LIFELONG LEARNING IN LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES: THE CASE OF NEPAL

by

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Abstract

The seventieth session of the General Assembly of the UN declared that the promotion of 'lifelong learning opportunities for all' as one of the Sustainable Development Goals. The idea of lifelong learning was first proposed by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization during the 1970s to mitigate the global educational crisis observed during the 1960s. However, until 2015 it was never taken as an educational policy strategy for the economically poor countries of the global South, known as Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Major supranational organisations such as the World Bank have encouraged LDCs to reorient their national educational policies and practices towards the framework of lifelong learning. This is an important breakthrough; however, almost no attention has been paid to what understandings of lifelong learning are being promoted by the supranational organisations that are increasingly involved in educational policy making and governance of LDCs.

Drawing on major theoretical constructs informed by Habermas (lifeworld and communicative rationality) and using critical policy sociology as a methodological tool, this study analysed educational policy documents and interviews undertaken with key educational policy makers of Nepal. This study found that the World Bank has promoted a neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning that takes investment in learning as the responsibility of individuals, promotes privatisation in education and advocates for the decentralisation of educational management to promote global governance in education. This limited notion of lifelong learning is partially adopted in LDCs like Nepal. The study concluded that the neoliberal

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understanding of lifelong learning has almost no potential in addressing the multifarious problems faced by LDCs such as poverty, illiteracy, and inequality.

This study recommended that the international organisations should not limit lifelong learning to an economic strategy aimed at increasing competitiveness and the production of flexible labour force; rather lifelong learning should be taken as the principal means for an inclusive and harmonious form of human development led by community-based initiatives. Providing lifelong learning opportunity for adults, especially those living in rural communities, should be the responsibility of the governments of LDCs for which international organisations may play a complementary role, when needed.

Lay Summary

In the context of globalization, international organisations such as the World Bank have not only provided loans and grants but also involved in making educational policies and plans of their member countries, especially those that depend on external funding. This study explored how the educational policies and plans of Nepal, one of the Least Developed Countries (LDC), has been affected by the educational policy recommendations of the World Bank, which is a major educational donor. The Bank has recommended a particular approach to lifelong learning as a new educational policy strategy for LDCs which positions education as a commodity and a pathway to becoming competitive in a global market economy. By taking the case of Nepal, this study explored the limitations of this particular understanding of lifelong learning to address some of the key challenges faced by LDCs such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and social inequality

Preface

This dissertation is an original intellectual product of the author, Kapil Dev Regmi. The fieldwork reported in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 was covered by the UBC Research Ethics Board's Certificate of Approval Number H1500553 (approved on March 30, 2015).

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List of Abbreviations

AAAA	Addis Ababa Action Agenda	GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ADB BPEP	Asian Development Bank Basic and Primary Education	INGOs	International Non- Governmental Organisation
BRICS	Project Brazil, Russia, India, China,	ILO	International Labour Organisation
DRICS	and South Africa	IMF	International Monetary Fund
CDP	UN Committee for Development Policy	IPOA	Istanbul Programme of Action
CEDA	Centre for Economic Development and Administration	JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
CLC	Community Learning Centre	LDC	Least Developed Countries
CSSP	Community Support School	MDG	Millennium Development Goal
	Project	MOE	Ministry of Education
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance	MOF	Ministry of Finance
DFID	UK Department for International Development	NASA	National Assessment of Student Achievement
DLI	Disbursement-Linked Indicators	NDS	National Development Service
EFA	Education for All	NEPC	National Education Planning
ERO	Education Review Office	NEGD	Commission
EU	European Union	NESP	National Education System Plan
FAO	Food and Agriculture	NFE	Non-Formal Education
GDP	Organization Gross Domestic Product	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
GON	Government of Nepal	NPC	National Planning Commission

OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and	UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
OPHI	Development Oxford Poverty and Human	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
PIAAC	Development Initiative Programme for the	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
TIAAC	International Assessment of Adult Competencies	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural
PIP	Programme Implementation Plan		Organization
PISA	Programme for International	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
PPP	Student Assessment Public Private Partnership	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper	USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results	VDC	Village Development Committee
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme	WTO	World Trade Organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal		
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network		
SLC	School Leaving Certificate		
SSRP	School Sector Reform Programme		
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study		
UGC	University Grants Commission		

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Dedication

To my parents:

China Kumari Regmi (Mother)

Bed Nidhi Regmi (Father)

Chapter 1: Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the relevance of lifelong learning as a new education policy agenda for economically poor countries of the global South known as Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Two key terms explored in this dissertation are 'lifelong learning' and 'LDCs'. The dissertation focuses on how the discourse of lifelong learning constructed by some supranational organisations, mainly the World Bank, has influenced educational policies of Nepal as an LDC. In the context of globalisation and global governance in education, this study analysed key educational policy documents (produced by the World Bank and the Government of Nepal) and interviews conducted with top-level educational policy makers and planners of Nepal. In this respect, the dissertation explored how the World Bank has emerged as a global institution to create a new form of global governance in education especially in LDCs.

Lifelong learning has become a catchword in almost all countries because of its growing influence on education policies in the globalised world. In the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union, the promotion of lifelong learning has been a strategy to speed up economic growth and competitiveness of their member countries. For United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank, lifelong learning has been a focused educational agenda to be implemented in developing countries including LDCs, especially after the declaration of 'lifelong learning' as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2016-2030) by the United Nations in September 2015 (Regmi 2015c). Review of relevant literature in this field shows that there are two dominant models of lifelong learning: the human capital model, which takes education and learning as a strategy for economic growth and competitiveness; and the humanistic model,

which takes education and learning as a fundamental human rights (Regmi 2015c, Rubenson 2011).

The human capital model of education emerged institutionally in the OECD policy conference on economic growth and investment in education held in 1961 (OECD 1961). With the publication of a series of policy reports through the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) and two conference reports (OECD 1989, 1996), the OECD has remained one of the strong advocates of this model. In recent decades, this has been a dominant model of education, especially in Anglophone countries such as the US and the UK (Brown 2000, Green 2006) and in some supranational organisations such as the European Union (European Commission 2000, European Union 2010) and the World Bank (World Bank 2003a, 2011). This model aims at promoting competition among individuals and nations by encouraging them: to participate in international assessments such as the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC); to leverage their education and learning by developing information technologies; and to create a flexible environment for continuous learning and pursuing jobs. This model aims to promote privatisation by encouraging private sectors to finance, manage and govern education; knowledge is seen as a private good or a commodity to be traded freely in the global market. When skilled and competent humans, a new form of capital, are allowed to move freely in the international market, national as well as global prosperity can be achieved (Regmi 2015c, Kitson and Michie 1999).

The humanistic model of lifelong learning, on the other hand, has its root in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations 1948). In Article 26, the Declaration proclaims that 'everyone has the right to education' and that education should be 'directed to the full development of the human personality', strengthen fundamental freedoms

and 'promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups' (ibid.). UNESCO's formal instigation of lifelong learning as a response to the 'global educational crisis'(Coombs 1968, 1985) of the late 1960s is reflected in two well-known UNESCO reports (Faure et al. 1972, Delors et al. 1996). These reports provide 'a social agenda designed to embrace equity and capture the notion of all kinds of learning for all' (Preece 2009, 3). In short, this model aims to create a better world by alleviating social inequality, reducing social injustices and ensuring human rights for all (Regmi 2015c, Elfert 2015, 2016).

UNESCO appears to have embraced the humanistic model of lifelong learning (Rubenson 2006a). By promoting a humanistic agenda of education, UNESCO has focused on adult education and learning as its core principles. UNESCO organises International Conferences on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) every 12 years. For example, following the approval of the Nairobi Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education in 1976, the UNESCO focused on achieving 'governments' commitment to promote adult education as an integral part of the educational system within a lifelong learning perspective' (UIL 2009, 8). Since 2009 UNESCO has started publishing Global Reports on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE) every three years (UIL 2016, 2013, 2009) for providing the status of adult learning and education in its member countries. For example, the GRALE report of 2009 recognised that 'despite the frequent use of the term 'lifelong learning' in a variety of legal, policy and programme documents, conceptual clarity about what constitutes lifelong learning and the place of adult learning and education within it has not become generalised' (UIL 2009, 24).

Since 2000 the World Bank has embraced the human capital model of lifelong learning as a new educational framework to recommend investment strategies by asking LDCs to change their educational policies and plans so as to implement major assumptions of this model such as

privatisation and competitiveness. These assumptions, in a sense, are the core principles of the World Bank that it has been following from the very beginning of its establishment. The World Bank was established following the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference held at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in the US in July 1944. The function of the World Bank as mandated by the Bretton Woods conference was 'to provide financing for post-war reconstruction and development projects' (Taylor 2012, 161). But after the 1950s it started providing loans to developing countries and LDCs including Nepal. During the 1950s, the Bank provided low-interest loans for infrastructure development such as roads and bridges. Since the late 1960s, however, during the presidential tenure of Robert McNamara (1968–1981), the Bank started for the development of social sectors including education. With its largest capital investment in the last three decades, the Bank 'has become the single largest source of development capital in the field of international education' (Heyneman 2003, 315). Since 1962, the Bank has 'invested \$69 billion globally in education via more than 1,500 projects' (World Bank 2011, 1).

To explore how the World Bank's policy recommendations have influenced national policies of economically poor countries, this dissertation focuses on the most impoverished nations of the global South known as LDCs. As of May 2016, there are 48 countries in this category: 33 in Africa, 14 in Asia and 1 in Latin America (see Figure 1). LDCs have several problems: life expectancy is 63.3 years which is very low in comparison to the OECD countries (80.2 years). Similarly, the expected years of schooling is 9.3 years compared to 15.8 years in the

OECD countries (UNDP 2015). The average literacy¹ rate of these countries is 58.4%, which is much lower than the world average (80.1%). These countries hold 12% of the world population but share 1% of the global wealth. The average external debt stock of these countries between 2005 and 2013 was 28.1% of their gross national income (UNDP 2015).

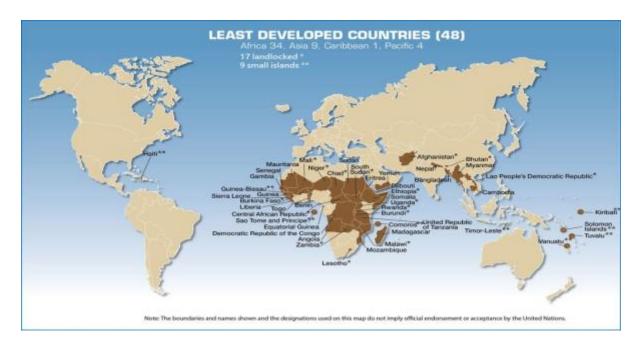


Figure 1 Map of Least Developed Countries

Source: UNESCO (2016b, 2)

LDCs are not able to make sufficient investment in education. Currently, they spend about 3.4% of their total GDP on education (the OECD countries spend 5.1% of their GDP)) which is insufficient given their budget limitations (UNDP 2015). More unfortunate is the fact that this negligible amount of investment is not yielding proportionate level of return. Because of

¹ In Human Development Reports such as UNDP (2015) literacy is understood as one's ability to read and write. Hence, the figures of literacy rates mentioned in these reports do not represent a comprehensive notion of literacy, which I have explored in detail in Section 2.3.5.

the lack of trained teachers, instructional materials and infrastructure, LDCs are not able to provide quality education for their citizens. Moreover, there is a mismatch between the credentials acquired by students and the skills required to undertake developmental activities. The majority of young people immigrating to other countries for jobs are also not able to utilise their educational qualifications acquired in their home countries. In a sense, the knowledge and skills acquired by the learners have been wasted (Glewwe et al. 2011) as 'education systems in many LDCs are not providing youth with the skills they need to escape from poverty and unemployment'(UNESCO 2011, 31).

Some of the supranational organisations—such as the World Bank, the OECD, UNESCO, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been making interventions in LDCs to mitigate those problems and challenges. The World Bank is one of the most powerful institutions to influence major developmental activities of these countries. The Bank aims at reducing poverty by improving the socioeconomic conditions of those impoverished nations through investment in lifelong learning (World Bank 2002a, 2003a, 2011). As a global bank, with a capacity to make large investment in LDCs in the forms of loans and grants, it holds decisive power to influence policies and programmes of these countries (Heyneman 2003).

By publishing a number of documents (World Bank 1999a, 2000, 2002a, b, 2003a, 2015a) the Bank has promoted lifelong learning as a new educational policy for LDCs. However, its endorsement of 'lifelong learning' as a solution to the problems and challenges of the economically poor countries has been criticised (Alexander 2001, Bonal 2004, Ginsburg et al. 2003, Heyneman 2003, Klees 2002, 2008, Arnove 2012a, McGinn 1994, Moutsios 2009, Mundy 2002, Tomusk 2002, Wickens and Sandlin 2007, Jones 1997, 2007). Two of its major documents

that explicitly endorse lifelong learning are: *Lifelong learning in the global knowledge economy: Challenges for developing countries* (World Bank 2003a); and *Learning for all: Investing in people's knowledge and skills to promote development* (World Bank 2011). The following quote extracted from the second document—also called *Education Strategy 2020* (World Bank 2011, 44)—reflects the Bank's understanding of lifelong learning:

Many young people in developing countries are leaving school and entering the labour market without the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for employment in a competitive modern economy. [...] 'the system approach' to education reform recognises employers as key stakeholders in education and regards non-formal skills training as part of a continuum of learning opportunities for acquiring key knowledge and skills. Efforts are underway in the Bank, in collaboration with development partners, to develop a framework and tools to measure the skills and competencies of country's labour force. One aim of these efforts is to increase the share of education projects that include market objectives and thereby improve the acquisition of workforce skills.

The Bank assumes that this particular approach to lifelong learning is the most appropriate educational strategy for LDCs and recommends them for its full implementation by the year 2020. But critics (Klees 2012, Klees, Samoff, and Stromquist 2012, Arnove 2012a, b, Baily 2012, Beardmore and Middleton 2012, Heyneman 2012, Mundy and Menashy 2012, Nordtveit 2012, Robertson 2012, Steiner-Khamsi 2012, Vally and Spreen 2012, Wiseman and Collins 2012) argue that the understanding of lifelong learning endorsed by the Bank is an 'economistic' perspective (Rubenson 2011) which stands in sharp contrast with the 'humanistic' notion of lifelong learning conceived by UNESCO during the early 1970s (Faure et al. 1972, Delors et al. 1996). Critics further argue that the endorsement of the economistic perspective of lifelong learning stems from modernist approach of development. In this sense, this is an attempt to bring LDCs into the framework of 'neoliberal globalisation'. The economistic perspective of lifelong learning is, therefore, informed by the underlying assumptions of neoliberalism such as competitiveness and privatisation. In this respect, it tends to serve the interest of the global capitalist market especially multinational corporations rather than the poor people of LDCs. For these people, the notion of achieving national competitiveness through the investment in human capital learning makes no sense.

As a citizen of an LDC, Nepal, my engagement with the World Bank's policy documents and the body of literature that critiques the economistic perspective of lifelong learning has led to several questions such as: Why should the poor nations compete in the global economy? Does the investment in human capital education translate into economic growth in LDCs? Should the education sector in LDCs be financed, managed and governed by the private sector? What are the benefits and challenges of privatisation in education in LDCs? What makes me particularly interested to explore further is the extent to which educational policy recommendations of the Bank—such as the ones stated in *Education Strategy 2020* that repeats almost the same narrow economistic rhetoric of the Structural Adjustment Program (Carnoy 1995, Jones 1997, Heyneman 2003)—is 'the right agenda' (World Bank 2011, 9) for LDCs.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The economistic and neoliberal perspective of lifelong learning advocated by the World Bank has an implicit assumption that LDCs are homogenous economies and their social, educational and political problems could be solved by investing in human capital education for producing flexible as well globally competitive citizens. Scholars have argued that those assumptions of human capital theory (achieving high economic growth, creating flexible labour force, and commodification of knowledge as a private good) do not benefit poor countries (Bagnall 2000, Resnik 2006), especially their rural communities. Instead, this type of investment

may help to fulfil the needs of the global capital markets, which does not fulfil the needs of LDCs. This economistic perspective of lifelong learning, which is becoming more dominant, deviates from the humanistic perspective of lifelong learning conceived during the 1970s (UNESCO 2015b, Delors et al. 1996, Faure et al. 1972).

Furthermore, the economistic perspective of lifelong learning is becoming more hegemonic because of a shift in educational governance of LDCs from national to supranational authorities controlled by the Bretton Wood Institutions (the World Bank, WTO, and IMF) and multinational corporations. Critics (Spring 2009, Rizvi and Lingard 2010) argue that multinational corporations steer policy priorities, not only of national governments, but also the Bretton Woods Institutions. A unique consensus among these institutions, also known as 'Washington Consensus' (Williamson 2000), and their matching interests with multinational corporations have been a major force shaping educational policies and practices of many countries of the global South. The economistic perspective of lifelong learning has become dominant because of the increasing hegemony of those institutions and corporations. In all LDCs, national governments are losing their roles and responsibilities in financing, management and governance of educational sector (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). In this respect, this study aims to explore the extent to which educational policies of LDCs are influenced by the economistic discourse of lifelong learning.

Similarly, there is a growing concern that the economistic and neoliberal view of lifelong learning mandated by the Bank is promoting neoliberal principles, which do not address the problems and challenges of LDCs. For example, as argued by Bello (2004, xiv), neoliberal principles such as deregulation, trade liberalisation, and privatisation—that became dominant policies during the SAP period but failed to solve the problems of the poor countries—have been

endorsed again with new rhetoric of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Bello further claims that such initiatives have resulted into institutionalised stagnation, worsened poverty, and increased inequality. As a consequence, the problems and challenges of LDCs have not been solved since the conception of LDC category in the early 1970s. It is unfortunate that only three countries have been able to graduate (see Chapter 2) from LDC category: Botswana in December 1994, Cape Verde in December 2007, and Maldives in January 2011 (United Nations 2012a). In this respect, this study aims to explore the potential of the lifelong learning perspective promoted by the World Bank for solving the problems and challenges that LDCs have long been enduring.

Above all, there is a clear gap in the current body of literature on whether and how the educational policy makers and other stakeholders of LDCs have resisted the World Bank's policy recommendations or fully embraced the globalising ideology of the Bank. Moreover, this study will explore if any alternative policy discourses are being created to challenge the neoliberal ones. Therefore, this research aims to make a critical exploration of neoliberal globalisation in educational policy with particular focus on one of the South Asian LDCs, Nepal. One of the rationales behind taking LDCs as a major focus is that the countries in this group are poorest among all the developing countries (Qadir 1982) hence have less power for resisting the force of supranational organisations. In comparison to the OECD and advanced developing nations like Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS), LDCs have weaker economic, cultural, social and political systems. Nepal makes a special case because of its geographic location (sandwiched between India and China), rapid political changes in recent years, and increased reliance on the financial assistance from the multilateral and bilateral organisations, mainly the World Bank.

1.2 Research questions

In light of the purposes of the study highlighted above, this research aims to answer the following questions:

- a. What understandings of lifelong learning are being promoted by the World Bank?
- b. How is the World Bank's lifelong learning policy discourse adopted or adapted in Nepal as an LDC?
- c. What are the limits and possibilities of these policies to address the key challenges faced by Nepal?

1.3 Significance of the study

This study will be the first of its kind that links the notion of lifelong learning—often associated with economic vis-à-vis educational policy of the OECD and the EU member states— with the contextual realities of the most impoverished nations of the global South, LDCs. Three major significances of this study are:

a. Some of the global projects – like the *Millennium Development Goals* and the *Education for All* – that were launched in 2000 by the leadership of global institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank ended in 2015 without achieving some of their ambitious targets. This study will be a valuable contribution for setting priorities and goals at both national and supranational levels in the 'post-2015' developmental decade (Morgan and White 2013, Bello 2013). This particular contribution will be significant for highlighting the distinctive needs of LDCs requiring special programs and priorities in comparison to other developing countries.

- b. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge that not only criticises neoliberal globalisation in education but also presents some recommendations, which could be helpful for supranational organisations such as the World Bank and UNESCO while devising educational plans and programmes particularly for LDCs. I hope that this research will bring some burning problems and challenges of the most marginalised countries to the front, which might help to start new level of discussions at international level.
- c. Finally, the study is relevant for both developed nations like the US and Canada because of their involvement in the OECD, and the World Bank and other advanced developing countries like BRICS. This study will create awareness among bilateral and multilateral donor organisations to be extra cautious about the contextual realities of LDCs while making policy recommendations. I am hopeful that this research will provide a cautionary note to the educational policy makers of LDCs to critically examine the educational policy discourse produced by supranational organisations such as the World Bank.

1.4 My positionality and values

The term positionality can be defined as a 'notion that personal values, views, and location in time and space influence how one understands the world' (Sánchez 2010, 2258). Some of the indicators of one's positionality are gender, race, class, prior experience, and all sort of idiosyncrasies that affect almost all 'aspects of the research process – from the articulation of a research question to the analysis and presentation of the data' (McCorkel and Myers 2003, 199, Erickson 2004).

Moreover, researchers' association with a particular field such as academic discipline, socio-political environment of their upbringing, and exposure to the academic world constitute their positionality which determines the type of values they bring into research process (Sipe and Ghiso 2004). For Ozga (2000) 'values are assumptions or beliefs about what is desirable and about how things are; they have a powerful impact at the level of pre-theoretical thinking or in the formation of subsets of beliefs and assumptions about the world' (p. 47). A general proposition followed in qualitative research including policy sociology, that I used in this study, is that 'the role of policy analyst should not be for the quest of drawing value-free findings'; rather they 'have a responsibility for making values clear' (Titmuss 1974, 27).

I was born and raised in Nepal. Before joining UBC for my postgraduate studies, I worked for more than fifteen years in Nepal as a college lecturer and educational researcher, however, I always feel that I belong to, and have the responsibility to speak about, Nepalese rural communities that are marginalised, underprivileged and often oppressed by national and international forces. As an informed scholar and a member of such communities I have observed a complete disjuncture between Nepal's educational policies and its contextual realities. My exploration in this line of inquiry resonated with several questions such as how a nation like Nepal– a South Asian LDC struggling to reduce extreme poverty, illiteracy and unemployment – could benefit from education policy aimed at producing flexible human capital resources for a competitive knowledge economy.

My PhD builds on my research for my Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Education where I interviewed Nepalese policy makers and explored the significance of less formal education and learning, such as indigenous education as a way of increasing people's participation in lifelong learning. I concluded that recognition of non-formal and informal indigenous learning is crucial

for Nepal's rural transformation and for opening up new avenues for enhancing a humanistic approach to lifelong learning as espoused by UNESCO in the early 1970s.

It is my conviction that a humanistic approach to lifelong learning could provide a better educational policy framework to the economically poor countries such as Nepal. My critical inquiry in the field of lifelong learning showed that the humanistic approach to lifelong learning is increasingly replaced by a dominant neoliberal approach to lifelong learning which has almost no potential for solving the problems of LDCs. To critique the dominant neoliberal approach to lifelong learning I embraced a critical lens to explore further in the field of educational policy making and planning.

Following McCorkel and Myers (2003, 220), I note that my research motivations are rooted in the environment that appreciate a critical perspective to analyse educational policies and plans of both supranational organisations (such as the OECD, the World Bank and UNESCO) and national authorities such as the Government of Nepal. My values may have some influence on the selection of my research questions, methodology, and tools for collecting and analysing data. To be more specific, the type of codes and themes used for analysing both policy texts and interview transcripts were (see Chapter 5-7), in a sense, affected by my positionality and values associated with it.

Moreover, as argued by Easton (1953), policy itself is the 'authoritative allocation of values' because 'policy makers negotiate a complex field of meanings and understandings' (Levinson, Sutton, and Winstead 2009, 778) during the process of policy making. In any kind of social policy, including educational policies, certain values are given high priority whereas some values are suppressed. To be critical about such tendency, in a sense, I support the values

associated with the community of scholars who appreciate the humanistic values that are suppressed in the dominant discourse of lifelong learning.

One of the potential problems in striking a balance between objectivity and subjectivity—that I have strived to achieve—for constructing intersubjective knowledge in this research relates to what scholars in social science call the 'emic' and 'etic' perspectives in research. The former is the case in which a researcher finds her/himself as an insider and the perspective taken by such researcher 'emphasizes the partnering and working together with people who are closest to the problem by dint of personal experience and identity' (Young 2005, 151). On the other hand, etic perspective refers to 'the idea of "outsider perspective," which is the perspective of a person who has not had a personal or "lived" experience of a particular culture/society' (Young 2005, 152). Even though, by virtue of being a UBC student, I am acquainted with the Western scholarly community, this research is informed by both my emic and etic perspectives. From an emic or insider perspective, I have 'empathy' with fellow LDC citizens in general and Nepalese people in particular. I share more or less the same feeling that majority of these peoples share regarding the intervention of the World Bank in their/our educational matters.

I would like to highlight two strengths of this research process to justify that even if I brought an emic perspective, the findings drawn from this study are not just an expression of emotions and resentments of LDC people, including me, as an insider researcher. Firstly, my interviewees were not people unaware of the entire political issues such as the intervention of supranational organisations in LDCs. Rather they were the experts who, in a sense, knew better than me about the issues and challenges with which I was concerned. In this respect, I learnt

from them, as 'traveller-interviewer'(Kvale and Brinkmann 2009), how educational problems of LDCs can be solved in a more just and sustainable manner.

And secondly, an interview with an expert is less likely to be a therapeutic or psychological interview where two parties – the interviewer and interviewee – share some emotions. I considered my interviewees not as objects to be examined and manipulated; rather I viewed them as responsible personnel in making and implementing educational policies. And second, even though I talked with Nepalese citizens for my interview data, I do not belong to their professional community. That is to say, I have never worked as policy actor in Nepal and neither have I done any government-paid regular jobs in Nepal. In this sense, I do not share totally the same experiences and feelings with them. I was involved in a kind of talk that Kvale (2006) calls 'confrontational interview' rather than consensus-seeking Platonic dialogue.

1.5 Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation has seven chapters. In the first Chapter, I have presented the background of the study that includes the introduction of the key terms of the study (lifelong learning and LDCs), the purpose of the study, research questions, the significance of the study and my positionality and values as a researcher. Since the study focuses on how the World Bank's understanding of lifelong learning has influenced the educational policies and practices of LDCs, the World Bank and Nepal (one of the LDCs selected for a detail study) are also introduced in brief.

In the second Chapter, I explore the emergence of LDCs as a special category of countries under the guise of Western model of development. The Chapter provides some key assumptions of the developmental model and outlines major problems of LDCs (such as weak productivity, poverty, unemployment, internal conflict, illiteracy, and gender inequality) and some of the root causes of those problems. The third Chapter introduces Nepal as one of the LDCs selected for a detail case study. It explores how international agencies such as the World Bank have affected social, economic and educational history of Nepal mainly from the 1950s to the 1980s. I have presented Nepal's educational policy development from the 1950s to the 1980s in the form of literature reviews. The analysis part of this dissertation is built on the historical trajectory of Nepalese education explored in Chapter 3.

The fourth Chapter provides a brief history behind the emergence of lifelong learning as educational policy agenda and its controversies at present. Since the World Bank is identified as a major educational investor in almost all LDCs including Nepal, its understanding of lifelong learning is emphasized. In addition to the presentation of the brief history of human capital orientation in education, this Chapter introduces some major theoretical constructs developed by Jürgen Habermas and explores how these constructs inform this study: mainly for understanding the complexity of lifelong learning.

The fifth Chapter presents the dissertation methodology, sources of data, strategies used to analyse the data, validity as well as ethical issues related to this study, and some limitations of the study. The sixth Chapter presents the analysis of the data under eight themes and explores them as the findings of the study. Finally, the seventh Chapter discusses the key findings of the study under three sections: lifelong learning and the World Bank, lifelong learning and LDCs, and the world crisis in lifelong learning. The dissertation ends with some recommendation to the World Bank and Nepal and the prospects of future research in this field.

Chapter 2: Developmental model and LDCs

Categorisation of different countries into certain groups has been a contested issue for several decades especially in the field of international development. In this study, I have taken Least Developed Countries (LDCs) as a special category of countries. This categorisation, however, is not without its flaws. Before presenting the case of LDCs, in terms of their problems and challenges, I explore some of the dominant discourses associated with the term 'development'. Even if this group of countries provides a context for this study, I problematize the notion *least developed* because this categorisation stems from a dominant model of development based on modernisation theory. Some of the questions I would like to address in this section are: how and when did LDCs as a category of countries appeared in the history of international development? What are the fundamental assumptions of the 'development model' that shape the dominant discourse of 'international development'? What are the critiques of developmental model? And, why did I take this categorisation as a context of this study despite its criticisms?

2.1 Developmental model

The development model stems from the European Enlightenment ideology that accepts the notion of 'development' as a positive change. The notion of development assumes that traditional and primitive societies should become modern: a process known as 'modernisation'. Its intellectual tradition goes back at least to the scholarly contributions of some classical sociologists such as Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), Max Weber (1864-1920) and Talcott Parsons (1902-1979); and classical economists such as Adam Smith (1723-1790), David Ricardo (1792-1823), and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). Hence, besides modernisation, this model of development draws insights from other cognate theories such as evolutionism, functionalism, diffusionism, mercantilism and neo/liberalism. These theories accept 'development' as a process of positive social change, hence I use an inclusive term 'development model', mainly because what these cognate theories call modernisation or modernity is actually 'development'. For the proponents of this model, development means 'making a better life for everyone' (Peet and Hartwick 2009, 1) so that the basic needs such as sufficient food, and a safe place to live are met.

According to Huntington (1971), unlike the dominant developmental model—which takes development as a linear process of positive change-there are other theories giving cyclical explanation of social change. Those theories focus on 'patterns of evolution of particular civilisation or cultures' that sequence of the origins, growth, maturity, and decline (p. 290). The dominant development model emerged against the backdrop of those cyclical theories, however, it opposes the idea that human society will decline once progress is made. Two major theories promoting this idea of 'progressive social change' are evolutionism and structural functionalism. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) applied the idea of biological evolution, that is, 'survival of the fittest' to social evolution, also known as 'Social Darwinism'. The idea behind this theory is that if we leave all social forces to open market competition, the most efficient forces would survive and evolve giving a new direction to social changes (Rogers 1972). Hence, providing an environment conducive to market forces, such as private firms or industries, to survive and progress is a key strategy: 'governments should abstain from intervening in the markets' (Szirmai 2005, 73). Similarly, structural functionalism, an idea of Durkheim, was a crucial influence on Parsons' theorisation of social change. Parsons, a key figure in modernisation theory, viewed social change as 'a process of evolution from simple, preindustrial traditional society to complex, industrial modern society' (Youngman 2000, 53).

Thus, the notion of modernisation appears as a major facet of the dominant development model. Modernisation refers to a number of processes such as changes in pattern of human life, rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, expansion in media, increased literacy, and greater political participation (Huntington 1971). Modernisation is a lengthy process that could be achieved not abruptly but through transition; however, its outcome is assumed to be always progressive. Huntington argues that 'the costs and the pains of the period of transition, particularly its early phases, are great, but the achievement of a modern social, political, and economic order is worth them' (p. 290). The developmental model, in its current form, promotes free trade regimes, which operate under the auspices of the Bretton Woods Institutions (the World Bank, and the IMF, and the WTO) and the consensus they have forged to maintain the world order. The logic of free trade regime, propounded by Adam Smith, was popularised by his followers David Ricardo and John Stuart Mill. Proponents of this model intend 'to show how unrestricted trade is beneficial to all countries taking part in it' (Rodrik 2011, 41). Rodrik further argues that there have been some success stories reflecting this free trade regime, but it 'did not win everywhere' (p. 43). In this dissertation, I have argued that for many countries, especially LDCs, such regimes have not been useful.

The dominant development model has the following four key underlying assumptions that have become guiding principles in the categorisation of LDCs as a distinctive group of countries.

Firstly, the development model assumes that there are fixed stages and routes of development. In his historical analysis of developed countries – mainly Britain, France, the US and Japan – Rostow (1990) found that all societies had gone through five stages of development: the traditional society, the precondition for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the

age of high mass consumption. Similarly, Parsons (1966, 1971) discussed three stages of development – the primitive, the intermediate and the modern – through which society would pass from 'ascription to achievement, from particularism to universalism, and from diffusionness to specificity' (Harrison 2005, 36). Influenced by Rostow and Parsons, the development model assumes that all countries must pass over the preceding stages for entering the succeeding ones. For example, the fourth stage in Rostow's projection of development, that is, 'the drive to maturity' was achieved by advanced countries at different times: Great Britain in the 1850s, the US in the 1900s, Japan in the 1940s, and Canada in the 1950s (Rostow 1959, 8). This implies that LDCs would progress towards the successive stages and follow the same route that the advanced countries took in the past; and this is the only route through which development would take place.

Secondly, the development model assumes that integration of LDCs into the world system provides them with comparative advantage. During the early nineteenth century economists were in dilemma: Do both exporting and importing countries have same level of benefit when they follow the provision of free trade? David Ricardo (1891) responded by giving his famous example of 'trade between England and Portugal in cloth and wine in 1817 and conclusively established the principle of comparative advantage' (Rodrik 2011, 61). Ricardo stipulated that 'each nation should specialise in the production of goods it could produce most cheaply in comparison with other goods' (Jaffee 1998, 152). Doing this, nations would benefit not only by making efficient use of their resources but also by exporting their products to the international market. All nations would prosper because the cost of production would be reduced and goods could be made available in cheap prices. The discourse as such rationalises the logic of capitalism which, according to Max Weber, is a part of a wider and long-run 'social trend of

Western societies' (Szirmai 2005, 76) in which profit motive and rational calculation play important roles. The idea of rational calculation comes from Adam Smith (2005). In *Wealth of Nations*, Smith argued against the obstacles of free trade. He claimed that if the individuals were left free to pursue their interest *the invisible hand of the market* would promote the collective welfare of human society (Smith 2005).

Thirdly, the development model assumes that LDCs cannot develop without foreign assistance mainly monetary and technical assistance. This assumption stems from the ideological visions of some influential political leaders of the US. In 1949 Truman proclaimed that 'we [the US and its allies] must embark on a bold new program for making the benefit of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas' (Truman 1949). After about a decade, in the Swearing-in Ceremony and Inaugural Address, on 20 January 1961, Kennedy reiterated the commitment: 'to those peoples in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our best efforts to help them help themselves, for whatever period is required' (Kennedy and Sorensen 1988, 12).

The dominant development model positions LDCs as weak, vulnerable, and needy of special support from developed countries, especially for achieving economic growth. The wealth and prosperity of a nation—and prosperity of some groups within a nation—will have trickledown effect on those who are trying to catch up with their prosperous counterparts. When growth reaches the stage of saturation, the income would trickledown 'so that everyone's income and standard of living would improve' (Youngman 2000, 54). During the 1960s and the 1970s, the time when this model was dominant, the proponents of this model assumed that a large investment supported by foreign aid would increase employment opportunities and help to

alleviate poverty. This idea has had crucial influence on major supranational organisations such as the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, and Rostow's own creation the USAID (Wiarda 2010).

And fourthly, the dominant development model assumes that through technological progress, LDCs will develop their adaptive capacity. Technological progress is a key to achieving modernisation because by using new technology people can increase their control over physical environment. According to Schumpeter (2003), 'long cycles of economic growth [in developed world] were driven by some major technological breakthroughs such as textiles, steam power, railways, chemicals, electricity and automobiles' (Szirmai 2005, 77). Even if traditional societies are considered backward in many respects, including the use of technology, this model assumes that they can profit from the 'advantage of backwardness'. The rationale behind this idea is: the amount of time and money spent by the 'pioneers in the development of new technoleconomic systems have to pay heavy costs' (Nolan and Lenski 1985, 341) but the 'latecomers' in modernisation process have the chance of avoiding costs on research and innovation. They are free to adopt new technology for their own benefit; and sometimes, the backward countries can outsmart advanced economies. Therefore, if underdeveloped countries should prosper they must be exposed to new technologies and allow their adaptive capacity to flourish.

2.2 Emergence of LDCs

The four fundamental assumptions of the developmental model—fixed stages of development, the law of comparative advantage, importance of foreign assistance, and adaptive capacity of traditional societies—have shaped the dominant discourse of international cooperation and development. The categorisation of LDCs as a special group of countries occurs on the basis of these four key underlying assumptions of developmental model.

In 1952, a French demographer, Alfred Sauvy, divided different countries of the world in three categories: The First World (the West including Japan), the Second World (the socialist world or the Soviet Bloc) and the Third World (mostly former European colonies). After the end of the Cold War in 1989, this categorisation has been viewed as defunct as the Second World has almost disappeared (McMichael, 2012). However, in the literature of international development the term 'Third World' is still used to denote those countries that are trying to catch up with developed countries of the West. Another categorisation—that takes economic development as a major criterion—divides countries into two groups: developed countries and developing countries. However, the binary between the terms 'developed' and 'developing' has never been clear. For example, the WTO – a global organization that aims to regulate trades among nations – claims that 'there are no WTO definitions of *developed* and *developing* countries as member countries announce for themselves whether they are developed or developing' (WTO 2015).

The categorisations noted above have become even more problematic in recent decades because of the rising influence of BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) on the global political economy. They now have control of world trade and have thus challenged the traditional international development mechanism. The notion of the South-South Cooperation promoted in recent decades shows how the relation between developed OECD countries as donors and non-OECD countries as aid-recipients has changed. Similarly, some of the assumptions such as the First World countries as former colonisers and the Third World countries as former colonies have become meaningless. Some of the former colonies such as the US and Canada are now rich countries and others like Nepal that were never colonised officially have remained the poorest of all. Many countries have progressed following the Western model of development such as the Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan) and BRICS; however, a group of countries mostly concentrated in Asia and Africa have not achieved any progresses since the latter half of the last century.

Before exploring the history of LDCs it is interesting to explore how Asian Tigers and BRICS have achieved advancement in trade and development. An important point to note here is that, contrary to what modernisation theorists would argue, according to Rodrik (2011), Asian Tigers and BRICS countries have achieved economic progress in the past couple of decades because of strong nationalised economy; and not because they followed free trade regimes: 'they pursued mixed strategies with a heavy dose of state intervention to diversify their economies' (Rodrik 2011, 9). Rodrik further argues that

the only countries that have managed to become rich under capitalism are those that have erected an extensive set of formal institutions that govern markets: tax systems that pay for public goods such as national defence and infrastructure, legal regimes that establish and protect property rights, courts that enforce contracts, police forces to sanction violators, bureaucrats who design and administer economic regulations, central banks that ensure monetary and financial stability, and so on (p. 33).

In light of this brief caveat, in what follows, I explore the history of LDCs as a new category of countries.

In the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD I) held in 1964—after 20 years of the establishment of the UN—delegates from 'developed countries' advocated for the establishment of LDCs as a distinctive category of countries to attract special support measures to help them in reducing poverty, illiteracy and solving health-related problems. In UNCTAD II, held in New Delhi in 1968, the category of LDCs was examined in detail. In January 1970, the Committee for Development Planning

'formed a working group to outline the methodology for identifying LDCs and to reflect upon special measures for countries to be classified' (United Nations 2008, 3).

The UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP) reviews the status of economically poor countries (the prospective and existing LDCs) every three years and suggests that the Economic and Social Council of the UN should decide whether a particular country is to be included in the category or to be graduated from LDC status. The criteria for the inclusion and graduation are decided by the CDP each time they examine the status of these countries. For example, in 1971 – the first time of LDC categorisation – the three criteria used for inclusion were: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, adult literacy rate, and share of manufacturing in GDP (United Nations 2008). But in 2012 the criteria were modified as (a) Gross National Income (GNI) per capita based on a three-year average with a threshold² of \$992; (b) Human Assets Index (HAI) based on the indicators related to nutrition (percentage of the population that is undernourished), health (child mortality rate), school enrolment (gross secondary school enrolment ration), and adult literacy rate; and (c) Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) based on the indicators related to natural shocks, trade related shocks, physical and economic exposures to shocks, smallness in terms of population (maximum 75 million), and remoteness that is 'a tradeweighted average of the country's distance from world markets' (United Nations 2015, 54).

Every 10 years, the UN convenes to discuss ways to help these countries graduate from LDC category. First two conferences were held in Paris (in 1981 and 1990), the third (in 2001)

² In 2015 triennial review the threshold is revised: 'To become eligible for graduation, a country must reach threshold levels for graduation for at least two of the aforementioned three criteria, or its GNI per capita must exceed at least twice the threshold level (\$2,484 in the 2015 triennial review), and the likelihood that the level of GNI per capita is sustainable must be deemed high' (Source: <u>http://unohrlls.org/about-ldcs/criteria-for-ldcs/</u>).

and the fourth (in 2011) were held in Brussels and Istanbul respectively. The Programme of Actions adopted in each of these conferences for respective ten-year period have emphasised the importance of assistance from the international community – basically the donor countries from the Western world – for the development of LDCs. For example, in the first conference held in 1981, the international community unanimously adopted the substantial new programme containing guidelines for domestic action to be complemented by international support measures (United Nations 2012a). The second conference, which was held in 1990, declared the Paris Programme of Action that emphasised the need for development to be human-centred (United Nations 1992).

The third UN conference (held in 2001) was an important milestone because the Brussels Programme of Action (United Nations 2001) coincided with the declaration of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thirty specific objectives were identified such as: (a) the MDGs to be achieved by means of fostering pro-poor growth; (b) building institutional and human capabilities; (c) reducing inequality and promoting greater popular participation, especially of women; (d) and ensuring the rule of law, property rights and respect for internationally agreed human rights (United Nations 2010). The participants of the conference made commitments to eradicate poverty through sustainable economic growth by increasing the amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA). One of the significant declarations was to encourage LDCs to be members of the WTO (United Nations 2001). The donor countries reiterated that they would reverse the declining trends of ODA and meet expeditiously the targets of 0.15% [to 0.2%] of their Gross National Product as ODA to LDCs (United Nations 2001).

The fourth conference (held in 2011) declared the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA) for the decade 2011-2020 (United Nations 2011b). One of the objectives of the IPOA is to graduate half of the LDCs by 2020. The fourth conference also recognised LDCs as vital parts of global economy. The donor countries repeated their commitment to provide 0.15 to 0.2% of their GNP to LDCs. The IPOA also focused on achieving a renewed and strengthened global partnership to speed up development activities in LDCs. The partnership also includes the UN systems such as the Bretton Woods Institutions, other multilateral institutions and regional development banks (United Nations 2011b). The new dimension of partnership advocated in IPOA is the notion of the South-South cooperation, also called the New International Development Architecture (NIDA); which appears as a new strategy to recognise the status of BRICS countries in shaping global economy (United Nations 2011b).

The organiser of the LDC conferences, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), is a principal organ of UN General Assembly that deals with trade, investment and development issues in the world. Besides conference reports and programme of actions, UNCTAD has been publishing analytical reports on the development issues of LDCs since 1984. The reports are generating knowledge on wide range of issues that highlight the effectiveness of national and international policies to promote development and poverty reduction and propose pragmatic and constructive alternatives. For example, the report published in 2011 (United Nations 2011a) highlights the potential role of South-South cooperation for inclusive and sustainable development on the basis of the NIDA endorsed by the Istanbul Declaration. The NIDA calls for South-South cooperation in the areas of 'finance, trade, commodities, technology and climate change adaptation and mitigation' (Gore and Kozul-Wright 2011, 3).

2.3 Problems of LDCs

Many international organisations including the UN have recognised particular weaknesses, vulnerabilities and development challenges faced by LDCs. While the problems and challenges of these countries vary; nonetheless, because of their history, mainly the colonisation and decolonisation processes, geographical locations, and environmental conditions such as the effect of global warming and climate change, some of the problems and challenges are common to all LDCs. UNESCO (2011) found three tiers of problems faced by LDCs. The first tier encompasses weak state institutions coupled with an absence of strong leadership and management capacities; the second tier includes systematic capacity deficit, persistent economic hardships, natural disasters, political crisis, and conflict; and the third tier includes the brain drain of qualified leaders, managers, researchers, scientists, and workers. Gleaning from major sources of literature related to LDCs, below I explore the problems and challenges faced by LDCs under six subheadings: weak productivity, poverty, unemployment, gender discrimination, internal conflict, and illiteracy.

2.3.1 Weak productivity

If we compare the proportionate shares of global GDP with the GDP of LDCs, we find a very alarming figure. About 12% of world population live in LDCs but their total contribution to the global economy is less than one percent. That is to say, one eighth of the world population shares less than one hundredth of the world's total GDP. Analysing the papers presented in the first UN conference on LDCs, Qadir (1982) reported that annual incomes in LDCs were no more than a weekly unemployment benefit in the European economic community. In the context of widening GDP gap between developed countries and LDCs, one will get more alarming figures

today. One of the reasons behind this gulf – between prosperity and depravity – is the weak and unsustainable domestic production of LDCs.

There have been a lot of fluctuations in LDCs' economies mainly after 2000. The average annual economic growth rate of LDCs from 2001 to 2008 – the boom period – was 7.1 percent mainly due to external factors such as increases in aid and debt relief, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows and workers' remittances (Gore and Kozul-Wright 2011, 4). But in 2011 the growth decreased below 5 percent and dropped to 3.3% in 2014 (UN-OHRLLS 2016). There are two major causes of this fluctuation. Firstly, LDCs 'have continued to depend, to a large extent, on external inflows for their domestic investments' (Kalanje 2002, 121). The economic recession that started in 2008 – occurred mostly in industrial and newly developed countries that share 99% of global economy – directly affected the growth in LDCs because of the spill-over effect (Gore and Kozul-Wright 2011). LDCs' economies depend on FDI, Official Development Assistance and other support measures: all of them channelled through advanced economies. Foreign aid contributes to 5.9 to 14 percent of total GDP of individual LDCs.

Secondly, the growth achieved by LDCs during 2000s was not supported by the creation of proportionate number of jobs. For example, the 'robust economic growth in South Asia in 2000s was largely associated with an improvement in labour productivity rather than job creation' (ILO 2013, 77). Scarcity of jobs in LDCs has led to force migration to Western countries and advanced developing countries such as BRICS. This trend is increasing very rapidly in recent decades. The share of agriculture production in the GDP is replaced by the remittances sent by the migrant workers. Remittances growth rate of total LDCs during 2000–2008 was 17 percent but in 2009/2010 it decreased to 6.8 percent (UNCTAD 2011). For example, Nepal received US\$ 3,512.9 million in 2010 in remittances (the highest among all

LDCs) which was only US\$ 111.5 million in 2000 (United Nations 2011a). This fluctuation shows that remittances could not be a sustainable solution of economic problems. Moreover, due to the lack of proper regulations, migrant workers from LDCs are facing serious problems such as under-payment, lack of security, torture and violence (basically to those who work as domestic workers) in the countries like Qatar, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia (Gibson 2013). Hence, the amount of money sent back to LDCs as remittance comes with heavy social price as both migrant workers and their families living in home countries face severe social, psychological and emotional problems.

2.3.2 Poverty

The locus of some of the major problems such as malnutrition, hunger and diseases is poverty which is intractably embedded in the socioeconomic statuses of LDC people. Despite remarkable advances in academic, scientific and technological frontiers made in the Western world, the 'large parts of the world's population', mostly those who live in rural communities of LDCs do not share the wealth and progress of the modern world (Bjerg, Bjørnskov, and Holm 2011, 143). More than 30.8% of world's extremely poor people – that is about 53% of the total LDC population (878.2 million) – live in LDCs with their earning less than \$1.25 per day (OECD 2013). This shows that LDCs have received neither comparative advantage nor there is any trickledown effect of the global wealth.

Eradication, if not reduction of poverty by half, was highlighted as a major agenda while setting the MDGs and preparing the programme for action in the past UN conferences on LDCs. Unfortunately, many LDCs could not accomplish most of the goals including halving the poverty by fifty percent (UNDP 2013). Some of the achievements of the millennium initiatives at global level occurred mostly because of the progresses made by BRICS countries. The Oxford Poverty

and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), which calculates world poverty using Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), found that 'all of the poorest MPI countries were LDCs in 2011'(Alkire and Robles 2012, 1). These results indicate that the LDCs are less likely to achieve the goal of reducing poverty within the global framework of development as reflected in the Millennium Declarations and the SDGs 2030 (Bhola 2005).

Amartya Sen, 1998 Nobel Prize Laureate, claims that poverty is not just the lack of money or wealth but it is the lack of capability to realise one's full potential as a human being (Sen 1999). This indicates that 'poverty leads to an intolerable waste of talent' (Banerjee and Duflo 2011, 25). For example, because of the lack of adequate nutrition, a poor *Dalit* girl from Nepal may not develop her cognitive and physical capacity to be a successful person even if she is able to attend school for a few years. There is no data to show how many girls and boys from LDCs have lost their ability to be world-class citizens because of the lack of food required for their survival and good health. About a billion people worldwide suffer from hunger. Of the majority who go to bed without dinner and who have children who go to school without having breakfast, now increasingly live in LDCs. According to Banerjee and Duflo (2011), hungry people are not able to work properly hence their productive capacity is low. This creates a kind of poverty trap—when they are not able to feed themselves they are not able to produce enough food and remain hungry and when they are hungry they are not able to work-which has almost no escape. In this respect, 'most recent famines have been caused not by lack of food availability but by institutional failures that led to poor distribution of the available food, or even hoarding and storage in the face of starvation elsewhere' (Banerjee and Duflo 2011, 34).

2.3.3 Unemployment

Unemployment as well as underemployment of labour force is the central cause of poverty in all LDCs (United Nations 2006). Despite the increasing number of working age people, LDCs are facing challenges to create productive employment opportunities for its growing population so as to increase productivity in a sustainable manner. The share of economically active population seeking work outside agriculture in LDCs rose from 21 per cent in 1980-1983 to 30 per cent in 2000–2003 (Gore and Kozul-Wright 2011). According to a UN report on LDCs, the percentage of employment in agriculture is 65% followed by service (26%) and industry (9%) (United Nations 2013). The report shows that the employment rate in LDCs is 96%. But this is not an accurate picture of employment. To understand the reality of LDC employment we need to look at the types of works considered as 'employment'. According to the ILO (2011), there are three types of employments: decent employment, working poor, and vulnerable employment. The working poor category represents the people who earn less than \$1.25 per day and the vulnerable employment category represents all unpaid works often carried out by women in agricultural settings (ILO 2011). More than 80% of the total employed people in LDCs fall under the vulnerable employment category. From 2000 to 2012 the gender gap in this category has increased by 11% (United Nations 2013).

Because of a very limited economy and lack of industrial and service sector growth, the need of those who are employed are also not satisfied because of low salary, allowances and other employment benefits. Their situation is made worse because of the rising cost of living. As the agricultural products created by those countries are insufficient for feeding their people, LDCs import a huge amount of food-stuffs from other countries. Increased food price (FAO 2011) and reduced amount of crops production, due to the effect of climate change, have exerted

strong pressure on young labour force to abandon traditional agricultural occupations and seek employment in international job market. In many instances, foreign employers are reluctant to admit workers who are often categorised as low-skilled or unskilled for their jobs and often they do not meet firm requirements set by the legal employers of the industrial and newly developed economies (United Nations 2006). As a consequence, the young workforce – both males and females – have 'faced with the stark choice between poverty at home and social exclusion abroad [often] as illegal international migrants' (United Nations 2006, 59).

As the trend of women migration is increasing in recent decades, LDCs—the home countries of majority of migrant workers—are sure to bear an unprecedented loss in the foreseeable future. According to Lowell, Docquier, and Marfouk (2009, 298),

When the emigration rate exceeds a threshold estimated at 20 percent, the origin country experiences a net loss of human capital. The net loss increases exponentially with the skilled emigration rate. And, since women in developing countries still face unequal access to tertiary education and highly skilled jobs, the emigration of educated women is likely to generate higher relative losses of human capital than the emigration of skilled males.

2.3.4 Internal conflict

Almost all LDCs have histories of colonisation, dictatorship, ethnic and gender discrimination and class conflicts. Colonisation 'has left behind... conflicts of a regional, cultural, border and social nature that are evident today' (Alvarez 1981, 647). The decolonisation processes of those countries have been chaotic and sometimes violent. Hence, one of the major reasons behind poverty and underdevelopment of LDCs has been protracted internal conflict. The conflict and the lack of democracy are directly associated with colonial practices of the past. For example, Diamond (1992) found a strong correlation between the level of development and democratic practices of LDCs. Diamond argues that one of the reasons behind the underdevelopment of most LDCs is the distorted relationships between the state and the society. As the governments are unable to provide basic human needs – food, shelter and clothes – LDC societies often act against the government, which makes both the parties more hostile leading to recurrent political instability. For example, in the last 20 years, Nepal witnessed more than 20 governments led by different political forces. By analysing the cases of African and Asian LDCs, Diamond (1992, 482) argues that the

distorted relationship between state and society has been one of the most fundamental causes of democratic breakdown in Africa and Asia following decolonisation because it has generated many of the other factors superficially identified with democratic malfunctioning...corruption, abuse of power, economic stagnation and crisis, ethnic conflict, electoral fraud, and political violence.

According to Cortez and Kim (2012, 1), there is 'a strong association between armed conflicts, poverty and underdevelopment'. These scholars found that 23 LDCs were conflict affected in 2010 hence there is a positive 'correlation between the emergence and recurrence of conflict and having the LDC status' (p. 3). They found that during the 1990s, battle-related deaths in civil conflict were on average 1.5 per 1,000 people in LDCs (in comparison to 0.2 for non-LDCs). Similarly, according to Rodrik (1999), domestic conflict is the most important affecting factor for the collapse of economy and persistent problems and challenges faced by LDCs. For example, during the early 1990s, Nepal was making some improvements in economic and social sectors but after the breakout of civil war in 1996 – led by 'Nepal Maoist Party' – most of the developmental infrastructures were destroyed (Pherali 2011) and many of such infrastructures have not yet been rebuilt.

2.3.5 Illiteracy

Because of global campaigns such as the Education for All (EFA) and the agenda of the Universal Primary Education (MDG #2), enrolment rates have increased in all LDCs but the mid-term reports of both the MDGs (UNDP 2013) and the EFA (EFA UNESCO 2013) show that there are about 57 million children out of school and around 250 million children who go to school, lack basic skills. The increasing rate of enrolment was not supported by proportionate measures to provide quality education such as learning materials and trained teachers. Moreover, despite the priority of the EFA (as the Fourth Goal) movement to reduce adult literacy by 50 percent, more than 40 percent of the adult population in LDCs still lack basic reading and writing skills (UNDP 2013), which is significantly low in comparison to the world average (80.9%). The illiteracy figure only accounts for whether the people are able to read and write. If we consider the more comprehensive definition of literacy such as the one quoted below, the lack of such literacy becomes the locus of all major problems that LDCs have been enduring for a long time.

Literacy is a key component of adult learning and education. It involves a continuum of learning and proficiency levels which allows citizens to engage in lifelong learning and participate fully in community, workplace and wider society. It includes the ability to read and write, to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials, as well as the ability to solve problems in an increasingly technological and information-rich environment. (UNESCO 2016a, 2)

The rate of return from the investment in education is very low in all LDCs because of the lack of either quality education or the mismatch between the credentials acquired by their citizens and the skills required to be involved in developmental activities. The problem is both the mismatch and the overall inflation of educational qualifications: there is growing oversupply of graduates in some disciplines such as humanities and social sciences and undersupply of

quality human resources in some disciplines such as agronomy, medicine and forestry. Many youths who spend several years for higher education are frustrated they do not get opportunities to utilise their qualifications. For example, in Nepal, thousands of graduates compete for a small number of government jobs that are announced very occasionally. The competition is very tough but only a handful of graduates have become able to achieve the posts. Most often the reason behind the failure of the majority of the competitors is not the lack of qualification required for the job. It is simply because the numbers of jobs are not sufficient to absorb them. The only choice left for them is to seek low-level labour jobs in BRICS and other newly industrial nations like Qatar.

2.3.6 Gender inequality

Gender inequality is another pressing problem of LDCs. Inequality is found in various sectors; however, inequality in educational attainment is one of the most challenging factors. Previous researches have shown that women's education is positively associated with the progress of their family and society (UNESCO 2003). Their capability to nurture the family including the investments of children's education has 'pronounced effects on the human capital of future generations' (Lowell, Docquier, and Marfouk 2009, 298). For example, better educated mothers can be better teachers of their children at home. But despite several efforts including the MDGs, the condition of women has not improved in all LDCs.

The majority of the women in LDCs are not able to pursue employment in service sector because of the lack of education and unavailability of job opportunities that suit them. Most of the women are forced to do unpaid works – that fall in the vulnerable employment category (ILO 2011) – such as household chores and agriculture related labour such as working in the farm, and providing assistance to their male counterparts in agriculture sector. In the latest report of the

Food and Agriculture of the United Nations (FAO), Jacques Diouf, the Director-General of FAO, claims that 'the agriculture sector is underperforming in many developing countries [...because] women do not have equal access to the resources and opportunities they need to be more productive'(FAO 2011, vi). Diouf further argues that 'we must promote gender equality and empower women in agriculture to win, sustainably, the fight against hunger and extreme poverty' (ibid).

The report found a widespread gender-gap basically in inheritance of assets, inputs and services that includes land, livestock, labour, education, extension and financial services, and technology. The gender gap has negatively affected not only the agriculture sector but also 'the broader economy and society as well as on women themselves' (p. 5). As a result, the Gender Inequality Index (GII – a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market) of the LDC is 0.594 which is higher in comparison to the world average (0.492); the best performer is Norway with the lowest GII of 0.075 (UNDP 2011).

2.4 Causes of problems

The discourse related to the evolution of LDCs as a special category of countries focuses on the problems and challenges faced by these countries and the role of international community for their economic development. This discourse sees LDCs only through a deficit perspective. From this view, it is only the support that donor agencies provide—but not the potential of LDCs to solve their problems—that matters the most. All the progress made towards this categorisation, especially through the initiative of the United Nations, are based on this deficit perspective which stems from the development model noted above. To be precise, the process of modernisation, which is understood as development, has a linear stage or route that LDCs must

follow to catch up with developed countries; LDCs will benefit from 'comparative advantage' if they are brought under the global framework of trade and development; LDCs cannot develop on their own hence they should be provided with financial assistance by donor countries; and all LDCs are equipped with adaptive capacity to use modern technologies developed in the Western industrial nations.

Analysis of the problems and challenges of LDCs in the light of some of the critiques of development model indicates that the categorisation of LDCs stems from the modernist development paradigm that are based on some economic indicators such as rates of economic growth or Gross Domestic Production rate. In what follows, I argue that the economic indicators of development such as the GDP has become a hegemonic agenda; but it has failed to explain various problems and challenges faced by LDCs such as poverty, malnutrition, and diseases. My argument here is that perpetuated poverty in LDCs is not solely the result of the historical deficit of those countries or the people living there. Either partly or fully, the poverty in LDCs is caused by the world system that created the poverty in some parts of the world and prosperity in other parts.

To critique both the development model and the process of LDC categorisation—on the basis of the four underlying assumptions discussed above—I use some of the issues raised by two major theories of development: world system theory and dependency theory. These two theories have some nuances; however, both have some common features hence they are taken as two variants of the underdevelopment model. The major argument of the underdevelopment model is: progress and prosperity of one country or society comes at the expense of a number of countries and societies. In this sense, LDCs have remained underdeveloped because there are obstacles created by the world system (Santos 1970). These obstacles persist and continuously

perpetuate the status quo between the developed countries and LDCs because of the capitalistic world system. The capitalistic system is highly interconnected and interdependent and full of unequal distribution of power relations (Regmi 2016a). As a result of this unequal power dynamics, the LDCs have been 'more vulnerable, more dependent, and subjected to greater exploitation' than advanced developing countries such as BRICS (Jaffee 1998, 152).

A series of events, mainly the European colonisation, the debt crises of the 1980s, the structural adjustment of the 1980s and the1990s, and the domination of neoliberal globalisation orchestrated by the Bretton Woods institutions, have been some of the major causes of the problems and challenges that are discussed below.

2.4.1 Exploitation

Critiques (Frank 1969, 46) of the dominant developmental model argue that rich nations 'did not develop by relying on their own effort'; rather the wealth and prosperity of those countries came from the exploitation of human and natural resources of LDCs. The exploitation started during the colonial period mostly led by Western colonial powers but this trend continues in different forms. Three major strategies used by developed countries to exploit LDCs are as follows. The first strategy is 'unequal exchange' of commodity that contrasts with the assumptions made in the Ricardo's law of 'comparative advantage'. As pointed out by Prebisch (1950), the law of comparative advantage results into imbalance in import and export mechanism between countries. For example, 'a nation wants the world market price of its exports to exceed the world market price of its imports' (Jaffee 1998, 153). Generally, LDCs export primary goods and import manufactured goods in return because they lack comparative capacity to produce and export manufactured goods. But this exchange comes with a heavy price because LDCs have to pay far higher prices than they get from selling primary goods. The arguments made by Frank

and Prebisch are relatively older, however, in present context of neoliberal globalisation such practices are executed by the Bretton Woods institutions, which impose the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and similar trade regulations in LDCs.

Critics of development model reject the idea that LDCs having close links with developed nations have the highest chance of development. For example, Frank (1969) found a negative correlation between economic ties between developed and underdeveloped nations and the potential economic prosperity of the latter. That is to say, stronger the ties with the core, weaker the chance of achieving prosperity. Bunker (1984) did a historical study to test Frank's claim and found that 'despite its long history of supplying valued commodities for world trade, the Amazon Basin has remained one of the poorest areas in the world, and the economic and social systems on which many of its inhabitants depend are seriously threatened by disruption or extinction' (p. 1022). Hence, as argued by Santos (1970, 235), the alleged backwardness of LDC economies is not due to the 'lack of integration with capitalism but that, on the contrary, the most powerful obstacles to their full development come from the way in which they are joined to this international system and its laws of development'. The idea behind 'advantage of backwardness' can be challenged because technological inventions made in the west may not help LDCs to develop. I would argue that LDCs may not get proper benefit from new inventions because either the new technologies are carefully transferred to maintain dependence and exploitation, or even if they are diffused, the majority of the LDC citizens cannot afford them because of various trade regulations such as patent and property rights. For example, in recent decades the use of computers, mobile phones, and Internet has dramatically increased in some LDCs. However, only the consumption of those products has increased not the proper utilisation of those technologies for the sustainable development of LDC societies (Shields 2011).

Extraction of human and natural resources for exporting to developed countries from LDCs manifests another form of exploitation. According to Frank (1978), accumulation of wealth by Western nations commenced in the mercantile period (1500-1770), carried through into industrial capitalism (1770-1870), and culminated into imperialism (1870-1930). But more unfortunate is the fact that the developed countries made no significant attempt to mobilise their wealth to LDCs so that so-called 'trickledown effect' would benefit the latter. Rather, the Western corporations having offshore businesses in LDCs have sent the accumulated wealth back to their home countries. This tendency of exploitation by accumulation is also known as 'repartition of profits' (Jaffee 1998). In the context of neoliberal globalisation, multinational corporations that operate under the auspices of supranational financial institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO extract not only natural resources but also human resources for their own benefit. The headquarters of these corporations, which are operated by a handful of business elites, are located in Western countries.

2.4.2 Global capitalism

Critics or global capitalism argue that the capitalist world system has been a major cause of the underdevelopment of LDCs. Considering the contributions of three major scholars Amin (1976), Frank (1969) and Wallerstein (1974) is important to explore how global capitalism has perpetuated poverty in LDCs. According to Wallerstein (1974), countries are divided into three categories: the core, the periphery and the semi-periphery. The core countries are advanced economies such as North American and Western European countries specialised in the production of manufactured goods. They are powerful both politically and militarily hence they are able to enforce unequal exchange-relations favourable to them. The countries in the second category, that is, the periphery countries, include exploited regions that export raw materials and low-wage products to the core countries. They are the weakest ones both militarily and politically. Finally, the countries in the third category (the semi-periphery) connect the core and the periphery. These are the countries gradually moving towards industrial production. Even if they are exploited by the core they benefit by exploiting the countries in the periphery. In this way, all countries, either willingly or forcefully, are caught up in global capitalist system.

Frank (1966) critiqued the idea that underdeveloped countries follow the same stages of development. He argued that 'underdevelopment is not original or traditional and that neither the past nor the present of the underdeveloped countries resembles in any important respect the past of the now developed countries' (Frank 1966, 28). The colonies, the semi-colonies, and the neocolonies existed primarily for the benefit of the capitalist metropolis. In this respect, development and underdevelopment are the two aspects of the same world economy where development of one part comes from the proportionate underdevelopment of the other parts (Frank 1978). Hence, 'the internal class structures of satellite societies are reflections of wider economic structures' (Harrison 2005, 81) of the global capitalist system. The capitalist class in periphery maintains alliance with the capitalist system of the core, something called 'comprador relationship'. As the stimulus for economic development in periphery comes from the core, the latter becomes able to control the socioeconomic activities of the former hence 'economic development is not self-controlled and self-sustaining' (Youngman 2000, 62). This implies that LDCs are not only exploited by the wealthy nations of the West but also by some of the rising economies such as BRICS located in the semi-periphery of the larger capitalistic world system.

According to Amin (1976), the capitalist economic system is closely linked with the expansion of imperialism and these two phenomena exist in a symbiotic relation supporting each other for their mutual benefits. Amin argues that for the expansion of capitalism, the existence of

two ideal types of capacities is necessary: the capacity to produce and the capacity to consume. Capacity to produce entails that private sector investment must be encouraged for maximising production and supplying of commodities; but to materialise this, the second condition that is 'capacity to consume' must be fulfilled. If consumers are not capable of buying those commodities, production would shrink. For enhancing consumer capacity, commodity prices should be reduced and wages of consumers should be increased. Hence, if production and consumption are limited within Western nations, eventually capitalism would fall. That is to say, to sustain global capitalism the expansion of imperialism is an obligatory condition. In the context of economic globalisation, the production and consumption functions are maintained through the imposition of neoliberal policies such as free trade.

2.4.3 Colonial legacy

Scholars associated with the notion of underdevelopment are concerned with and see as a major problem the economic dependence of LDCs on the countries at the core (Amin 1976, Santos 1970). Others, who take race and gender into consideration (McClintock 1995, Mamdani 2001), argue that the legacy of colonialism is affecting LDC societies even after the direct colonial rule has been over. They claim that inequality and perpetuated status quo – in terms of gender, race, and class that colonised nations are facing these days – were instigated and institutionalised in colonial period.

According to Santos (1970), taking class structure into consideration, the social structure of dependent countries are determined by the international relations these countries had with their respective colonisers that function within the global capitalistic framework. Immersed into colonial trade mechanism, colonised nations became export oriented. The feudal lords of the colonised nations, who have special authority under the aegis of colonisers, were happy to export

their commodities to Western nations, something that Amin (1976) calls, 'extroverted accumulation'. Such tendency created 'a number of structural distortions that prevented sustained and autonomous economic growth' in LDCs (Jaffee 1998, 166). Several LDCs still follow this legacy of colonialism. Caught up in the neoliberal market mechanism, many business elites of the LDCs either willing or unwillingly produce raw materials and manufactured commodities for exporting to other countries.

Besides economic legacy, many scholars claim that the problems of LDCs such as social, economic, gender and racial inequalities are the legacies of colonialism. For example, McClintock (1995), in her popular book '*Imperial Leather*' claims that 'imperialism and the invention of race were fundamental aspects of Western, industrial modernity' (p. 5). From a feminist perspective, she argues that patriarchy was a Western practice that shaped gender dynamics in colonised nations. Different laws and policies – such as marital laws, property laws, land laws, and supporting policies to implement these laws – were made and enforced by 'white men in their own interests' (McClintock 1995, 6). Such laws and policies not only provided security and maintenance to colonial enterprise but also left unpleasant traces leading to a perpetual inequality in the colonised countries.

According to Mamdani (2001), the fissures and boundaries that separate the peoples in LDCs today were drawn during the colonial period. For example, the boundaries within and across African nations, 'were drawn up with pencils and a ruler on a map at a conference table at Berlin in the 1880s' (p. 653). Moreover, after creating such boundaries, also known as 'scramble for Africa'(Harlow and Carter 2003), the colonisers were involved in creating a hierarchy among races and ethnicities. In the hierarchy, European whites were kept on the top level, 'followed by Coloureds, then Asians, then Arabs, and then Hemites (the Tutsi)' (Mamdani 2001, 654). The

ethnic groups ranked lowest in the hierarchies were considered uncivilised even compared with other native races. Analysis of the social, cultural and political legacy of colonialism in Africa led Mamdani to conclude that 'colonisation was not just about the identity of governors, that they were white or Europeans; it was even more so about the institutions they created to enable minority to rule over majority' (p. 663).

2.4.4 Western construct

Some scholars (Escobar 1988, 1992) argue that concepts such as underdevelopment, backwardness, poverty, and illiteracy—that advocates of modernisation theory take for granted—are Western constructs. These concepts are vested with political interests that benefit wealthy Western nations by obscuring and obfuscating the real problems of the southern populace. And such construction of development, in its current manifestation, started mainly after the Second World War with the commencement of the US hegemony in the world economic order as reflected in the speech by president Truman (1949) noted above. This construction of development was institutionalised through the establishment of different 'apparatuses of knowledge production' – such as the World Bank and the USAID – that presented 'a whole new political economy of truth' in a more legitimate and authoritative manner (Escobar 1992, 24) labelling many countries as underdeveloped or LDCs.

The Western construction of development reflects a 'geopolitical imagination' that not only neglects the non-Western worldviews and understandings, but also comes with an intention to subordinate and assimilate LDCs into the capitalist system that celebrates Western culture and benefits its economy (Rist 2008, Slater 1992, 1993). The Western construction of development is based on its intellectual tradition of European Enlightenment that believed in rationality and followed by the sense that technical procedures are needed for understanding and solving social

problems. And the personnel who could perform these tasks are not peasants working for their subsistence farming in the local villages of LDCs but the development professionals trained in Western academic institutions and the hegemony of supranational organisations such as the World Bank and the USAID, who hold authority to analyse the problems of 'others' and impose readymade models of development embedded in the rationale of modernity.

As the construction of development has its bases in the Western capitalistic geopolitical imagination, the approaches taken so far in the name of 'developing the LDCs', continue to be 'top-down, ethnocentric, and technocratic' (Escobar 1995, 44). This deficit approach treats LDC people as backward, uncivilised and traditional. It attempts to measure their progress and regress in technical units such as level of poverty, literacy percentage, and economic growth. Such units are presented in statistical figures so as to devise so-called evidence-based scientific development plans. This technical and rational discourses have a hallucinating effect on LDC citizens who happen to 'think of themselves as inferior, underdeveloped, and ignorant'(Escobar 1995, 52). In this construction, LDC citizens represent a homogenous group of people standing in binary opposition with their superior, developed and educated counterparts of the Western world.

A retrospective exploration of those major strategies – used by colonising powers for exploiting LDCs – shows that these countries are 'much better off in their traditional ways of life, by comparison with what foreign capital is pushing and pulling them into' (Baran 1973, 330). One of the examples illustrating this conclusion comes from Rodney (1981) who did a historical study of Africa and found that African countries were better than Europe at some point in history. Unequal trade relations practiced mainly in colonial period helped European colonisers to achieve what they call 'modernity' but Africa bogged down into vicious circle of

poverty (Rodney 1981). This also supports the fact that the number of countries in LDC category has increased from 25 in 1971 to 48 in 2016.

2.5 Summary

To sum up, this Chapter explored the historical evolution of LDCs as a special category of countries within the ideological framework of development model. This category was conceived to channel special support measures from the donor countries, however, in reality LDCs have not achieved expected progress and prosperity because donor support has not been geared towards LDCs sustainable development. No effort has been made to transform LDCs into self-dependent countries hence all developmental efforts have helped to widen the gulf between the developed countries and LDCs. As noted by some scholars (Santos-Paulino 2007), international community has failed to reduce poverty because foreign aids provided for promoting economic growth in LDCs have mainly contributed to the growth of imports.

This Chapter presented some of the major problems and challenges of LDCs: weak productivity, poverty, unemployment, internal conflict, illiteracy and gender inequality. Drawing from some critical theories, mainly underdevelopment theory and world system theory, this Chapter identified four major causes behind the underdevelopment of LDCs: continuous exploitation from the Western countries and multinational corporations located in the Western countries, the global capitalistic system which continues by creating inequality between nations and individuals, the colonial legacy that created fissures and stratifications in LDC societies, and the construction of hegemonic Western discourse that reproduces inequality in different forms and shapes. What appears very crucial while presenting the history of LDC categorization – in the light of some critical social theories such as dependency, world system and post-colonial

theory – is the fact that these countries' characteristics are produced through particular discourses and vocabularies: poverty, illiteracy, underdeveloped, and so on.

One of the solutions discussed for some time now, within the development and academic community, is the right approach to education. As I discussed in Chapter 1, lifelong learning has been regarded as a suitable educational policy for solving all those problems and challenges. And my major question in these endeavours have been what perspective of lifelong learning is being promoted by the World Bank and to what extent is such perspective suitable as per the contextual realities of LDCs. To explore the problems and challenges of LDCs and the role of education in solving them, in the next Chapter, I explore the case of Nepal, one of the 48 LDCs, in greater detail.

Chapter 3: Nepal

In this Chapter I explore the political, economic, and social history of Nepal in general and its history of education in particular with a focus on the educational projects and programmes that were funded by Nepal's donors especially the World Bank.



Figure 2 Map of Nepal

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal

3.1 Socioeconomic history

Nepal is one of the Asian LDCs. Its economy largely depends on financial assistance provided by bilateral and multilateral agencies. With a per capita income of about US\$ 730 (2014) and more than half of its 27.8 million people living on less than US\$ 2 per day, Nepal faces several challenges. A decade long armed conflict (1996 – 2006) and protracted political instability, and a massive 2015 earthquake have made Nepal a vulnerable country. Its major problems – such as poverty, illiteracy, economic vulnerability, conflict, and political instability – are similar to many LDCs that I described in Chapter 2. Hence, Nepal makes an appropriate case for exploring exogenous influence on the educational development of LDCs. More than 50 bilateral and multilateral donor agencies have been active in Nepal since the 1950s but no substantial progress has been made in terms of reducing illiteracy, poverty, and many other problems and challenges that are common to all LDCs (International Alert 2006).

As shown in the following figure Nepal's total external debt (figures in US dollars)—that is the sum of public, publicly guaranteed, and private nonguaranteed long-term debt basically to the World Bank and the IMF—is increasing each year.

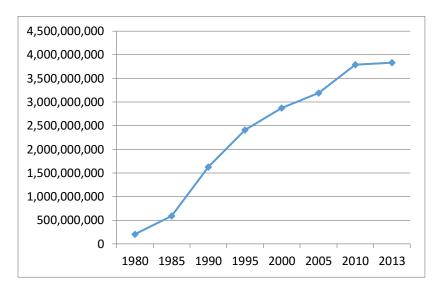


Figure 3 Nepal's external debt stocks from 1980 to 2013

Source: World Bank (2016d)

In 1980, Nepal's total external debt was US\$ 204,542,000 but in 2013 it increased 18 fold and reached US\$ 3,832,564,000. This shows that Nepal's dependence on foreign assistance has been increasing since the 1980s. Even more important is the fact that foreign assistance in the form of grants has decreased; it is only the loan that has been increasing significantly (NRC-

NFE 2000). It has direct impact on educational programmes or projects and conditionalities that are often associated with the disbursement of loans.

Nepal promulgated a new Constitution in September 2015 (GON 2015a) which during the writing of this dissertation was in the process of implementation. According to the previous constitutional provisions, in order to carry out administrative activities, Nepal was divided into 5 development regions. These development regions were further divided into 14 administrative Zones with each Zone divided into 4 to 8 local bodies called Districts. There were 75 districts in Nepal. Districts were further divided into Village Development Committees and Municipalities. The new constitution has made the provision that Nepal will be divided into seven provinces. However, as of March 2016, there is no certainty that this constitutional provision will be fully implemented because of the cultural diversity, socioeconomic inequality, and the influence of external forces.

The National Planning Commission (NPC) of Nepal is a central body created during the 1950s to make development plans for each five years. The Ministry of Education and the Department of Education are central governing agencies for Nepal's educational development. However, review of literature related to Nepal educational history shows that Nepal's educational development is mostly guided by exogenous forces. There are several other interest groups such as thousands of non-governmental organisations, financial institutions, and political groups influencing educational and other social policies of Nepal, nonetheless the World Bank appears as the major force to control educational policies and practices (Winther-Schmidt 2011).

After the abolishment of the Rana regime (1847-1951) Nepal became a democratic nation in 1951 with King as the head of the nation. The first government formed on February 18, 1951 'recognised education as the right of the people and took significant steps for its spread' (Vir

1988, 37). In 1952 a National Board of Education was set up which, in November 1953, recommended the Government appoint a National Commission for Education Planning (NEPC). This was formed with Hugh Bernard Wood, an educational expert from the US, as the Commission's advisor.

A quasi-democratic system called Panchayat was in practice from 1962 until democratic system was restored in 1990. Dor Bahadur Bista (1991)—who observed Nepalese history, culture, and politics during the early 1980s—claimed that 'the term democracy covers a multitude of political forms in Nepal' (p. 113) and 'many of the political forms that have been promoted in Nepal reflect social organisations that are essentially alien' (p. 114). Bista's claim is still valid because the major political parties of Nepal at present, such as the Nepal Communist Party Unified Marxist-Leninist (NCPUML) and the Nepali Communist Party Maoist (NCPM), are not only named after political thinkers who are alien to Nepali people such as Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Mao Zedong but they also reproduce ideologies propounded by those thinkers that do not reflect socio-political history of Nepal.

Political theories such as Marxism and Maoism, associated with those thinkers, including the term democracy, are defined according to the interests of the political parties. Those ideologies are used to launch 'social movements by firing the imagination of poor and other deprived sections of society' but the positive aspects of those philosophies—such as Marxism, Leninism and Maoism—are soon forgotten (Baral 2012, 172). Democracy, both in its theory and practice are, diluted by the selfish interest of political parties and their leaders. Even the oldest political party of Nepal, Nepali Congress Party, lacks clear understanding on what democracy really means in the context of Nepal (Baral 2012).

The rule of democracy, social welfare and good governance are often expounded by all major political parties during the time of election, but such rhetoric fades away after elections are over. All major post-election periods have experienced the same traditional melodrama where existing governments are toppled and new coalitions of different political forces are formed to rule the country. Since the restoration of democracy in 1990 more than 20 coalition governments have been formed, but none of them had the chance to rule the country for a full five-year term. Hence, political instability and lack of democracy have been one of the major factors behind increased foreign influence on Nepal's educational policy making, especially after the 1990s. What follows is a brief critical exploration of educational development in Nepal.

3.2 Educational history

3.2.1 Before 1847: Religious education influenced by India

In ancient period, especially during the Lichhavi dynasty (400 to 750) the term Nepal was used to refer only to the Kathmandu Valley: the present capital city of Nepal. According to Bista (1991), there were a 'substantial body of highly skilled and professional labourers including engineers and architects' (p.116) who might have been trained in some educational institutions that developed in some present-day Indian plains such as Taxila and Nalanda (Sen, 2015). For example, Nalanda was founded during the early fifth century but it was destroyed in the 1190s by invading armies from West Asia. The destruction of Nalanda took place between the establishment of Oxford in 1167 and the founding of Cambridge in 1209 (Sen 2015). Taxila and Nalanda universities run by Buddhist foundation were attended by students from India, China, Japan and Nepal. Nepalese scholars who attended those international universities developed the Buddhist education system in Nepal. Bista (1991) indicates that those Nepalese academic institutions developed during the Lichhavi dynasty followed indigenous literary heritage and

were based on Buddhist educational traditions. However, in the 11th century, a devout Hindu called Sankaracharya, who came from India, not only defeated the Buddhists rulers, but also attacked those institutions and destroyed their scholarly and literary products such as books and other texts (Bista 1991).

Nepal was fragmented into several small kingdoms towards the end of Malla Period (1100-1700). It was again unified during the late 1860s by Prithvi Narayan Shah, a ruler of Gorkha, also spelled as *Gurkha* (a small kingdom in Southern Nepal). Several battles were fought between the Gorkha army and those of small kingdoms during the unification period. After the Anglo-Nepal war (1814-1816) the Sugauli Treaty, signed between British East India Company and the Government of Nepal in 1816, not only fixed the political boundary of Nepal but also put the country under British hegemony. Nepal has never been a 'colonial state' (Riaz and Basu 2007, 3) like India or any other Asian or African LDCs that were fully colonised by the British or French Powers. However, the time when many countries of the global South were ruled by European colonial powers Nepal was ruled by an elite group of people known as *Ranas* from 1847 to 1950. Though kings were ceremonial heads of the nation, Ranas held the absolute power to rule the country. They exploited the country's resources for their own consumption and extravagance. According to Bista (1991, 28), 'Nepal was kept under the worst form of isolation, backwardness, and economic exploitation' during the Rana period.

As noted above, the schooling system that might have been developed before the advent of Sankaracharya was associated with Buddhist monasteries that followed Buddhist teachinglearning philosophy. But the Hindu education system introduced by Sankaracharya followed *gurukul*: a religious educational practice based on Hindu educational philosophy. There was a strong emphasis on the relationship between *guru* (teacher) and *shishya* (student) where teacher

played the role as the father and student as the son. Major components of gurukul educational system are ritual prayers, development of priesthood, and readings of religious texts. In gurukul system students (mostly boys because there was no provision for the education of girls) often left their homes and stayed at guru's residence known as *ashrams* and learning took place informally under the direct supervision of a guru. The gurukul system is appreciated mainly in Hindu mythological texts such as Mahabharata; however the flipside of this system, at least in the case of Nepal, is that to be educated in gurukul system 'one had to be born into a Caste where such an education was appropriate' (Bista 1991, 117).

The most advanced form of Hindu gurukul education system was the establishment of Sanskrit Schools known as *Pathsalas* that came into being during Rana period. But they were attended only by the students from high caste families after having certain level of linguistic skills in Sanskrit. Some of the students from upper class family, who graduated from Pathsalas, used to go to Varanasi in India for higher education (Bista 1991). The Gurukul education system that focused on religious rituals was not relevant for the majority of the people, especially to those who had to work hard—in an agricultural setting—for survival.

3.2.2 From 1847 to 1950: Western education influenced by the British

Even though Nepalese people were isolated from outside influence, the ruling class people, mainly Ranas, had frequent interaction with French and British colonial powers, especially the British East India Company, the colonial ruler of Nepal's closest neighbour India. As noted above, even if Nepal was not colonised by the British, colonial practices were executed by Rana rulers. Social reorganisation, stratification, and creating division and hierarchy were some of strategies used by colonisers to create social inequality and tension so as to make them the masters of superior cultures (McMichael 2012). In almost the same vein, Rana rulers created

further fissures in Nepali society which had been suffering historically from social stratification based on Hindu caste system. Some of the seemingly progressive steps taken by Ranas – such as establishment of some schools – were geared towards making themselves superior and capable of ruling the general populace.

Jung Bahadur Rana (1817-1877), the first Rana prime minister, who visited France and Britain during the early 1850s, was highly influenced by the achievements made by the outside world. He pleased the East India Company and got some parts of land—Banke, Bardia, Kailali and Kanchanpur-returned to Nepal that were ceded by British through Sugauli Treaty (signed in 1816). He was highly influenced by European styles of buildings, lifestyles and other scientific and technological advancements of the Western world. After returning from his visit to Britain he set up an English School, known as the Durbar High School, in the vicinity of his palace in 1853. If students were not the members of Rana family, they were not allowed to study in Durbar High School. Ranas did not want Nepalese people to be educated, lest educated people could be an instrument for political change (Bista 1991). Some of the successors of Jung Bahadur, who appeared to be more democratic than others who ruled the country, attempted to make education accessible to general people. For example, when Dev Shumsher Rana became Nepal's prime minister in March 1901 he allowed primary school to open in other parts of the country. Almost 200 schools were opened during the first decade of the twentieth century, but all of them were shut down when Chandra Shumsher succeeded him.

As noted above, Ranas feared that if people were educated they might topple their oligarchic rules –such as transferring the post of prime minister to brothers of Ranas—based on the familial linage. The students of Durbar High School were only the children of Ranas and upper caste elites who supported Rana's oligarchy. Durbar High School followed the curriculum

derived from the British model that comprised of subjects such as English and mathematics. History and geography were also taught but the contents of the those subjects were 'confined to that of British Isles and India' (Bista 1991, 119). Bista claims that the hidden intention behind the inclusion of curricular contents was 'to instil a sense of inferiority' particularly for the debasement of 'the ethnic heritage of the different Nepali peoples' (p. 119).

The graduates of Durbar High School enjoyed a lot of prestige and power. They were also appointed by Ranas to important government positions. There was almost no provision of adult education during the Rana period. However, to provide higher education opportunities to those graduates, Tri-Chandra College, the first higher education institution of Nepal, was founded in 1918 and followed the curricula developed by University of Patna, India. Some graduates of Tri-Chandra College were sent not only to India but also to Japan and Europe for further education and training; they enjoyed key government positions after their return. An important point to note here is that even if it is hard to state precisely how those foreign graduates manipulated Nepalese education, there is almost no doubt that educational policy and practices developed by their leadership brought a strong Western, especially British, influence to Nepalese education system.

Indian Independence from the British rule in 1947 made some impacts on both political change—that finally ended Rana rule in 1950—and educational development in Nepal. Several Basic Schools were founded following the principles of Mahatma Gandhi aimed at making individuals 'self-sufficient' through strong emphasis on 'rural vocational training' (NEPC 1956, 26). Students of Basic Schools used to learn spinning, weaving, woodworking, and agriculture as their basic skills. Other components of Basic Schools curricula included history and civics, health and physical training, cultural and recreational programme, and village improvement

projects (NEPC 1956). However, the education based on Gandhian principles did not last long mainly because values given to indigenous education was replaced by human capital values. The graduates of Gandhian schools failed to attain the privilege and prestige similar to that of the graduates of the Durbar High School in terms of gaining employment opportunities in government positions.

3.2.3 From 1950 to 1960: Western education influenced by United States

Several schools were set up during Rana rule but there were no educational policies and plans at national level to guide educational practices of those schools. To supervise existing educational facilities, including schools of different forms – such as English Schools, Basic Schools, and Pathsalas – an Education Board was established in 1952. A meeting of the Board held in November 1953 suggested to the Government of Nepal (GON) that a national commission, later named as the Nepal Education Planning Commission (NEPC), be formed to survey existing status of educational provisions and make a long term plans in the light of changed political contexts (Vir 1988). But the formation and implementation of the NEPC was not merely a parochial interest; rather it manifests a beginning of a large scale exogenous influence on educational policy development in Nepal. Hence, its creation should be understood within the larger movement of international development led by the United States, which not only supported the NEPC, but also changed Nepalese education system as per its own political imaginary of the post-war period.

Nepal and the United States established diplomatic relations in 1947. Four years later, on 23 January 1951, Nepal 'signed the General Agreement for Technical Cooperation' (Khadka 2000, 77) with the US under the Point Four Programme. This Programme was launched by the US following Truman's urge for 'making the benefits of scientific advances and industrial

progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped' (Truman 1949) countries including Nepal. Following the agreement Nepal accepted 'a first token payment of US \$2000' in January 1951 as US assistance (Whelpton 2005, 128). The US was particularly interested in making interventions in Nepal during the Cold War because of Nepal's geopolitical location in South Asia: situated between two powerful nations India and China. Hence, the General Agreement for Technical Cooperation comes as a part of Marshall Plan which US devised for serving its 'geopolitical goals in the Cold War' (McMichael 2012, 57). Any encroachment either from its Northern neighbour China or the USSR was a serious threat of communist expansion in entire South Asia. According to Khadka (2000), US foreign policy objectives of that time could be summarised as '(a) helping Nepal maintain its independence and neutrality, (b) containing the possible threat of communism, (c) supporting Nepal's development efforts to become a modernized and developed economy, and (d) enhancing Nepal's 'Western orientation' (p. 81).

3.2.3.1 Analysis of NEPC (1956)

Below I present a brief analysis of the report produced by the National Education Planning Commission (NEPC, 1956) as the first education policy of Nepal.

The report of the NEPC (1956) is not only the first educational policy but also the policy made with active involvement of an external agent. Some elites of Nepal who came into power after the end of Rana regime became influential members of the new Government of Nepal. The GON requested Paul Rose, the representative of United States Operations Mission (USOM), former name of the USAID, to provide an educational expert to formulate Nepal's national education policy. Dr Hugh B. Wood, an educational specialist from the University of Oregon, who was in India on a Fulbright teaching assignment, was sent to Kathmandu for that task

(Isaacson et al. 2001). After his arrival he was formally offered the role of Educational Advisor of the Commission headed by the chairman of the Education Board, Sardar Rudra Raj Pandey. The Commission comprised about 35 of the most educated Nepalese intellectuals. Most of them were the graduates of the Durbar High School who held different positions such as professors of Tri-Chandra College, head teachers of both Sanskrit and English Schools, and representatives from the recently formed Ministry of Education. The Commission submitted its final report to the Ministry on March 1, 1955.

The report of the NEPC has four parts and 20 Sections. The first part presents the findings of general survey made by the Commission members in terms of mapping the existing nature of education and desired need for modern education system. In the second part of the document, school education, university education and adult education are covered. Here, the NEPC appears to have introduced the concept of 'adult education' for the first time in Nepal. It introduced some new provisions for adult education such as agricultural extension programme, school-community library, and adult education programmes through cinema and radio. Teaching adults through pamphlets, bulletins, newspapers and magazines were some of the techniques that aimed at including agriculture related contents. The NEPC saw adult education as strategy to strengthen democracy, especially for the development and implementation of new constitution that replaced oligarchic Rana regime. However, adult education was understood as merely people's ability to read and write. As the report noted, 'democracy cannot flourish in a country where 98% of the people are illiterate' (NEPC 1956, 151).

The NEPC conceived of the lack of literacy skills as an impediment to instil democratic values in Nepalese adults. It did not recognise the ability and potential of Nepalese adults' skills and experiences to make their living in hardships and abject poverty, rather the Commission

characterised them as ignorant: 'All attempts to make a show of democracy will bear no fruit in our society unless the vast majority of adults, now steeped in total ignorance, are made to feel their duties and responsibilities in a democratic nation' (p. 152). Further, the NEPC report reveals that the Commission members gave almost no consideration to the intrinsic value of adult education: an understanding that adults should be educated for 'empowerment, social transformation, or personal fulfilment' (Rogers and Horrocks 2010, 5). Rather the report took adult education as an instrument to complement primary school education: 'only literate adults can fully know the value of education for their children ... as adults become literate they will want even more education for their children' (p. 151). This approach contradicts a more comprehensive approach adopted by UNESCO that 'aims at simultaneously educating children, youth and adults...thereby speeding the transition from an illiterate to a literate society' (Bhola 1984).

Western style education, education experienced by many Nepali elites, and most importantly Dr Wood himself, was seen as an unavoidable condition for the 'success of democracy' and hence modernisation:

There is a tremendous shortage of trained personnel to tackle the many problems – to help Nepal catch up with the progress of the twentieth century. Ninety-eight percent of the people are illiterate; only about 300 complete High School each year... about 100 complete colleges, there are no recognised technical or engineering colleges, no teachers' colleges, no business administration training, no medical or dental colleges or nurses' training; there is no university. The lack of educated personnel, of an educational system, and of institutions is Nepal's biggest problem (NEPC 1956, 23).

A critical analysis of the NEPC report shows the extent to which the members of the Commission were influenced by some of the key underlying assumptions of development model, mainly of modernisation theory, such as the motive for changing traditional and primitive society to a more advanced and modern one akin to the ones seen in Western nations including the US. The report does not recognise the indigenous ways of living such as subsistence farming and implementation of a vast treasure of knowledge and skills possessed by the elders of traditional Nepalese communities. Previous researches (Rappleye 2009) have shown that it was only Dr Wood who singlehandedly, in his capacity as an expert, implanted US education system in Nepal. While I partially agree with such findings, what is missing in the existing body of literature is the fact that some intelligent Nepalese personnel, including the members of the Commission, were not so naïve as they have been characterised in the literature. The reality, I would argue, is that those intellectuals were trained in the schools such as Durbar High School which had already diffused hegemonic discourse of modernisation theory. From that view, Nepal had to become a modern state capable of following the developmental route and all the stages: the primitive, the intermediate, and the modern (Rostow 1990, Parsons 1971).

The Commission saw rapid urbanisation and importation of goods such as garments that replaced traditional practices of Nepali citizens being self-dependent by weaving their own clothes—as inevitable process towards modernisation. Hence traditional skills such as weaving clothes were discouraged by introducing new education system that put strong emphasis on assessment and certification.

The NEPC report also manifests how different exogenous forces become active in different times to guide educational policies and programmes of Nepal. The report blamed the educational system developed during the Rana regime; because of the British influence, it was not based on the needs of Nepal. But the members of the Commission, including Dr Wood, did not recognise how the educational provisions included in the NEPC were influenced by the US

education system. The following quote gives a clear indication that the Commission wanted to replace British Education system that was in practice in Nepal during Rana regime:

As in India, we have a system of education imposed from the outside world in which each unit dominates the next lower unit. Patna University dominates the college, the college dominates the high school, the high school and the middle school the primary school. To remove these defects it is necessary to insure that our university is inspired by a new sense of values and an expression or an embodiment of national ideals rather than a ready-made imposition from above or cheap import from outside (NEPC 1956, 128-129).

With growing US influence on Nepal's development, especially the ambition of Nepalese leaders to convert traditional Nepal into a modern nation, the First Five Year Plan (FYP 1956-1961) was prepared by newly established National Planning Commission (NPC Nepal 1956). Development of the education sector became a major part of the First FYP; the recommendations made by the NEPC provided a blueprint. In this sense, the NEPC can be regarded as foundational to the development of the 'modern education system' in Nepal. However, towards the end of 1950s there was some resistance to the hegemonic influence of the US on Nepal's educational development. Firstly, many people, especially the Marxist-oriented political groups, were 'suspicious of American motives'; many schools opened through local initiatives wanted no connection with the programmes supported by the US' (Bista 1991, 123).

Secondly, after the death of King Tribhuvan Shah in 1955, his son Mahendra was ascended to the throne. Unlike his father—who mostly relied on India and the US—Mahendra was more strategic in maintaining international relations. To break US hegemony on Nepal's polity of the Cold War period he made a royal visit to Moscow in 1958. Following his visit the USSR sent three planes to Nepal for the development of its civil aviation (Whelpton 2005). This move of the new king reflects Nepal's initiative towards balancing the hostile powers of the Cold

War and discouraging US hegemony in Nepal. Amidst this resistance a new Director of the USOM, Harold Weiner, became aware that the heavy-handedness of Dr Wood in Nepal was not only criticised but it was also going to 'imperil the entire US donor presence in Nepal' (Rappleye 2009, 274). To reverse the situation, Weiner took away Wood's power by 'taking away his official jeep [with Nepalese administrators trained in the US] ...and freezing all funds under Wood's direct control' (ibid).

To sum, Nepal's educational policy development, especially between 1950 and 1960, was led by the US. Even though Ranas were ousted and Nepal was declared a democratic state (for the first time in history) democratic practices were almost non-existent. The king was holding absolute power and there were no elections for nearly a decade. The general election held in 1959 to create a democratic parliament was won by the Nepali Congress Party (NCP, one of the largest political forces until now). However, there was 'widespread unrest in different parts of the country against the NCP and, consequently, against the government' (Bista 1991, 103). In 1960, Mahendra decided that multiparty democracy was not an appropriate political system for Nepal. He not only closed down the parliament and imprisoned all Cabinet members but also introduced new political system called Panchayat: a centralised system of governance where the King held absolute power.

3.2.4 From 1960 to 1980: Nationalised education influenced by Monarchy

As noted above, King Mahendra appeared as an active Nepalese ruler capable of balancing diplomatic relations not only between the global rivals of the Cold War but also two hostile regional powers: India and China. Compared with his father King Tribhuvan, Mahendra preferred stronger alliance with the USSR than the US at global level and with China rather than India at regional level as a way to strengthen Nepal's diplomatic relations during the mid-1950s and early 1960s (Whelpton 2005). In October 1961 Mahendra visited Chinese influential communist president Mao Zedong. Two major outcomes of the visit were: China's approval of Nepalese claim that the disputed peak of Mt Everest belonged to Nepal; and China's agreement to construct a road from Kathmandu to Nepal-Tibet boarder (Upadhya 2012). India perceived the new relationship between China and Nepal, especially the construction of the road connecting Nepal and Tibet, as its security threat. Mahendra was not particularly interested in imposing Mao's communist ideology on Nepal; however, his moves were aimed at striking a balance between two hostile powers, and especially for counterweighting Indian as well as US influence on Nepal (Upadhya 2012).

Mahendra was in a critical situation when 'India imposed an unofficial economic blockade towards the end of 1962' (Whelpton 2005, 99). However, the outbreak of war between India and China in October 1962 made Mahendra's role more crucial for India, especially for defending against Chinese invasion along its Himalayan boarder. Increasing criticisms of the US influence following Dr Wood's heavy-handedness, on the one hand, and tensions between Nepal's close neighbours India and China, on the other, provided Mahendra with an opportunity to bring Nepal's polity under his full control. The first Nepalese experiment with democracy came to an end in December 1960. Mahendra 'dissolved parliament, jailed the prime minister and most of the elected leaders, and abolished multiparty democracy claiming it was incompatible with Nepalese traditions and needs' (Upadhya 2012, 3). And finally, in 1962 he introduced a new political system, the Panchayat: a quasi-democratic political system with king as the sovereign ruler. The word Panchayat has a root in Vedic tradition in which five elders well-versed in Hindu religion used to advise and govern villages in traditional Nepal (Riaz and Basu 2007).

In the Panchayat regime the king held all executive, legislative, and judicial powers through which he would 'exercise his authority with the assistance of a specifically selected development bureaucracy and royal rule would ultimately depend upon the axis of military and bureaucracy' (Riaz and Basu 2007, 47). There was a four-tier political structure: Village Panchayat, District Panchayat, Zonal Panchayat and National Panchayat. The Village Panchayat was a local governing body comprised of eleven members elected from the adult population of each Village. The political structure immediately above the Village Panchayat was the District Panchayat which also comprised of 11 members but they were not elected directly from the people but from the members of Village Panchayat within a district. As there were 14 administrative Zones 'all eleven members of the District Panchayat in a Zone would form the Zonal Assembly, which would elect the Zonal Panchayat' (Khadka 1986, 433). Finally, the members of the Zonal Assembly would form the Electoral College for selecting and sending representatives from each district to the national legislature to form the National Panchayat. The National Panchayat was a national governing body formed through a complex voting system that also included members from diverse professional organisations, class-based unions, and members of the Zonal Panchayat (Riaz and Basu 2007).

As far as the educational development during Panchayat regime is concerned there was a strong motivation towards nationalism. The government appointed the All Round National Education Committee in 1961 to provide recommendations for the Second Five Year Plan, 1962-1956 (NPC Nepal 1962). The GON also set up the National Education Advisory Board in 1968. However, those two policy initiatives were negligent in comparison to the National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971) that 'brought schools and education institutions under much tighter central control' according to the spirit of the Panchayat regime (Rappleye 2011, 28). The NESP

was formed in 1971 and was gradually implemented in all 75 districts by 1975 as an integral part of the Fourth Five Year Plan, 1970–1975 (NPC Nepal 1970). In fact, the NESP was the major educational policy change in Nepal after the implementation of the NEPC in 1956 that was spearheaded by Dr Wood as the Commission's advisor. In a sense, in terms of exogenous influence on Nepal's policy making, the NESP can be regarded as 'Nepal's declaration of independence from U.S. policy dominance' (Sellar 1981, 11).

3.2.4.1 Analysis of the National Education System Plan

Below I present a brief analysis of the National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971) as the second major educational policy document of Nepal.

In the history of Nepal's educational development, the NESP (1971) constitutes the second major education policy document of Nepal. Unlike NEPC (1956), the NESP was devised with the involvement and leadership of more Nepalese educationists. In this sense, the NESP was an attempt to resist educational models imposed by the West. According to Bista, unlike NEPC, the NESP opened avenues to devise educational plans and programmes 'based on the perceived needs of the common people' (Bista 1991, 125). My analysis of the NESP report in light of the existing body of scholarly literature shows at least three distinctive features of the NESP.

Firstly, all schools and colleges owned by communities were nationalised (except Sanskrit Pathsalas) and fully supported by the government with an increased educational budget. The Ministry of Education was the largest ministry among all the ministries of the Government of Nepal in terms of budget. A full implementation of the NESP at national level was made only after it was proved successful in some districts of Nepal. The implementation process that started from two districts (Kaski and Chitwan) was enacted in all 75 districts by 1975. The NESP

attempted to 'create a single unified system of public education with a centralised vision for the sector in which district education offices would be empowered to administer schools' (Carney and Bista 2009, 195). As it attempted to ensure 'free, and high quality state education' (p. 196), education providers from private sector were highly discouraged.

Secondly, 'the NESP called for a vocationalisation of all secondary schools' hence 'all upper secondary students in Nepal took a small percentage of vocational courses in addition to regular subjects' (Sellar 1981, 9). The aim of vocationalisation was to produce basic-level skilled workforce for supporting national development activities. Vocational courses such as agriculture, home science and health education taught in secondary schools focused on functional adult literacy programmes (Belbase 1981). The NESP took adult education as 'a vital factor in promoting all-round development of illiterate adults in the context of national development' (p. 167). The NESP aimed at launching adult education programmes in two forms: (a) literacy extension programme and (b) functional adult education programme (UNESCO 2006). According to Belbase (1981), the objectives of the functional literacy programme were: 'to enable illiterate adults to master simple numerical skills along with reading and writing; to train adults in the vocation they are involved in and thereby increase their efficiency; to teach them about agricultural practises, cleanliness, sanitation, health care, and the political system' (Belbase 1981, 188).

Thirdly, the NESP brought a provision of sending 'college students out to teach in rural communities' as a part of the National Development Service (Rappleye 2009, 283). Spending a year in rural areas by working with rural people—mainly participating in development activities including teaching in local schools—was a compulsory course requirement for obtaining a post-graduate degree from Tribhuvan University: the only university in Nepal. The National

Development Service (NDS) system was started in 1974 with almost no external support except a small amount of financial assistance from the UNICEF and the Canadian International Development Research Centre (IDRC)' (Yadama and Messerschmidt 2004, 108). A team of IDRC scholars, who were interested in understanding Study and Service linkage, found that the NDS programme launched in Nepal was very effective for both postgraduate students and rural communities (Fussell and Quarmby 1974).

The NDS programme 'provided a vital and significant learning experience both for the participating youth and their host communities' (Yadama and Messerschmidt 2004, 108). The fundamental objective of the NDS programme was to 'make the community the classroom', which appeared as an act of transforming higher education beyond the contemporary norms of offering only theoretical bookish knowledge. Hence, the NDS was a novel practice to expose young students to 'the realities of life and realities of development in the rural areas' (Yadama and Messerschmidt 2004, 109). Hence, major changes brought by the NESP in Nepal can be summarised as (a) vocationalisation of secondary education, (b) increased financing in education from the government including free primary education, (c) production of teaching-learning materials mainly textbooks inside the country (earlier they were mostly imported from India), and (d) entrance examination for admission in higher education.

Despite those crucial steps, the NESP received much criticism mainly because it was guided by a particular kind of ideology that aimed at producing new subjects that would accept the norms of the ruling class, basically the rulers of the Panchayat regime. The overall goal of education envisaged in the NESP was narrow in focus in terms of addressing the inherent diversity of Nepalese society. The goal of education, according to the NESP report was:

to strengthen devotion to crown, country, national unity and the Panchayat system, to develop uniform traditions in education by bringing together various patterns under a single national policy, to limit the tradition of regional languages, to encourage financial and social mobility, and to fulfil manpower requirements essential for national development (NESP 1971, 1)

As articulated in the quote above the overarching goal of education was to create a popular faith in the monarchy and Panchayat system itself. Diversity in terms of Nepalese culture and language were perceived as barriers to educational expansion, development and national integration. Political parties and ethnic-based groups were explicitly excluded from policy formation and implementation process (Caddell 2007). Political representatives elected to form Village Panchayat were mostly the leaders of feudal groups, often from elite class of people having strong connection with the politicians holding positions at the District, Zonal and National Panchayat. As some of the members of National Panchayat were directly appointed by the King there was little chance for other peoples, mainly from ethnic minorities, to be appointed in governing bodies.

Therefore, the NESP did not last long mainly because of its inherent ambivalence: on the one hand the NESP wanted liberation from the Western educational paradigm mainly dominated by the US; on the other hand, it wanted to celebrate the epistemology of the ruling elite group. It created contradictions not only among policy makers, including bureaucrats, but also among some intellectual elite groups. Hence, towards the end of the 1970s there was strong opposition from the people of upper class, especially against the provision of entrance examination to get admission to postgraduate studies. According to Bista (1991), 'some of those in higher positions became concerned that their own children might not be able to achieve the same status if they were to fail entrance examinations' (p. 127).

Amidst growing dissatisfaction, a group of university students marched to the Pakistan Embassy on April 6, 1979 'ostensibly protesting the execution of Pakistan's former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto' (Whelpton 2005, 107). However, police heavy-handedness against students' demonstration led to the escalation of protests against the government itself. The consequent negotiation between government and protesting students led to an agreement. The agreement included the provision of automatic university entrance for all who had passed School Leaving Certificate: the final examination of school education. The students' protest further escalated when some communist fractions started demonstration against the Panchayat regime.

A referendum was held in 1980 to determine whether Nepal should opt for multiparty system or continue to operate under Panchayat system with appropriate reforms. The second option was won through referendum by a small margin, subsequently the King endorsed the partyless Panchayat system. The Constitution of Nepal was amended for the third time in light of the referendum result. The new provision provided spaces for nominating a small number of parliament members from among academicians, representatives of special class organisations (such as ex-military, women, peasants, and labour) and from ethnic minorities. However, the absolute power to nominate those parliament members was held by the King himself.

The NESP collapsed almost completely by the end of 1979. 'What replaced the NESP was not the product of policy or of any commission' (Bista 1991, 127) at national level, rather, some short-term educational projects launched by the initiative of donors mainly the World Bank were introduced.

3.3 Education after the 1980s

Towards the end of the 1980s, the Soviet Union was losing its power and the bipolar world order was shifting towards a unipolar world controlled by the US. Through Marshall Plan

the US had achieved its desired objective – 'the open world economy' – through which it could directly invest in developing countries and get desirable returns. In fact, through Marshall Plan the US was providing credits to LDCs for the sake of making them able to buy its own commodities such as food, improved seeds, machineries and other supplies. Supply of those commodities accelerated the dependency of LDCs on the US economy. LDCs were in need of more loans not only for sustaining their fragile economy but also for repayment of existing debts. The oil crisis of the mid 1970s further deepened the problem. Higher oil price 'accounted for more than 25% of the total debt of the third world' (McMichael 2012, 115). Basically in the name of 'debt management' the Bretton Wood institutions re-emerged as powerful global actors. Even though about '60% of third world debt was with private banks' located in the richest Western nations mainly in the US 'the IMF assumed a supervisory status implementing Structural Adjustment Policies'(McMichael 2012, 116) in almost all LDCs including Nepal.

Even though the cause of increasing debt of LDCs was obvious – increasing dependency on US commodities and oil crisis – debt was defied as liquidity problem of the individual countries. The Bretton Woods institutions blamed LDCs' social policies for their inability to pay loans and stabilise their economy. Changing their social policies including education became a requirement for obtaining loans from the Bank and IMF. Some of those requirements included: 'drastic reduction of public spending'; currency devaluation (inflating prices of imports and reduce export prices to improve the balance of trade); and 'privatisation of state enterprises to free the market' (McMichael 2012, 118). These adjustments in existing social policies were obligatory requirements for obtaining loans from the Bank and IMF. However, a crucial point to note here is that no governments of LDCs including Nepal rejected those requirements, at least, at its initial stage. As I noted in Chapter 2 these governments were persuaded by the ideological

discourse that pointed to how the miraculous economic growth achieved by some of the newly industrialised nations—such as Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, collectively known as Asian Tigers—had been the result of 'outward looking economic policies emphasising exports and foreign private investments' (Panday and Tamang 2011, 26). According to McMichael (2012, 115), even though the economic growth achieved by Asian Tigers was used as a justification for the necessity of SAPs, in fact, they were benefited from 'state managed economies'.

The political transformation of 1990—from Panchayat to democracy—ended the centralised education system and hence brought 'a more multicultural and inclusive view of education' (Bhatta 2011). The new constitution promulgated in 1990 brought some specific provisions to ensure education to marginalised and underprivileged groups. For example, unlike NEPC (1956) and NESP (1971)—that took linguistic diversity as a barrier for developing nationalised education system—the new Constitution recognised the importance of non-Nepali languages. Imposition of dominant Nepali language as a medium of instruction was understood as educational barrier for non-Nepali speaking students. The new Constitution brought the provision of providing at least primary education in students' mother tongues.

The fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 and subsequent changes in the global world order, mostly the dominance of the Bretton Woods institutions, affected Nepal (Upadhya 2012). Not only the outside world but also Nepali rulers, mainly the political parties and civil society, took political change in Nepal as a sign of freedom and independence from the restrictions imposed by Panchayat regime. Major political forces of Nepal took this change as an opportunity to welcome Western ideology of development, freedom, and democracy. For example, to advance its democratic and liberal commitments to the outside world as well as 'attracting financial support'

from the international community (Caddell 2007), the new democratic government welcomed donors in order to fund Nepal's education. However, because of the lack of coordination among donors interested in investing in Nepal and mostly the government's inability to bring them under a single national framework, all educational activities were limited to short-term projects. Some of the projects, especially the ones funded by the World Bank, guided Nepal's educational policies and practices at a later period.

The term 'lifelong learning', the focus of this study, covers all forms of education and learning. For exploring this comprehensive vision of education, I divide Nepal's education in three categories: school education, higher education and adult education. In what follows, I provide a brief outline of educational projects, programmes, plans and policies associated with these categories. In light of the historical overview of Nepal's education, the rest of this dissertation focuses on educational policies, plans, programmes and projects developed after the 1980s. Key documents related to those policies and practices are analysed in Chapter Six.

3.3.1 School Education

Since Nepal became a member of the World Bank in 1961 the country has been receiving loans from the Bank for several developmental projects. According to its official website (http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/projects), as of March 2014 the Bank has 20 active projects in Nepal with a net commitment of about US\$ 1.506 billion. Major educational projects launched after the 1980s with the World Bank as a major funder are as follows:

SN	Project Names	Duration
1.	Primary Education Project	1984-1992
2.	Basic and Primary Education Project I	1992-1999
3.	Basic and Primary Education Project II	1999-2004
4.	Community School Support Project	2003-2008
5.	Education for All Project	2004-2010
6.	School Sector Reform Programme	2009-2016

Table 1: Educational projects of Nepal

Source: Various educational project reports

The Primary Education Project (1984-1992) was funded by the International Development Association (IDA), one of the five financial organisations associated with the World Bank Group, with the credit loan of US \$12.78 million. An additional US \$1.7 million was supported by UNICEF as technical assistance. Main objectives of the project were to 'achieve low-cost qualitative improvements in primary education and strengthen the administrative and technical capacity in the education sector' (World Bank 1984, i). The Basic and Primary Education Project I (1992-1999) that replaced the Primary Education Project was jointly funded by the Nepalese government (31%) and other donors such as the Asian Development Bank (15%) with the World Bank (23%) as the major donor (World Bank 1999b). The main objectives of the project were to '(a) improve the quality of primary education, (b) increase equitable access to primary schooling, and (c) strengthen the management of the formal and non-formal primary education delivery system (World Bank 1999b, 2). For the Basic and Primary Education II (1999-2004), the project with the total cost of US\$ 55.70 million, the Bank supported US\$12.50 million.

The total cost (US \$5.00 million) of the Community School Support Project (2003-2008) was fully supported by the Bank. The main objectives of the project were to provide block, performance, supplementary, and other grants, including scholarships, and technical assistance

for capacity building, to support communities taking over the management of governmentfunded schools (World Bank 2010a). The Education for All Project (2004-2010) had initial cost US\$ 664.00 million, for which the Bank supported US\$ 50.00 million (World Bank 2010b). The project aimed at: (a) improving access to, and equity of basic and primary education; (b) enhancing educational quality and relevance; and (c) improving efficiency, and institutional capacity of education service delivery. In 2007 the Bank committed to provide US\$ 60.00 million additional financing for the same project.

The School Sector Reform Programme (2009-2016) has the highest budget among all the programmes and projects launched in the past. Its total cost for seven years is US\$ 2635.00 million for which the Bank has committed to cover US\$ 130.00 million. According to the information provided in Bank's official website³ about 76% of the budget would be spent on primary education whereas secondary education and adult education/literacy would receive 19% and 1% respectively. The following table obtained from the *SSRP Annual Strategies Implementation Plan 2014-2015* (GON 2014b) provides Development Partners' financial support for the years 2011 to 2015.

³ <u>http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P113441/school-sector-reform-program?lang=en&tab=details</u>

Funding commitment (SSR pooled budget pro-rata share)									
		Allocation		Allocation		Allocation		Allocation	
		F.Y.2011/12		F.Y.2012/13		F.Y.2013/14		F.Y.2014/15	
				A manual Dura mada		A manual Dua mate			
SN	Org.	Amount	Pro	Amount	Pro rata	Amount	Pro rata	Amount	Pro rata
		(in US\$	rata	(in US\$	share in	(in US\$	share in	(in US\$	share in
		million)	share	million)	%	million)	%	million)	%
1	ADB	40	23.36	31.45	19.40%	20.00	11.74%	10.00	10.40 %
2	Aus AID	4	2.34	4.08	2.50%	4.20	2.47%	1.86	1.93 %
3	Denmark	11	6.43	18.85	11.70%	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00 %
4	EU/DFID	14	8.18	19.59	12.10%	14.00	8.22%	16.57	17.23 %
5	GPE	50	29.21	32.00	19.80%	5.00	2.94%	2.30	2.39 %
6	Finland	6.5	3.8	3.75	2.30%	9.10	5.34%	6.81	7.08 %
7	Norway	8	4.67	10.00	6.20%	2.30	1.35%	10.20	10.61 %
8	UNICEF	0.3	0.18	0.5	0.30%	0.50	0.29%	0.50	0.52 %
9	World	37.4	21.85	41.50	25.70%	40.00	23.49%	45.00	46.79 %
	Bank								
10	JICA							2.94	3.06 %
11	Funding Gap			75.20	44.16%				
	Total	171.2	100	161.72	100.00%	170.30	100%	96.18	100 %
	Total	11974794		14069788		14645800		9290410	
	NRS' 000								

Table 2: Funding commitment for the SSRP

Source: SSRP Annual Strategies Implementation Plan 2014-2015, page 17

The SSRP is built on previous programmes such as the EFA Programme (2004-2009), Secondary Education Support Project (1992-2000), Community School Support Project (2003-2008), and Teacher Education Project (2002-2009) (ADB 2012). The core document 'articulates the policy directions within the purview of statutory provisions' (p. iii), the EFA National Plan of Action (GON 2003), and the Three Year Interim Plan (GON 2007b) by incorporating the EFA Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO 2000) and the Millennium Development Goals. Unlike most other programmes and projects, the SSRP comes after wider consultation and discussion on its potentialities and challenges to improve the education system of Nepal. The genesis of the Programme goes back to 2004 when a Thematic Group was formed by the Ministry of Education for consultations and discussion towards devising the plan. In 2006 the Ministry developed a Concept Paper. The Concept Paper, 'brought into wider consolation, engaging experts, professionals and stakeholders at the national, regional, district and at the community and school levels' (GON 2009, iii), was approved by the Government in 2007 and the final and consolidated Core Document was approved in 2008. The final School Sector Reform Programme was approved by the Ministry of Education in August 2009. The donor agencies, called as Development Partners (DPs) 'agreed to provide support for its implementation from 2009/10 onwards' (GON 2009, 4).

Educational projects launched by donors were of relatively shorter duration; they guided educational policies and practices of Nepal. For example, with an assistance from the World Bank, the new democratic government formed in the post-Panchayat period formulated *A 10-Year (1991-2001) Basic and Primary Education Master Plan* (GON 1997) 'in an effort to define priorities for donor development support' (Carney and Bista 2009, 197). The Master Plan aimed to produce a 'literate and numerate population ready for further education, but also competent citizens who can deal with problems at home and at work' (GON 1997, 7). There was a strong urge for school decentralisation because both the government and the donors assumed that investment in school education was not providing commensurate return because of Panchayat regime that nationalised the education system.

As there was not a single overarching national framework (like the NEPC 1956 or NESP 1971) to guide Nepal's education system, educational development after 1990s was limited to project activities guided by the respective external funders. The Government of Nepal kept on changing its educational policies and practices as desired by those funders (Rappleye 2011). For example, the Secondary Education Development Project (SEDP 1992-2000) was launched with financial and technical support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB 2004). The Basic and Primary Education Project I (1992-1999) and the Community Support School Project (CSSP

2003-2008) were supported by the World Bank. In the BPEP II 'Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) replaced the World Bank as the leading donor, outspending the Bank nearly three to one (12.5 million compared with 36.7 million USD) to take the lead' (Rappleye 2011, 36).

Donors' push towards change in educational policies and practices can be seen in different forms. The first Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP I)—initiated 'through a series of interactions between the World Bank' (Bhatta 2011, 16)—became a national program after it was included in the Eight Plan (1992-1997). Similarly, the decentralisation agenda set by the World Bank as a condition to support US\$ 5 million for the Community School Support Project (2003-2007) 'became a national policy after it was incorporated in the subsequent periodic development plans' (Bhatta 2011, 19). To implement BPEP II (1999-2003) all donor agencies (Denmark, the EU, Norway, Japan, Finland, ADB and UNICEF) that supported the project agreed to follow Program Implementation Plan (PIP) prepared by the leadership of the World Bank. The Department of Education, a national institution with the power almost similar to the Ministry of Education, was created for implementing BPEP II according to the PIP guidelines (Bhatta 2011). The second phase of the BPEP II (2004-2009) was renamed as Education for All 2004-2009 Programme, following the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO 2000).

3.3.2 Higher Education

As noted above, the history of higher education in Nepal goes back to the establishment of Tri-Chandra College in 1918. The College followed the curricula developed by the University of Patna, an Indian university established by the British colonial rulers. Nepal was not colonised formally like India but during the Rana period (1847-1950) Nepal's education including higher education sector was influence by the British model of education. The curricula and courses adopted by Tri-Chandra College followed the British model of education. Final examinations of the college and certification of its graduates were undertaken by Patna University. In this sense, Tri-Chandra College made almost no contribution towards development of contextually relevant higher education sector in Nepal. The first democratic government formed on February 18, 1951 recognised education as the right of the people, which opened up new avenues for higher education development in Nepal. The government appointed University Commission in March 1956 which recommended the establishment of Tribhuvan University. In 1959 Tribhuvan University charter was prepared and enacted. Still Tribhuvan University is the largest (with 86% of total higher education students in 2011) university which defines the nature and characteristics of Nepal's higher education.

Higher education in Nepalese education system starts after twelve years of schooling and consists of Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels. Depending on the programmes, Bachelor degree is of three or four years whereas Master degree takes generally two years. The National Education Commission appointed in 1952 recommended the government to establish new universities as well as a University Grant Commission for allocating financial resources to higher education. Currently, there are nine universities and 1,134 higher education institutions affiliated to different universities. The process towards the establishment of an Open University with the investment of Non-Resident Nepali Association is underway. About 62% of total higher education in Nepal has adopted a cost-recovery approach hence financial responsibility goes to private sectors and individual students which has resulted in decreases of government funding for higher education sector. In the 2000-2001 fiscal year higher education received 15.6% of total funding

in education and that decreased to 9.3% in 2005/2006 (CEDA 2007). In 2011/2012, higher education received only 1.58% (about \$63,392) of total annual budget (MOF Nepal 2013) which hardly covers teacher salaries.

The World Bank has invested in a number of projects to support higher education in Nepal. The following projects are the major ones:

Project names	Duration	Loan in million
Technical Education Project	1977-1985	US \$ 4.7
Western Region Campus Project	1979-1987	US \$ 12
Agricultural Manpower Development Project	1985-1994	US \$ 10.9
Engineering Education Project	1989-1996	US \$ 10
First Higher Education Project	1994-2001	US \$ 17
Second Higher Education Project	2007-2014	US \$ 60
Higher Education Reform Project	2015-2021	US \$ 65

Table 3: Higher Education projects funded by the World Bank

Sources: (World Bank 2014c, 2015c, 2016b)

The first project funded by the World Bank in the education sector was the Technical Education Project (1977-1985) designed during the mid-1970s when the Bank was interested in funding projects based on the demand forecast approach. The Institute of Engineering was the target of the project and the Project Implementation Unit was headed by the Dean of the Institute. The Technical Education project was jointly designed by the World Bank and UNESCO mission to Nepal. The project recognised 'a shortage of trained manpower, particularly engineering technicians' required for implementing basic infrastructural development projects (World Bank 1988, iii). The project completion report states that 'despite its relatively successful implementation, the project has not achieved its objectives of improving the quality of engineering programs or meeting manpower needs' (p. vi). Other projects such as the Western Region Campus Project, Agricultural Manpower Development Project and Engineering Education Project also focused on technical education but had limited scope because of small amount of project funds.

The Second Higher Education Project (2007-2014) and ongoing Higher Education Reform Project (2015-2021) are mostly guided by the neoliberal interpretation of human capital theory (this is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4). The Second Higher Education Project which was completed in 2014, aimed at '(a) enhanced quality, efficiency and relevance of higher education through a set of systemic reforms and incentives to selected institutions; and (b) improved access for academically qualified students from disadvantaged groups in higher education and higher secondary education' (World Bank 2014c, v). The Implementation Completion and Results Report provides a list of indicators such as:

- increasing pass rates at Bachelor and Master levels,
- increasing number of enrolees in technical science and management subjects,
- decentralisation of colleges affiliated to Tribhuvan University,
- increasing number of publication in referred journals,
- providing financial assistance to students,
- publication of Education Management Information System (EMIS),
- empowering Tribhuvan University to prepare and follow academic calendar, and
- the formulation of higher education policy (World Bank 2014c).

The ongoing Higher Education Reform Project 2015-2021 is designed with several conditionalities similar to the one imposed for the implementation of the second Higher Education Project (2007-2014) such as formation of a new higher education policy. According to the official website of the Bank (World Bank 2015e) the objective of the Higher Education Reform Project is 'to help address the human resource needs of the country and add to the

national knowledge base'. These conditionalities are discussed in Chapter 6 while analysing the Bank's educational policies associated with Nepal's higher education.

3.3.3 Adult Education

Adult education is a very inclusive term that may encompass higher education as well. However, I have used this term to refer to all forms of non-formal education programme outside of higher education launched in Nepal.

One of the major adult education projects launched in Nepal during the 1980s was the Education for Rural Development Project (1981-1985). As this project covered three remote districts (Doti, Bajhang and Bajura) of Seti Zone (1 of the 14 administrative Zones of Nepal) it is also called the Seti Project. The project was funded by three UN agencies-UNESCO, the UNDP and UNICEF—with an amount of US \$2.5 million for five years (IIEP 1985). The Seti project was a part of UN initiative towards rural development: a key theme of UN's Second Development Decade (1970-1980). During the 1970s there was debate whether human capital education based on theoretical learning-aimed at changing traditional rural societies into a modern and prosperous nation—was an appropriate educational provision for the rural communities of the impoverished nations of the global South. Followed by the 1970 World Conference on Agricultural Education and Training, there was an increasing motivation towards focusing educational initiatives on rural development (IIEP 1985). Against this backdrop 'UNESCO's programmes during the 1970s and 1980s were permeated with endeavours to renovate and re-orient education in rural areas' (p. 5). Besides the Seti Project, similar rural development projects were underway in rural areas of Ethiopia, India and Bangladesh.

One of the major objectives of the Seti project was to develop a system of basic education that will serve to promote rural development by reducing the existing gap between the school and the community. The project focused on making education more relevant to learners' future life. Education was perceived as 'a positive force for the development of the area in which the school was located' (UNESCO-UNDP 1985, 4). A major part of the project was the provision of functional literacy and creating awareness among adults about 'new ideas, skills and knowledge that will enable them to take direct action to improve the quality of their lives' (ibid). The project aimed at producing trained adult educators by providing practical training in 'agriculture, irrigation or primary health care' (UNESCO-UNDP 1985, 6). The following quote provides a glimpse of curricular contents of the project:

All participants had to carry out 18 different development activities, such as making latrines, making improved cooking stoves and cleaning the village roads. For some of the practical activities the project provided inputs such as fruit tree saplings and vegetable seeds...The project was more concerned with education to promote basic development and produce social changes, than with literacy alone, so it needed to develop its own curriculum materials, based upon the realities of life in the far Western Nepal (UNESCO-UNDP 1985, 14).

The project was instrumental in linking theoretical knowledge with the practicalities of village life in rural Nepal. The project understood that 'education is not merely a matter of academic theory but also one of combining theory with practice, by applying in daily life what is learnt and, conversely, learning facts and skills that can be so applied' (UNESCO-UNDP 1985, 35). In recognition of its achievement the International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) held an international seminar in May 1984 in the project headquarters (located at remote part of Nepal where no road or air transportation was available) which was attended by participants from 17 different countries (UNESCO-UNDP 1985). The focus of the seminar was to discuss UNESCO's integrated rural development project implemented in different countries such as Ethiopia, Bangladesh and India. The Seminar recognised that Seti project was an international

example of how the principle of making connection between education and rural development could practically be implemented (IIEP 1985). The Seminar concluded that:

...the starting-point of any agricultural development intervention should be a deeper understanding of the traditional production system—the cycle of crop rotation, the agricultural calendar, the traditional technology, agro-ecological conditions, and the kinds of criteria on which traditional subsistence farmers base the adoption or rejection of change. The development strategy that should be pursued then becomes one of attempting to make adjustments in the traditional system, with due regard to its fragility and resilience (Berstecher and Kiros 1985, 25).

With the aim of strengthening the nonformal education sector, the National Education Commission (GON 1992) established the National Non-Formal Education Centre in 1999 which paved the way towards launching adult education programmes in the country. Some of the major non-formal and literacy programmes launched after the 1990s were Adult Post-Literacy Program, Flexible Schooling Programme, Women's Literacy Program, School Outreach Program, Income Generating Program, and Community Learning Centres. These programmes were launched by the initiatives of different actors mainly International Nongovernmental Organisation (INGOs). However, Nepal lacked a national educational policy to bring these programmes and projects under single national policy framework. Therefore 'A 10-year *literacy/NFE policy program framework'* was made in 2006 by the leadership of UNESCO Office in Kathmandu in consultation with major educational stakeholders such as Non-Formal Education Centre, National Planning Commission, and other government and non-government organisations (UNESCO 2006). The vision of the Framework was 'to create a fully literate learning society whose citizens possess the skills and competences that enable them to contribute continuously towards harmonious national development by raising the quality of life of every citizen' (p. 17). The Education for All (2000-2015) global programme was a major motivational

factor behind the creation of this Framework. In a sense, this Framework was a part of 'UNESCO's global program on Literacy Initiative for Empowerment within the framework of United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) (UNESCO 2006, vi).

The NFE Policy Framework understood literacy in a rather wider sense: 'Simply being able to read, write and calculate may not always be sufficient for living in the more complex world of today' (UNESCO 2006, 18). Some of the issues mentioned in the Framework include: extending and expanding access to education to raise the literacy rate basically for meeting EFA goal (i.e. to reduce illiteracy by 50% by 2015); mainstreaming out-of-school children's education programmes; management and monitoring of literacy/NFE programmes; and making linkages between literacy/NFE and grassroots based development programmes.

The Non-Formal Education Centre is the major authority to make and implement policies related to adult education and learning in Nepal (CONFINTEA Nepal 2008). The Centre formulated the Non-Formal Education Policy in 2007 (GON 2007a). Similar to the *10-year literacy/NFE policy program framework* (UNESCO 2006) there is a list of 16 policies with a number of strategies to implement those policies and to guide 'government as well as non-government agencies involved in conducting non-formal education programs' in Nepal (p. 1). Some of the NFE policies (GON 2007a) include:

- providing non-formal educational opportunities to those who are deprived of formal education;
- recognition of non-formal education as equivalent to formal education;
- decentralisation of governance and management of non-formal education to local bodies;
- developing strong database on literacy for launching further programmes;

- increasing female literacy rate; synchronising NFE curricula with the curricula of formal education at all levels (from primary school to university);
- development of Community Learning Centres (CLCs) 'to provide non-formal education to all'; and
- strengthening partnerships among government, private sectors, and I/NGOs to strengthen NFE provisions.

The 2007 NFE policy also mentions implementing 'programs related to lifelong and continuous education, skill development and income generation' (GON 2007a, 1) but the policy is not explicit about what is 'lifelong learning' and its relevance in the context of Nepal. Overall, the NFE policy appears as a vague and highly ambitious document having little significance in providing concrete steps towards implementation. A number of bullet points mentioned as strategies are not clearly articulated and make almost no connection with existing problems especially reducing some of the institutional barriers to increase adults' participation in learning. Rather adult education is conceived in a narrow terms, as basically literacy: 'the ability to read and write with understanding and to perform simple arithmetic calculations' (CONFINTEA Nepal 2008, 18).

According to International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA) country report (2008) a common goal of adult education and learning for Nepal is 'to raise the level of adult literacy, particularly amongst women and people belonging to marginalized groups such as *Dalits* and disadvantaged ethnic groups, through the provision of appropriate learning and life skills programmes for all young people and adults, thus contributing to achieving poverty reduction and equitable socioeconomic and human development' (CONFINTEA Nepal 2008, 7). The institutional framework for NFE extends from national to local level. There is a Non-Formal Education Council headed by the Minister of Education. Non-Formal Education Centre is a national executive body working under the Council. At the local level there is a provision of having District Level NFE Committees in each 75 districts of the country and Village or Municipality Level NFE Committees in each Village Development Committees and Municipalities (CONFINTEA Nepal 2008). The major projects launched in Nepal after 1990s – the Basic and Primary Education Project (1992-2003), Secondary Education Support Project (1992-2009), Community School Support Project (2003-2008), Education for All Programme (2004-2009) – focused mainly on formal schooling, especially primary and secondary education, but neglected adult education, literacy and lifelong learning.

The core document of the SSRP (2009-2016), *School Sector Reform Plan: Policies and strategies* (GON 2009), mentions the term lifelong learning several times. In Chapter 4 the term lifelong learning appears in association with literacy: 'Literacy enables to them to engage in lifelong learning and helps develop capabilities to sustain their livelihoods and participate fully in the society' (GON 2009, lviii). The Programme aims at linking lifelong learning with income generation as well as occupational and vocational skills. It also aims at 'developing partnership for collaboration with UN agencies and I/NGOs to implement lifelong learning programs in selected districts' (GON 2014a, 21). Though the term 'lifelong learning' has a presence in some of the major policy documents produced to implement SSRP (GON 2009, 2014a) it is not clear how lifelong learning has been conceived. What perspective of lifelong learning—broadly speaking whether it is humanistic or economistic—is adopted or adapted while introducing lifelong learning in Nepal? How is the policy discourse related to lifelong learning affected by the donors, especially the World Bank, in shaping the understanding of lifelong learning among

policy makers of Nepal? In Chapter 6 I have analysed some of the key documents—produced both at national and supranational level—and interviews to answer these questions.

3.4 Summary

To sum up, this Chapter explored the educational history of Nepal through the perspective of global political economy. The Chapter explored a Western model of education introduced during the 1950s by the initiative of the USAID shaped educational policies and practices of Nepal at later stages. There was an emphasis on creating a modern and democratic Nepal but the impetus for this change was guided by the foreign policy of the US conceived to maintain the world order in the Cold War period.

During the late 1960s the Nepalese monarchy promoted a nationalised educational policy that reduced Western influence to some extent. During the 1970s to 1980s, UNESCO was actively involved in Nepal and focused on the promotion of rural adult literacy. However, after the 1980s, with the rise of neoliberal world order, Nepalese education gradually fell under the global governance mechanism dominated by the World Bank and its global partners in education (GPE 2013, Brock-Utne 2007). Since the major decisions of the Bank are made by its Board of Governance headed by the US, the legacy of education initiated by the USAID in the early 1950s continued to shape educational policies and practices of Nepal.

The next Chapter delineates, looking through a Habermasian lens, how the concept of lifelong learning evolved. It explores how the humanistic tradition conceived, basically by UNESCO during the 1970s (Faure et al. 1972, Delors et al. 1996), was gradually replaced after the concept was taken up by some financially motivated supranational organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank as an instrument for strengthening knowledge economies of some countries of the global North.

Chapter 4: Theoretical framework

This chapter reviews literature related to lifelong learning and presents the historical evolution of lifelong learning—and how its discourses were affected by some key theories such as human capital theory and neoliberal thinking in education—as a new concept and its controversies at present. The second section of this chapter introduces Habermas and explores some of the key Habermasian theoretical constructs mainly the colonisation of the lifeworld and the importance of communicative rationality. These theoretical perspectives are used for analysing data, especially for providing a better understanding of lifelong learning and its relevance for LDCs as a new educational policy agenda.

4.1 Lifelong learning: human capital theory

The term 'lifelong learning' relates to the notion of 'lifelong education' that became a popular term in the early 1970s in the field of education (Tuijnman and Boström 2002). According to Gelpi (1985), the concept behind these two terms—lifelong learning and lifelong education—can be found in the history of education of many countries. It is found in the Chinese tradition, Indian Buddhism, Greek philosophy and European Renaissance (Borg and Mayo 2005, 204). The term lifelong education made a more explicit and formal appearance in 1972 through one of the UNESCO reports: *Learning to be: The world of education today and tomorrow* (Faure et al. 1972), also called the Faure report. In the report, education is viewed as a lifelong process that 'should not only be available to all but be a part of every individual's life, and should have as its aim both the development of society and the realization of man's potentialities' (Faure et al. 1972, ix).

In a sense, the concept of lifelong education as presented in the Faure report echoes the post-war period of reconstruction, development and stability, known as the 'golden age' of post-war optimism (Antikainen 2006). But during the late 1960s, particularly 'the student unrest in 1968 and elsewhere workers' pay unrest provided the first signal that the golden age was coming to an end' (Antikainen 2006, 237). Hence, as noted by Field (2001, 4), the concept of lifelong education used in the Faure report is the outcome of 'the radical thinking of the student movement, the work of post-independence intellectuals in the 'Third World' and the post-industrial rhetoric'. This was an important politico-economic change that motivated UNESCO to explore new paradigms in education and the rationale behind the formation of *International Commission on the Development of Education* – popularly known as Faure Commission with its chairman Edgar Faure – that formally introduced lifelong education as a new concept in the field of education.

Besides 'lifelong education', the Faure report also stressed the idea of 'learning society' (Rubenson 2006a). Even though the term 'learning society' was first introduced in the 1960s by Husen, the Faure report was the first UNESCO document to use that phrase (Welton 2005, 35). Learning society refers to the idea that 'learning opportunities should be available to all and occur in all areas of society, from school and college to the home, the community and workplace' (Green 2000, 35, Husen 1974). As reflected in the Faure report, there is a symbiotic relationship between the two concepts (lifelong education and learning society):

If all that has to be learned must be continually reinvented and renewed, then teaching becomes education and, more and more, learning. If learning involves all of one's life, in the sense of both time-span and diversity, and all of society, including its social and economic as well as its educational resources, then we must go even further than the

necessary overhaul of 'educational systems' until we reach the stage of a learning society (Faure et al. 1972, xxxiii).

While 'lifelong education' was recommended as 'a master concept for educational policy for both developed and developing countries' in UNESCO (Faure et al. 1972, 182), the OECD introduced a similar concept--'recurrent education'--through the publication of one of its influential reports, *Recurrent education: A strategy for lifelong learning* (OECD 1973). The report defines recurrent education as 'a comprehensive educational strategy for all postcompulsory or post-basic education, the essential characteristic of which is the distribution of education over the total life-span of the individual in a recurring way, i.e. in alternation with other activities, principally with work, but also with leisure and retirement' (OECD 1973, 16). The concept of recurrent education 'came to take a centre stage in the educational activities of the OECD during much of the 1970s' (Rubenson 2006a, 154).

Hence, the two concepts 'lifelong education' introduced by UNESCO and 'recurrent education' introduced by the OECD in the early 1970s can be considered as the foundations of lifelong learning. These ideas contributed towards the creation of—what is now called—the first generation of 'lifelong learning' discourse in which the humanistic tradition, advocated especially by UNESCO, made a crucial impact. Both concepts have some common features, however, the subsequent development in this field has generated a lot of controversies and scholars have pointed out that the two organisations – UNESCO and the OECD – are responsible for providing often competing visions of lifelong learning (Rubenson 2006a, b, Schuetze 2006).

There are at least three similarities between recurrent education and lifelong education: (a) both of the concepts address the educational crises that was felt when post-war optimism was fading during the late 1960s, manifested especially through educational and social inequalities

(Rubenson 2006a); (b) both focus on the importance of non-formal along with the formal learning; and (c) both emphasise that 'access to educational opportunities should not be confined to the individual's early years but become available over the whole life-span' (Tuijnman and Boström 2002, 100).

However, there are two major differences that are more striking than the similarities noted above. Firstly, 'lifelong education' proposed by UNESCO has more holistic ideals whereas the OECD's ideas of recurrent education is 'more limited in scope' (Tuijnman and Boström 2002, 100). For example, the Faure report considers lifelong education in a broader sense something that could fulfil the inadequacy in the structure of education for addressing the needs of the changing society (Rubenson 2006a, Faure et al. 1972). For the OECD, the idea of recurrent education comes with the aim of 'gradual introduction and expansion of educational opportunities for adults and at the improved alignment of adult education with the regular formal system' (Tuijnman and Boström 2002, 100).

And secondly, lifelong education comes with an emancipatory and democratic intent whereas recurrent education has more instrumental and utilitarian focus. For example, lifelong education as reflected in the Faure report is to 'promote a better society and quality of life and allow people to adapt to and control change' (Rubenson 2006a, 159). The emphasis is on 'the advancement of a free, equitable, democratic society that would be accomplished through emancipation of the underprivileged through the provision of equal opportunity in education and other life chances' (Schuetze and Casey 2006, 282). It aims at providing 'learning opportunities for everybody, independent of class, race or financial means, and independent of the age of the learner (Schuetze 2006, 290). But for the OECD, the focus is on 'the correspondence between

education and work and the interdependence of education policy and labour market policy' (Tuijnman and Boström 2002, 100).

Amidst the ideological battle fought between UNESCO and the OECD for creating a dominant discourse on lifelong learning, a new politico-economic change occurred during the late 1970s and the early 1980s, especially in the Western world. This was even more powerful than the end of post-war 'golden age' – that I noted earlier – and subsequent educational crisis. In fact, there are two forces primarily responsible for the creation of what is now identified as the second generation of lifelong learning – or the economistic notion of lifelong learning – that appeared in the 1980s (Rubenson 2006a). The first force is the advancements made in the field of science and technology, especially in the developed countries, most of which are the member states of the OECD. What these countries wanted was the maximum use of technologies for maximising labour productivity. People who are able to use advanced technological skills would be helpful for the market. With the help of technology few people could do more work thus the markets can gain more benefits by reducing the labour costs. This phenomenon is popularly known as 'post-Fordism' (Castells 2010).

And the second force responsible for the development of the second generation of lifelong learning (Rubenson 2006a) is the new politico-economic philosophy called 'neoliberalism'. This second force has colonised the way the overall goal of education and lifelong learning is interpreted in the current dominant discourses. To understand the second generation of lifelong learning and the neoliberal ideals we need to look at 'human capital theory' that made a significant influence on the entire discourse of lifelong learning. The next subsection explores two generations of human capital theory that have strongly influenced current discourse of lifelong learning.

4.1.1 Human capital theory

Human capital means 'the knowledge, skills, and attributes acquired by investment in education and health throughout the lifecycle' (McMahon 2009, 41). This is an economic theory related to various educational issues such as the role of education in society as well as the importance of educated labour force for economic growth and development.

Despite the devastation made by the World War II, some countries like Germany and Japan were achieving phenomenal economic growth in the post-war reconstruction period. Some economists, interested in educational economics, found a correlation between the 'levels of educational attainment and economic development' achieved by those countries (Arnove 2010, 827). During the mid-1950s, exploring the relations between education and economic growth was of particular interest to technical personnel associated with the OECD (OECD 1960, Rubenson 2008). The collective interests of these technical personnel resulted in the *Policy conference on economic growth and investment in education*, in Washington in October 1961 (OECD 1961). This conference highlighted that education is an investment.

According to Rubenson (2008), this was the first generation of the human capital theory that aimed at 'achieving both efficiencies and equality through investment in education' based on the Keynesian political economic paradigm (Rubenson 2006a, 153) that focused on: (a) providing access to education for a larger proportion of population by providing free or low-fee educational programs (Sobel 1978); (b) expansion of education system so as to meet the rising demand of skilled, trained and qualified human resources; and (c) equality of opportunity to increase the capability of underprivileged groups so as to strengthen human capital base at national level (Schultz 1961).

The first generation of human capital theory recognised that education has a broader social and cultural goal. For example, Schultz (1960) argued that 'education serves to develop individuals to become competent and responsible citizens by giving men and women an opportunity to acquire an understanding of the values they hold and an appreciation of what they mean to life' (p. 572). For him, one of the major causes of income inequality was the inequality in educational opportunity among various groups of people. He claimed that 'workers in the South on the average earn appreciably less than in the North because they have less education (Schultz 1961, 4). Many other economists of the 1960s provided similar arguments in support of human capital theory. They argued that 'it is human resources of a nation, not its capital nor its material resources, that ultimately determine the character and pace of its economic and social development' (Olaniyan and Okemakinde 2008, 158).

Those principles of human capital theory were well received by the governments of many countries in the South most of which had just become independent and had high ambition to be modern industrial nations. These countries focused on the mass expansion of modern schooling systems by increasing school enrolments, higher participation in adult education, increase in teacher recruitment and literacy programs (Coombs 1968). An important point to note here is that, while emphasising modern schooling, these countries set aside their existing traditional educational practices that, in fact, had been suffering from the hegemonic powers of the colonial rulers and were in need of revitalisation. The desire for achieving industrial modernisation—basically through the consumption of technological advancement made in the Western world—side-lined the traditional education and occupational systems. Joining formal schooling, gaining credentials and finding salaried jobs in the market became major goals of that time (Park 1980). But by the late 1960s expansion in education, both in the North and the South, was no longer

perceived as indispensable because there was 'a marked imbalance between the number of graduates and the number of job traditionally available to them' (Husen 1979, 206, Faure et al. 1972, Coombs 1985). As noted in the Faure report, the educational crisis of the late 1960s created an awareness, especially among young intellectuals of LDCs, that the educational practices imported from the North were addressing neither their needs nor 'their problems' (Faure et al. 1972, xx).

The crisis in education not only questioned the assumed role of education as a panacea for social problems, but also the interest in exploring further the relation between educational investment and economic development started to disappear. Consequently, the first generation of human capital theory and its ambitious proposals such as expansion of education and equality of opportunity for creating a strong human-resource based society faded away. UNESCO aimed to address this crisis by conceptualising the idea of 'lifelong education' (Faure et al. 1972) whereas the OECD aimed to address the crisis by conceptualisation the idea of 'recurrent education' (OECD 1973). Their two seminal documents gave birth to the first generation of lifelong learning noted above.

As I mentioned above, an important shift – from Keynesianism to neoliberalism – occurred in the philosophy of economics during the 1980s. This shift made a significant impact on the ideals of human capital theory as well as lifelong learning, which became crucial not only for the development of the second generation of lifelong learning – in which the role of market outwits the role of the state (Rubenson 2006a) – but also for the 'second generation of human capital theory' (Rubenson 2008). In Keynesianism, the 'active government intervention in the market is both desirable and necessary to avoid destabilising levels of social unrest and high unemployment' (Kettell 2007). But in the neoliberal paradigm of economic philosophy, liberal

market forces and individual autonomy are the fundamental prerequisites for economic growth and development; state intervention is assumed to have some detrimental effects (Young 2011).

The idea behind neoliberalism is often traced back to the work of Friedrich Hayek, an Austrian economist and Nobel Prize winner, who founded the Chicago School of Economics. His book *The Road to Serfdom* (Hayek 1944) strongly criticised government bureaucracies including educational bureaucracies (Spring 2008). He argued that 'free markets, rather than government control and bureaucracy were the best means of determining production and pricing of goods along with the control of other social institutions including schools' (Spring 2008, 343). The neoliberal ideals secured its validity in the context of 'economic stagflation'—a period of slow economic growth and high unemployment—experienced in the late 1970s. This stagflation led to the rejection of the 'post-war consensus of Keynesian demand management' in the Thatcher-Reagan regime of the 1980s that 'popularised a radical market-oriented system based on supply side economics and rejecting state intervention in the economy' (Young 2011, 1677).

The neoliberal ideology that was becoming more hegemonic and dominant under the auspices of Thatcher-Reagan regime gave a platform and justifications for some economists to look back at the older discourse of human capital theory and make modifications suitable for the changed politico-economic contexts. There are two major forces that brought a significant metamorphosis in the human capital theory that paved the way towards the emergence of the 'second generation of the human capital theory' (Rubenson 2008). The first force came from the OECD itself which saw the importance of revitalising human capital rationale to mitigate some of the problems such as slow economic growth, rising deficits, heightened inflation and increasing unemployment that developed countries were facing during the 1970s and 1980s (Rubenson 2008).

And the second force came from the 'consensus' of Bretton Woods Institutions, also known as 'Washington consensus' (Williamson 2000). This is an agreement among the conglomerate of Washington-based three major financial institutions: The World Bank, the IMF and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which is now called the WTO. In a sense, the Washington consensus is understood as an agreement of major international actors to bring the developing countries, including LDCs, under the grip of neoliberal framework (Harvey 2005). These two international forces emanating from the major supranational organisations gave birth to the second generation of human capital theory where 'education is represented as input-output systems which can be reduced to an economic production function' (Olssen and Peters 2005, 324).

There are at least three notable shifts from the first generation to the second generation of human capital theory: (a) the aspiration for the equality of opportunity noted in the first generation has been replaced by the capacity of (current and future) employees to be flexible as per the need of the job market; (b) education has lost its intrinsic purpose rather it has been used as a new instrument for encouraging individuals to become competitive to increase the national competitiveness in the global knowledge economy; and (c) it has become the responsibility of individuals to manage time and resources for continuous updating of their knowledge and skills (Rubenson 2008). And this is the discourse and ideology of the second generation of the human capital theory that informs the dominant discourse of lifelong learning, mostly in its second generation and in its economistic tradition.

As noted by Rubenson (2008), an interesting point to emphasise here is that the second generation of human capital theory viewed education 'not only as an investment but also as a factor of production' (252). Major supranational organisations, mainly the OECD, used this

rationale while producing policy reports to guide educational and economic policies of their member countries. For example, *Education and the economy in a changing society* (OECD 1989), proposed that education at all levels should be connected to the human capital needs of the market, to the aim of individual countries for achieving international competitiveness and most importantly to the production of labourers that are not only technologically efficient but also flexible. As Rubenson (2008) noted 'national differences in economic performance' was attributed to 'educational effectiveness and countries learning capacities' (252). This vision of education narrowed the scope and value of education as an investment for economic growth and competitiveness. In this way, the notion of education as an investment noted in the first generation of human capital theory was replaced by the new discourse of lifelong learning and importance of individuals' performance for increasing productivity, competitiveness and flexibility in the job market. This new discourse on lifelong learning informed the policy reports such as *Lifelong learning for all* (OECD 1996), which is 'well suited to a neoliberal agenda' (Rubenson 2008, 256).

As the main force to influence the discourse of lifelong learning is neoliberalism, I would call the second generation of lifelong learning as a neoliberal perspective of lifelong learning, or 'neoliberal lifelong learning' to be precise. In what follows, I explore some of the underlying assumptions of the neoliberal lifelong learning.

4.1.2 Neoliberalism

What makes the neoliberal notion of lifelong learning a dominant education model is the phenomenon called 'globalisation', also known as, often in a derogatory sense, 'neoliberal globalisation'. The term "globalization" was 'coined by economist Theodore Levitt in 1985 to describe changes in global economics affecting production, consumption, and investment'

(Spring 2009, 2) that were already taking place around the world. For example, studying primary school curricula between 1920 and 1986, Benavot et al. (1991) found that

modern models of society and education and their interrelation are similar around the world and generate educational systems and school curricula that are strikingly similar ... A new culture or a set of cultures is being promulgated by mass educational institutions (p. 86).

Education imparted through mass schooling is no longer fulfilling the social and economic interests of diversified societies and nations. On the contrary, such educational systems serve the interest of dominant societies and nations that have the power to influence the minority cultures and epistemologies associated with them. This is the school of thought led by 'cultural theorists' (Benavot et al. 1991, Baker and LeTendre 2005) who believe that education culture is converging towards a global model.

But there is another perspective that stands in sharp contrast with the hypothesis of cultural theorists. This school of thought is led by anthropologists and comparative educationists (Anderson-Levitt 2003, Steiner-Khamsi 2004) who claim that the global educational culture emanating from supranational organisations is not uniformly adapted to local school systems. Some of previous research findings support this hypothesis. For example, collecting ethnographic data from a number of countries – such as Brazil, China, the United States and South Africa – Anderson-Levitt (2003) concluded that, despite homogenising effort made by global reformers like UNESCO and the World Bank, the policies and programs at national and local level are 'much less homogeneous than world culture theory might imply' (p. 4). Anderson-Levitt further showed that 'teachers and other local actors sometimes resist and always transform the official models they are handed' (ibid). For example, in Brazil, 'the religious educational model supported by the Catholic Church differed from the model offered by the

World Bank and USAID' (Spring 2009, 16). Moreover, they also highlighted that the supranational organisations are powerful actors in the globalisation of education; however, their policies are different. For example, the focus of the World Bank is on human capital education whereas for UNESCO human rights is a major concern (Anderson-Levitt 2003).

However, despite such differences in some research findings there is a powerful force that binds these supranational organisations together that has silenced the humanistic agenda of lifelong learning. And this is the ideological force of 'neoliberalism' that has colonised the 'lifeworld' and all alternative worldviews (Habermas 1987). In this context, the semantics of jargon, such as human capital, knowledge based economy, lifelong learning, and learning societies have been appropriated according to the assumptions of neoliberalism. According to Olssen and Peters (2005), the major assumptions of neoliberalism that have almost colonised educational praxes are: (a) individuals are self-interested subjects and are the best judge of their needs; (b) the best way to allocate resources is through superior market mechanism; (c) the free market is a self-regulating mechanism that keeps the economy and other sectors such as education in balance; and (d) any form of state-imposed protections and trade regulations would discourage free trade and shrink national economy.

The neoliberal appropriation of lifelong learning agendas has resulted into the homogenisation of curricula around the world at almost all levels: from primary schools to K-12 and universities. For example, Baker and LeTendre (2005) conducted a research in about 50 countries for four years. Relying on Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) data they emphasized the commonality in educational institutions among industrialized countries and made several interesting observations such as: rise of mass schooling, and the effect of family (such as income) outweighing the effect of schools on students' achievement.

They also argued that world educational trends and the forces behind them will work to change and shape the possible directions education may take in the future (Baker and LeTendre 2005). As a consequence, similar educational credentials are expected for employment in the global marketplace. This is why university curricula around the world are converging. For example, university education in India and China are becoming similar to university education practised in the EU and the US so that the degrees from different universities around the world 'can be used as credentials for global employment' (Spring 2009, 10).

Furthermore, there is one interesting phenomenon that we should not ignore while talking about homogenisation of educational culture. It is not only the educational models of some core countries (powerful European and North American nations) that are assimilating the educational practices of Southern countries but also the educational cultures of some semi-peripheral nations (such as India, China, and Japan) are influencing the educational practices of peripheral nations, mostly LDCs, such as Nepal, Bhutan, and Cambodia (Appadurai 1990). In this sense, globalisation manifests a centripetal force that tends to assimilate all cultural practices often through the creation of other sub-centres or semi-peripheral spaces. An obvious but unfortunate fact is that in its current practice, globalisation favours only one ideology that is 'neoliberalism' based on Western liberal philosophy.

In the neoliberal perspective of lifelong learning, the 'transnational system of power working through global organizations, such as publishing corporations, research organizations, higher education institutions, professional organizations, and testing services' promote a dominant at the same time very narrow form of knowledge (Spring 2009, 13). According to Hinchliffe (2006), with a 'self-admitted clear economic' agenda this perspective of lifelong learning 'aims at positioning persons in an uncertain labour market' (p. 94). This perspective, however, does not require 'a greater depth of knowledge and skills', that is, individuals ready to change their knowledge and skills according to the changing demand of the neoliberal corporate market (Hinchliffe 2006, 94). Hinchliffe further argues that 'what would count, rather, would be the extent to which knowledge and understanding could be operationalized' (p. 95) or performed, something that Lyotard (1979) calls 'performativity' for maximising employer's profit. These problems persist because economic system is designed not for serving the needs of human beings; rather human beings are reduced and objectified to serve the need of the global capitalism (Hyslop-Margison and Sears 2006).

The types of political economy discussed in current literature include the neoliberal market model (Anglo-Saxon countries such as the US and the UK), the social market model (Christian democratic countries of northern Europe), and social democratic model (Scandinavian countries). These models not only conform to the 'three worlds of welfare capitalism' (Esping-Andersen 1990) but also reflect the type of lifelong learning practiced in specific countries. The countries implementing the neoliberal perspective of lifelong learning policy have some specific outcomes such as greater variation in income inequality and employment rates. For example, Green (2006) found that Anglos-Saxon countries such as the US and the UK adopting neoliberal or market model, practice more economistic (or neoliberal) perspective of lifelong learning but the Nordic countries adopting social democratic model, practice less economistic perspective of lifelong learning. According to Green (2006), some features of political economy such as levels of social expenditure, income inequality, educational equality, the rate of participation in lifelong learning, the proportion of high skilled jobs, and social cohesion display the same pattern of regional variation (p. 311-315) found in the three models of welfare capitalism noted above.

Income inequality is mostly driven by the types of labour force the educational system of a particular country produces. For example, the Anglo-Saxon countries where liberal market model rules 'produce exceptionally polarised high skills/low skills labour forces' (Green 2006, 315). The high skilled labour force serves the needs of the knowledge intensive, high skills sectors such as science, engineering, and defence whereas low skilled workforce serve the needs of the market requiring cheap and flexible labour. Why have the Anglo-Saxon countries, despite their high GDP, have been in third position among three groups of countries/welfare sates? The answer lies in the fact that these countries have high degree of skills inequality because there is less support for the students and families to help them participate in lifelong learning. That is why the Anglo-Saxon countries are called knowledge economies rather than knowledge societies (Green 2005).

In sum, the review of literature related to lifelong learning suggests that the concept of lifelong learning has changed significantly from a humanistic tradition to a neoliberal perspective. Hence, nations have differentiated outcomes based on the type of lifelong learning model they implement. To put this in the context of this research, it has become interesting to explore the type of lifelong learning promoted by the World Bank and its potential outcomes to address the problems and challenges of LDCs. Building on the review of literature presented above, in what follows, I explore some key theoretical constructs provided by Jürgen Habermas and employ them in this research as a major theoretical framework.

4.2 Habermas: lifeworld and communicative rationality

Among critical theorists associated with both analytical and continental philosophy, Jürgen Habermas holds a unique position. His effort to defend modernity and consistent justification of the relevance of Enlightenment rationality, have made him one of the 'most widely discussed interdisciplinary social theorists' in today's world (Antonio and Kellner 1992, 278). Habermas criticises both structuralism (associated with Enlightenment philosopher Kant, Hegel and Marx) and poststructuralism (associated with Nietzsche, Derrida and Foucault). Habermas claims that despite their emancipatory intent post-structural theorists could not go beyond the ontological boundary created by what he calls the *philosophical consciousness*. He criticises the philosophical underpinnings of poststructuralism such as a complete negation of rationality and objectivity in social sciences. Habermas' main point is that post-structuralists are 'at a loss to account for the rationality of their own emancipatory critique' hence their radical critique of rationality 'ultimately undermines the possibility of critical reflection itself' (Murphy and Fleming 2010, 5).

Scholars (Welton 1995, 2005, Mezirow 1981, 1995, 1997, Brookfield 2005, Brookfield and Holst 2011) who adapted Habermasian framework to analyse educational issues argue that the type of critical theory developed by Habermas opens up a new avenue to explore an alternative approach to education. They argue that Habermas could provide some pragmatic foundations to conceive an emancipatory approach to guide educational policies and programs thereby creating counter narratives against the imperatives of global capitalism and neoliberalism. From Habermasian perspective, the sources of major problems and challenges in education can be seen as a conflict between the attributes of the 'lifeworld' (defined below) and the imperatives of global capitalism gradually encroaching into – and colonising – the lifeworld. In this sense, the principles of the neoliberalism can be seen as hegemonic forces colonising the very foundations of the lifeworld. In Habermasian analysis, education associated with humans' cognitive interests to learn has a major role in defending the lifeworld. In this respect, this study employs Habermas to explore whether LDCs' educational policies and programs are colonised by the neoliberal forces and the extent to which the lifeworld maintained by LDC communities is affected by such forces.

After reviewing major Habermasian works I have come to embrace two theoretical constructs that inform this research. They are 'colonisation of the lifeworld' by the capitalist system and the importance of 'communicative rationality' to decolonise or rescue the lifeworld. First, I explore these two theoretical constructs in brief and relate them to the rationale of this research. As delineated in Chapter 1, the three major purposes of my study are to: explore whether there is a misunderstanding of the humanistic agenda of lifelong learning; explore the extent to which educational policies of LDCs are influenced by the economistic discourse of lifelong learning; and explore the potentiality of lifelong learning to solve the problems and challenges of LDCs.

4.2.1 Colonisation of the lifeworld

The 'lifeworld' and 'system' are two fundamental concepts developed by Habermas, especially in the *Theory of communicative action* (Habermas 1984, 1987). To make sense of these concepts, we need to relate them with Durkheim's dichotomy between mechanical and organic solidarity that Habermas employs for his theorisation. In *The division of labour in society*, Durkheim (1984) explores the two types of solidarity—mechanical and organic—to explain social cohesion and human unity. Mechanical solidarity is found in small-scale traditional societies where social ties are based on likeness in cultural attributes such as religion, festivals, and languages that each member of a tribe shares. But organic solidarity is the feature of industrial society where there is almost no social tie; rather peoples often dissimilar in their cultural attributes become interdependent due to the division of labour created by industrial development (Osa 2008). The human unity glued together in the mechanical solidarity

disintegrates gradually after the society enters the industrial phase, and by default, the result is the emergence of an organic solidarity.

Durkheim's dichotomy between mechanical and organic solidarity resembles the notions of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, respectively, propounded by Tönnies (1957) in *Community and society*. The former is a type of social setting in which people live together as relatives, friends, and neighbours. They are tied together because of their communal feelings, emotions, and instincts. But *gesellschaft* is another type of social setting that develops in larger geographies such as big cities, where people are associated with each other due to convention, agreement, politics, and rule of law. *Gesellschaft* is an ideal and artificial situation where communal feelings, emotions and instincts are lost but *gemeinschaft*, on the other hand, is a real and natural situation where 'natural will for living together' works as binding force but not the conventions and legal agreements (Varcoe 2008).

Habermasian notion of 'lifeworld' stems from what Tonnies referred as gemeinschaft and Durkheim referred as mechanical solidarity. In *The Theory of communication action*, Habermas (1984, 1987) elaborates the nature and importance of the lifeworld. He claims that lifeworld is the relationship people hold to each other in a traditional society. It is maintained by ordinary people talking to each other, sharing their feelings and understandings with each other, and knowing each other in everyday relationships. Individuals from the very beginning of their lives are socialised according to the lifeworld maintained by the community people. For Habermas, the lifeworld is the background consensus of our everyday lives – 'the vast stock of taken for granted definitions and understandings of the world that give coherence and direction to our everyday actions and interactions' (Pusey 1987, 58).

According to Habermas, the main problem in today's society is that the 'lifeworld' and its fundamental characteristics are diminishing because the lifeworld has been colonised by a new phenomenon called the 'system', meaning the 'capitalist system'. A society dominated by the 'system' can be compared with Tonnies notion of gesellschaft and Durkheim's notion of organic solidarity, in which people are associated with a kind of artificial bond created by 'power and money'. Even though Habermasian conceptualisations of lifeworld and system stem from the earlier notions developed by Tonnies and Durkheim, Habermas takes 'market imperatives' as a major point of departure from his predecessors in his extensive theorisation of communicative action. Moreover, unlike Tonnies and Durkheim, Habermas takes language as the major attribute of the lifeworld to establish social relation, which is replaced by money and administrative system, in the capitalist society. In the lifeworld, there is 'social integration' which stands in sharp contrast with 'system integration' found in the capitalist society. In social integration people are associated with each other 'via a basic normative consensus' such as culture, language, 'norms, values, and mutual understanding' (Habermas 1996, 39) but in the system integration people are associated 'via the systemic interconnection of functionally specified domains of action' (Habermas 1987, 115). System integration is regulated by economic and bureaucratic forces whereas the regulating forces of social relations are only money and power (Habermas 1996).

According to Habermas, in system integration money steers 'a social intercourse that has been largely disconnected from norms and values ...[and] facilitates the smooth running of the economy as a system' (Edgar 2006, 19). Similarly, the administrative power provides legitimate justification to the state to enact and enforce law. System integration is in fact a fundamental feature of present-day capitalist society where 'highly complex market system' (p. 116) has

almost destroyed the social integration found in the traditional societies. The basic features of the lifeworld that work as social ties are not taken as important and necessary. Rather 'they are made peripheral' (Habermas 1987, 154).

Habermas claims that the administrative power supported by law and economic imperatives (associated with money) have become hegemonic and have started directing what is possible and how anything is achieved in a society. By using such hegemonic power, administrative and economic subsystems of the capitalist society create a situation where human subjects are constituted in a way that often prevents those subjects from raising rational questions against the hegemonic power; rather people behave in a certain way that is expected by the system. Capitalism secures this hegemonic power through the logic of instrumental rationality. Habermas argues that the hegemonic effect of instrumental rationality can be challenged by enhancing communicative rationality.

Therefore, by using Habermasian lens, this study explores whether the increasing domination of neoliberal agendas over the humanistic perspective of lifelong learning conceived in its first generation could be seen as a form of 'colonisation'. Furthermore, I would like to explore whether the imperatives of capitalistic system have exerted pressure not only on ordinary human subjects but also on the educational policies made by supranational organisations like the World Bank. In this context, this research aims to explore how lifelong learning is understood as a tool for achieving economic growth and national competitiveness. How is the notion of lifelong learning being conceived in major policy reports produced by the Bank (World Bank 2003a, 2011)? Are there any misunderstandings of the humanistic ideals of lifelong learning? To answer these questions, in my research and data analysis, the Habermasian concept of 'colonisation of

the lifeworld' has been a crucial theoretical tool to review policy documents of both the World Bank and LDCs.

4.2.2 Communicative rationality

The concept of rationality, dominated by Kantian philosophy of logic, asserts that humans are conscious individuals capable of thinking rationally and making self-decisions, something that Habermas refers to the notion of 'decisionism'. But the development of communication theory in linguistics challenged this notion. This theory argued that language, as a means of communication, is not solely the medium of individual reasoning but a powerful tool to guide the 'consciousness' and reasoning itself. By implication, language is something that shapes 'rationality'. This emphasis on language over consciousness symbolises what is now called the 'linguistic turn' in social sciences. Influenced by this turn, Habermas' predecessors in Frankfurt School such as Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) formulated their views on rationality. But their formulation was based on Max Weber's concept of 'iron cage' (Weber 1930), which, according to Habermas, is the major problems in interpreting rationality. Habermas argues that 'Weber incorrectly conflated modernisation and rationality with rationality per se' which led him to conclude that 'the reason itself as the iron cage' (Murphy 2010, 82).

Habermas not only drew a line between modernity and rationality but also divided rationality into two: instrumental rationality and communicative rationality. He argued that communicative rationality is not necessarily tied with modernisation process; rather it is an inevitable attribute of the lifeworld. In this sense, the root cause of the problems faced by LDCs is not 'rationality' *per se* but the domination of instrumental rationality over communicative rationality. This way Habermas reaches a conclusion that 'the unfinished project of modernity is

to protect and expand the sphere of communicative rationality and relink the differentiated expert domains with the communicative praxis of the lifeworld' (Boman 2006, 550, Habermas 1997).

Habermasian theorisation of communicative rationality relates to the concept of 'communicative competence' which is an expanded concept of 'linguistic competence', often associated with Saussure (1966): the progenitor of structuralism, also called the father of modern linguistics. This concept was further expanded by an American linguist Noam Chomsky, who adopted Saussure's concept in *Transformational Grammar* (Chomsky 2002). Both Saussure and Chomsky limited 'competence' within the analysis of formal structure of sentences and the rules of grammar, also called grammatical competence. They claimed that linguistic competence (or langue in Saussure's terms) enables human beings to create infinite number of sentences with the help of finite number of grammatical rules. Habermasian conceptualisation of communicative competence takes some insights from the notion of 'linguistic competence' but goes beyond that. In a sense, communicative competence, in Habermasian conceptualisation, relates to Bourdieu's notion of 'extended competence' that aims to enable speakers to create 'infinite number of sentences in an infinite number of situations, coherently and pertinently' (Bourdieu 1977, 446).

In Habermasian sense, communicative competence is a fundamental ability possessed by community members to participate in rational discussion; and hence this is an inherent feature of communicative rationality. For Habermas (1984) a rational person is

not only if he [sic] is able to put forward an assertion, when criticised, to provide grounds for it by pointing to appropriate evidence, but also if he [sic] is following an established norm and is able, when criticised, to justify his [sic] action by explicating the given situation in the light of legitimate expectations...And the rationality of those who participate in this communicative practice is determined whether, if necessary, they could, under suitable circumstances, provide reasons for their expressions (pp. 15-17).

Habermas claims that one of the reasons behind the domination of instrumental rationality over communicative rationality – and the subsequent colonisation of the lifeworld by the system – is the increasing complexity that the capitalist system has brought to the society. In a small-scale society, one knows other members, which means he or she understands what other people know, what skills they have, and how to negotiate with them. As these shared understanding or 'the presuppositions' are sustained by 'culturally transmitted and linguistically organised reservoir of implicit knowledge' (Habermas 1984, xxiv), the communicative competence possessed by each member of the society is not lost. To state in Habermasian term, the people in the traditional society possess the ability to make 'validity claims', which is the fundamental feature of communicative rationality.

In Habermasian analysis, validity claims refer to at least three ways through which any claims made by a speaker can be challenged or questioned by listeners: the meaningfulness of what the speaker says; the speaker's right to say what he or she says; and the sincerity of the speaker to make claims (Edgar 2006, xv, Habermas 1984). But in the late capitalistic system, societies have become so complex that people have started to lose power to make validity claims as they 'cease relating to each other purely as communicatively competent human beings, and instead treat each other as means to an end' (Edgar 2006, 18). This is happening because their communicative competence is colonised by 'instrumental rationality'. As a result individuals and groups increasingly 'define themselves and their aspiration in system terms and see themselves as consumers and clients' (Habermas 1987, 356). The human subjects are converted into workers and consumers that involve exchanging their labour for money and monetarily measured goods and services. The state administrative system regulates such exchanges, and in return gets revenues paid as taxes that are again used for maintaining the system mechanism (Welton 1995,

143). In a nutshell, the political and economic imperatives of instrumental rationality, or the rules of the system, have reduced the possibility of communicative rationality that could guide and shape 'decisions and actions that affect the core activities of the lifeworld' (Murphy and Fleming 2010, 6).

A crucial point to note here is that the people colonised by the system imperatives often do not question or even understand the rules that govern their actions (unless they are provided with some enabling conditions). Why are they not able to understand such rules? Habermas provides an explanation for this:

The goal-directed actions [of individuals] are coordinated not only through processes of reaching understanding, but also through functional interconnections that are not intended by them and are usually not even perceived within the horizon of everyday practice. In capitalist societies, the market is the most important example of a norm-free regulation of cooperative contexts. The market is one of those systemic mechanisms that stabilize non-intended interconnections of action by way of functionally intermeshing action consequences, whereas the mechanism of mutual understanding harmonizes the action orientations of participants (Habermas 1987, 151).

Scholars who use Habermasian analysis of the role of the market believe that 'the complexity of late capitalism is outstripping people's capacity to understand and hence to resist new forms of domination that capitalism is producing' (Welton 2005, Plumb 1995, 181). As the lifeworld is controlled by money and power, people's needs and wishes have been unidentifiable; 'instead the needs of the system' have become eminent (Fleming 2012, 132). Because of this complexity it has been difficult for policy makers to understand what perspective of lifelong learning—one that is oriented towards the market or the one that is oriented towards the lifeworld—really necessary for a country.

Habermas' unique position to defend the notion of modernity and rationality not only made him a 'widely discussed' (Antonio and Kellner 1992, 278) critical theorists but also one of the key figures triggering scholarly debate in several areas including critical theory. The history of his scholarly publications shows that the debates and criticisms of his ideas have led him to revise and further expand his critical theory. For example, in *The structural transformation of the public sphere*, Habermas (1989) investigated how the liberal and the bourgeois form of public sphere was transformed into the social-welfare state that ultimately limited the scope of discussion and debate pertaining to the general public.

However, some of Habermasian ideas are challenged by some notable critics. For example, his analysis of public sphere was criticised by feminist scholars such as Nancy Fraser. According to Fraser (1990), despite its attempt to critique the bourgeois form of public sphere, Habermasian theorisation has not provided 'a new, post-bourgeois model of the public sphere' (p. 58). Fraser outlines four basic assumptions (see pp 62-63) of the Habermasian conceptualisation of public sphere, which, according to Fraser, have constrained the possibility of creating public sphere that really contribute towards social justice and equality. Fraser's major criticism is that the Habermasian conceptualisation of the public sphere is 'constituted by a number of exclusions' including gender inequality (p. 59). Fraser argues that Habermas, while promoting the agenda of rational discussion, silenced all forms of social inequality and power imbalances which might curtail the possibility of empowering the marginalised groups of people, especially women, to participate in public discussion and influence the decisions of their concerns.

The notion of public sphere and type of public debate described by Habermas, in a sense, resembles the forms of rational communication that take place in the lifeworld discussed above.

However, according to Fraser, the problem with this conceptualisation is that it is not possible for all interlocutors, especially for the marginalised groups of people 'to bracket status differentials and to deliberate as if they were social equals' (Fraser 1990, 62). This means that these types of people, even if they are the potential discussants, either they are systematically excluded or their opinions are undermined hence they are not able to question the status quo perpetuated in the form of class, race and gender.

Habermas used Freudian psychoanalysis, especially the analysis of patient's interaction as a way of understanding human psychology, particularly to theorise the power dynamics among individuals who participate in rational discussion. But critics argued that psychoanalysis could not provide an 'apt model of liberatory reflection in any case' mainly because 'the asymmetries between patient and analyst could not represent the proper intersubjective form for emancipation' (Bohman and Rehg 2011, n.p.). The power imbalance between the analyst and the patient—which gives the former a superior role during the interaction, interpretations and the analysis of the interaction—cannot lead to the development of emancipatory science that Habermas argued in *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Habermas 1971).

Hence, according to above noted critiques, the notion of rational discussion or communicative rationality does not really empower the marginalised group of people because either they are excluded from their participation in discussion or their capacity to act rationally is squashed by the status quo. Hence, one of the crucial implications of this type of critique for this research is having a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of rational communication. It is important to be extra cautious about who participates in public discussion in what role and with what forms of power. Two major contexts in which I have used this nuanced understanding of public sphere and communicative rationality are: (a) the sphere of educational policy

discussion taking place between the World Bank's delegates and the representatives of the GON; and (b) the lifeworld maintained by the people living rural communities of LDCs.

Therefore, in this study, I have used the idea of communicative rationality for exploring not only the misunderstandings of the humanistic perspective of lifelong learning but also for exploring how some of the principles of the humanistic perspective of lifelong learning are reproduced in the educational policy discourse of the World Bank as well as LDCs. Furthermore, Habermasian conceptualisation has been used to explore (a) how the notion of the instrumental rationality associated with economistic perspective of lifelong has curtailed the communicative competence of policy makers; and (b) whether the power imbalances among policy makers (both associated with the GON and the World Bank) has reduced the capacity of Nepalese policy makers to participate in rational discussion while doing policy negotiation with international donors especially those associated with the World Bank.

4.3 Summary

Informed by Habermasian conceptualisation of the lifeworld and communicative rationality, the aim of this study is to explore the possible connections and contradictions between the lifeworld maintained by rural communities of LDCs and the dominant neoliberal perspective of lifelong learning developed in the OECD context. Hence, the focus of this study is to explore the extent to which educational policies of LDCs, especially of Nepal, have been colonised by the new rhetoric of lifelong learning promoted by supranational organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank. At the centre of all these discussions, I focus on what understanding and agenda of lifelong learning are being promoted by the World Bank for addressing the problems and challenges of LDCs like Nepal.

To sum up, in light of the theoretical discussion presented in this Chapter, this research brings a critical perspective to analyse whether the instrumental rationality associated with the economistic agenda of lifelong learning has jeopardised policy makers' capacity to participate in rational discussion and unknot the intricacies of their problems, mainly due to the force of capitalistic system. Why are they investing in human capital education (in its neoliberal manifestation or the second generation of human capital theory) without really understanding whether their investment has been solving their problems in sustainable manner? To be precise, looking through Habermasian lens, the point is not that LDCs do not need human capital (or instrumental) knowledge, but the focus of this inquiry is to understand how the instrumental rationality associated with the new rhetoric of lifelong learning – such as flexible labour force, economic growth and competitiveness – has colonised educational policies and practices and marginalized other forms of rationality.

Chapter 5: Methodology

Building on the theoretical discussion presented in Chapter 4, in this Chapter, I present critical policy sociology as an overarching methodological framework; the sources of my data; method, tools and techniques used for gathering and analysing the data; some of the research issues such as validity and ethics; and methodological approaches adopted to generate themes, and draw findings.

5.1 Critical policy sociology

Critical policy sociology developed by scholars such as Dale (1986), Gale (2001), Ozga (1987, 2000), Rawolle and Lingard (2008) informs this research especially for analysing educational policy documents and interviews. More specifically, among various perspectives of critical policy sociology such as evaluation study and policy analysis, this study followed the 'post-Westphalian perspective'. The Post-Westphalian perspective of policy sociology is helpful to analyse educational policy of one or more nations in the context of educational globalisation (Ball 1997, Dale 1999, Ball 1998, 1999, Rizvi and Lingard 2010). I have used this perspective to explore how the educational policy agenda conceived at supranational organisations such as the World Bank has affected educational policy making and implementation at LDCs.

Jenny Ozga, who is known to have coined the term, policy sociology, claims that policy sociology is rooted in the social science tradition. It is historically informed and employs 'qualitative and illuminative techniques' (Gale 2001, 381, Ozga 1987). To make sense of what is 'policy sociology' we need to compare it with other variants of policy research. Roger Dale contrasts 'policy sociology' with two other facets of policy research that he calls 'social administration project' and 'policy analysis project' (Ozga 2000, Dale 1986). The social

administration project aims at improving administrative practices of welfare system within a nation-state whereas 'policy analysis project' aims at finding solutions of social problems encountered, particularly, during the policy implementation stage. Unlike these two facets of policy research 'policy sociology', what Dale calls 'social science project', aims at meeting peoples' needs, 'to define and clarify their problems, to identify options and assess their effectiveness' (Ozga 2000, 40, Dale 1986).

For Young (1999), policy analysis manifests a more traditional approach whereas policy sociology is a more critical one. Young argues that the traditional approach views policy research as a neutral scientific approach but it 'fails to critique rational decision making models that view policy problems as neutral' (p. 678). In contrast to this, Young claims that the critical approach to policy studies not only challenges the notion that takes policy issues as neutral and value-free but also deals with 'how knowledge, power and resources are distributed inequitably' (Young 1999, 685, Carusi 2011). Therefore, as the purposes of this research (see Chapter 1.1) are related to these two perspectives—post-Westphalian (described below) and critical—policy sociology is found the most suitable methodology for this study.

In the context of globalisation, education policy of a nation state is influenced by international policy agendas. Hence, for a comprehensive analysis of educational policy it is necessary to bring an international perspective which is referred as the de-parochialisation of educational policy studies. Nation-states are highly interconnected and their policies are influenced by supranational organisations such as UNESCO, the OECD, the European Union and the World Bank. These two key concepts—post-Westphalian and critical perspective—of critical policy sociology are explained below.

According to Krasner (1995), the term 'post-Westphalian', which is used to highlight the burgeoning interconnections and influence among different nations in the globalized world, refers to the practice of policy making and analysing with regard to the influence of globalisation. The explication of the post-Westphalian perspective is incomplete without a 'critical perspective' of policy sociology. The post-Westphalian perspective of policy sociology is informed by critical theory to provide a critical lens to policy researchers to examine how supranational organisations influence educational policies of their member states.

Neo-Marxian scholars such as Gramsci and Althusser were critical of state apparatuses such as schools and bureaucracy and the way these apparatuses are appropriated by the elites for interpellating certain ideologies or 'common sense' to further exploit the marginalised group of people (Althusser 1971, Gramsci 1971). The 'critical aspect' of Critical Policy Sociology is informed by the contribution of three notable scholars: Gramsci, Bourdieu and Habermas. In Gramscian terms the major struggle we are having today is the struggle to understand the tendency through which individuals submit themselves, or 'give consent' to the forms of domination and exploitation.

Traditional methods of policy analysis focused on only national context are less useful for understanding the tension between the global and the local. If we overlook 'how our social imaginary is being reshaped simultaneously by both global and local processes' we may not be able to 'critically engage with these processes in order to develop alternatives to their hegemonic expressions' (Rizvi and Lingard 2010, 35). As the present discourse on critical theory is mostly influenced by Bourdieu and Habermas, the contributions of these two theorists to the post-Westphalian perspective of policy sociology need further elaboration. My aim here is not to exaggerate one's ideas to critique another but, as stated by Latour (2004), to assess the existing

ideas with care and caution and 'assemble' what has already been developed in the field of critical theory.

5.1.1 Bourdieu and policy sociology

A number of scholars (Rawolle and Lingard 2008, Lingard, Rawolle, and Taylor 2005, Lingard, Taylor, and Rawolle 2005) who bring Bourdieusian perspective to policy analysis argue that some of Bourdieu's ideas such as the rejection of 'methodological nationalism' (Bourdieu 1999), concept of field (Bourdieu 1984), and distinctions among the forms of capital (Bourdieu 1986) are helpful while analysing educational policy. These scholars claim that methodological nationalism, or parochial analysis of education policy, could not 'provide adequate scope for analysing educational policy in the context of globalisation' because the scope of policy stretches from local to national and global levels (Rawolle and Lingard 2008, 730). They argue that policy analysts need to see how educational policies are affected by exogenous forces often emanating from supranational organisations such as the OECD or the World Bank (Lingard, Rawolle, and Taylor 2005). Bourdieu's theorisation on how policy (as text) transfers from those organisations to national and international spaces—and influences different 'fields' and affects the subsequent course of actions—is useful for this study. According to Bourdieu (1999),

text circulate without their context, that ... they don't bring with them the field of production of which they are a product, and the fact that recipients, who are themselves in a different field of production, reinterpret the texts in accordance with the structure of the field of reception, are facts that generate some formidable misunderstandings and that can have good or bad consequences (p. 221).

Moreover, the Bourdieu's idea of 'forms of capital' is crucial for understanding how only certain forms of policies, but not others, circulate globally and affect national and local educational practices. Scholars who use Bourdieu's notion of capital argue that the amount of

capital possessed by a nation determines the degree of influence that nations can exert on shaping educational polices of other nations. Bourdieu talks not only about economic capital (as Marx did) but also about other forms of capital such as physical, cultural and social. All forms of capital work as the constituents of 'symbolic capital'. Symbolic capital is 'perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception, which cause them to know it and to recognize it, to give it value' (Bourdieu and Farage 1994, 8). In this respect, the agents of neoliberal globalisation, mainly the World Bank and its allies such as the WTO and the IMF, possess 'symbolic capital' which makes them able to use symbolic power. In this sense, endorsement of neoliberal educational policies in the name of lifelong learning can be interpreted as 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) performed by these financial institutions and their allies. In this respect, 'what passes for academic scholarship' and the educated people in LDCs is not 'in relation to an absolute or objective good' (Broadfoot 1978, 76); rather, it is the choice of certain forms of education that may not be useful for LDC societies.

Moreover, Bourdieu's notion of capital also helps us to see another side of the problem that we are facing today. On the surface, supranational organizations seem to have imposed symbolic violence on the developing nations but in reality the powerful nations like the US are the main players in 'this game' (Schuetze 2006) because the power dynamics between economically vis-à-vis politically powerful nations and LDCs are very asymmetric. The supranational organizations provide a suitable 'field' for playing this game, often in the favour of those powerful nations. For example, almost all economically poor nations including LDCs, like Nepal, are positioned differently from the powerful nations of the Global North, like 'the US, in relation to the educational policy effects of the World Bank and other international agencies' (Rizvi and Lingard 2010, 68). To be specific, the US has the power to influence the World Bank,

but Nepal has almost no power to influence the former. Hence, using critical policy sociology my methodological approach this study aims to explore the extent to which Nepal's education policy-making is influenced by the World Bank. I would like to focus on how LDCs' problems and challenges are addressed by global educational policy goals after the 1990s such as the Education for All, the MDGs and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2016-2030), which supranational organisations such as the World Bank have endorsed for LDCs.

5.1.2 Habermas and policy sociology

My engagement with the literature related to Habermas (Habermas 1971, 1984, 1987, 1989, 1997) shows that some of the concepts—such as colonisation of the lifeworld and the importance of communicative rationality discussed in the previous Chapter—are very crucial for bringing critical and post-Westphalian perspectives in policy sociology.

In this research I am particularly interested in understanding whether the 'pathologies' in educational policies are the consequences of the colonisation of communicative rationality by instrumental rationality. As noted above, instrumental rationality is associated with neoliberal ideology which has become increasingly dominant in the field of policy making. 'It is the discourse of neoliberal ideology, according to which deregulation, privatization and competition are not merely necessary but also good, and according to which markets are not merely efficient, but also promote freedom'(Jütten 2013, 99). If this is the case then such pathologies are not easily cured because of the lack of rational discussion among various stakeholders of education at local, national, and global levels. Communicative rationality—which Habermas takes as an inherent attribute of the lifeworld—can also be a hallmark for the production and implementation of appropriate educational policy in the world governed by supranational organisations. The communication between local, national and global actors may be distorted, not necessarily

because of linguistic reasons, something known as communicative competence in Habermasian postulation, rather because of the asymmetrical power relations among these actors.

I found critical policy sociology useful to explore whether the policies and programs recommended by the World Bank are based on the 'subjective decisions' of one party, something that Habermas calls 'decisionism'. I would like to explore the extent to which policy making process in LDCs follows intersubjective process: where the principles of deliberative democracy are followed, where all stakeholders have equitable, non-coercive, and non-hierarchical chance of participating in rational discussion and redeeming each other's validity claims.

In the context of increasing power asymmetry among various nations—where LDCs have been treated as mere loan recipients-rational discussion may not happen among educational stakeholders hence educational policies and programs are decided by the agents of neoliberal capitalism. Habermasian analysis also helps to understand the relation between money and power-the two steering media of 'capitalist system'. In the context of globalization and the increasing interest of supranational organizations in boosting transnational governance, the problem is really de-parochial where market imperatives associated with money and administrative imperative associated with power are globalized. Now the issue is not how money and power/politics are operating at national level and colonizing the lifeworld; rather a more important issue is how financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF are promoting new forms of colonization within the framework of neoliberal capitalism. Therefore, policy sociology is useful for this research to bring critical and post-Westphalian perspective in order to understand whether LDCs educational policies are the outcomes of decisionism dominated by the global financial institutions or whether there are any 'intersubjective practices' based on the principles of communicative rationality.

5.2 Sources of data

I used two major sources of data for this study: policy documents and interviews.

5.2.1 Policy documents

The policy documents analysed in this study include the following:

- Policy documents published by the World Bank in the subject areas related to lifelong learning:
 - a. Key documents selected for detail analysis were 'Education Strategy 2020'
 (World Bank 2011), Constructing knowledge societies: New challenges for tertiary education (World Bank 2002a), Lifelong learning in the global knowledge economy: Challenges for developing countries (World Bank 2003a).
 - b. Some policy documents associated with these key documents published by the Bank were also considered (World Bank 1980, 1995, 1999a, 2000, 2002b, 2015a)
- Policy documents associated with Nepal's educational projects and programmes launched especially after the 1980s (see 'Section 2.3: Education after the 1980' of Chapter 2) were analysed:
 - a. Policy documents published by the Government of Nepal (GON 1997, 1992, 1999, 2003, 2007b, a, 2009, 2014a).
 - b. Project Recommendation and Completion Reports published by the World Bank in relation to Nepal's education (World Bank 1984, 1988, 1993, 1994, 1999b, 2001, 2003b, 2010a, b, 2014c, 2004, 2009, 2014d, 2015c, b).

I have selected these policy documents to analyse and illustrate the importance of historicity in policy discourse. According to Phillips (2003, p. 2), 'policy sociology placed within

a wider context of historical analysis provides an analytical approach which attempts to determine the major ideas, values and critical factors which have influenced and shaped the direction of education policy in a given period'. Similarly, Ball (1997, 266) claims that policy analysis is a 'trajectory study' where attentions must be paid to 'the ways in which policies evolve, change and decay through time and space and their incoherence'. Following Foucault's notion of 'historicity' scholars argue that the educational problems we are facing today emanated from the 'deeper historical, structural and ideological contradictions in education policy'(Grace 1995, 3). To analyse such contradictions, this study explores the history of educational policy development in Nepal.

5.2.2 Interview transcripts

Another source of data was interviews conducted with 13 key educational policy makers of Nepal in 2015. Below I explain how interviewees were selected, how interviews were conducted and transcripts were prepared for analysis.

5.3 Interviews

Looking through the lens of 'communicative rationality' (Habermas 1984), interviewing can be seen as an 'intersubjective process of learning' where the interviewer is involved in a process of knowledge co-construction with the help of interviewees' active participation. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the role of interviewer is of two types which they define using two metaphors: 'traveller' and 'miner'. Interviewer-as-traveller involves the construction of knowledge by providing due recognition of interviewees' opinions—where interviewer's own experiences and knowledge play a significant role—not only when asking questions but also while analysing data and presenting the findings of the research. On the other hand, the role of 'interviewer as miner' involves the act of unearthing opinions, views, and experiences of the interviewees by mining deeper into the layer of unconsciousness.

A miner-interviewer tends to believe that knowledge is with participant that s/he must elicit by asking the right questions. A miner is less likely to use her/his knowledge in this elicitation process. S/he is oriented to producing a kind of pure knowledge in the sense that there is no subjective filtration of interviewer's idiosyncrasies and personal philosophy. On the other hand, a traveller-interviewer believes that knowledge is constructed through interaction where interviewer has an active role to contest and verify what interviewees say and believe. These two metaphorical conceptualisations—traveller and miner—are crucial to understand how 'meaning' or 'reality' is interpreted in major paradigms of social science research: positivism and constructivism. Positivists believe that meaning is inherent in the objects, something that is out of subjective realm but for constructivists meaning become something socially created by the objects and subjects (Kaufmann 2011). In the case of interviewing, constructivists believe that meaning is an intersubjective process that comes through the active involvement of both interviewer and interviewee. Hence, knowledge produced through interview is more 'intersubjective' one.

My role in this research was the one represented by 'the traveller' metaphor and I brought a constructivist approach to my research for interviewing and analysing data. That is to say, this study is an epistemic inquiry in which knowledge is generated through dialogue and questioning rather than assuming what the interviewees believe to be true (Hoskins and Stoltz 2005). Rather than presenting myself as an 'incompetent interlocutor' (Flick 2006, 165) I asked some probing questions and always remained attentive what my interviewees were 'saying or not saying' (Bryman, Teevan, and Bell 2009, 164). For example, I wanted to explore my interviewees' understanding of lifelong learning and how their understanding was affected by the hegemonic discourse of neoliberal globalisation in education. If I had totally relied on 'verbatim accounts' of what they said I might have 'relinquished' depth of understanding (Hoskins and Stoltz 2005, 98). As exemplified by Hoskins and Stoltz (2005), my struggle lay 'in finding a balance between a respectful, and collaborative alliance with participants' (p. 97).

Some scholars (Owens 2006, Sipe and Ghiso 2004, Hoskins and Stoltz 2005) have pointed out some practical problems such as distortion of conversation while doing interview. To avoid potential obstructions in the conversation some techniques such as, turn taking or 'conversational turn' (Sipe and Ghiso 2004), or 'conversational space' (Owens 2006) were used. Hence, the conversation between me and my interviewees was not obstructed due to hesitation, misunderstandings, and the lack of communicative competence. According to Owens (2006), conversational space is 'the arena of topics, gestures, and languages safely available to individuals in a given verbal interaction...allowing interaction to continue unimpeded by embarrassment or shame for either party' (p. 1161). In this research, I did not consider my interviewees and their views as objects from which I could take away and convert into a new rhetoric of knowledge; rather I treated them as rational discussants and co-producers of knowledge. I achieved this by: (a) clarifying with them my research goals; (b) being in-touch with them throughout my study (and beyond) and conveying the progresses done in this research; and (c) sending the interview transcripts (of their own interview) for 'member checking'. I believe that these techniques have increased the validity of this study.

5.3.1 Selection of interviewees

The interviewees for this research include experts who were responsible for educational policy making and implementation in Nepal. According to Gläser and Laudel (2009), experts are

'people who possess special knowledge of a social phenomenon' which the interviewer is interested in' (p. 117). Experts may include different categories of people (Bogner, Littig, and Menz 2009) such as business elites, scholars having expertise in specific field such as economics and political scientists, educationists, high ranking bureaucrats and administrators, and so on. In this research the word 'expert' is used in a very specific sense as exemplified in the criteria that I used for selecting interviewees.

Some of the major criteria for selecting interviewee included: (a) involvement in Nepal's educational policy making process in the recent past or at the time of data collection; (b) involvement in policy or program negotiation with supranational organisations, mainly the World Bank; and (c) holding (or having held in recent past) a responsible position in government and non-government offices in Nepal. No assumptions were made that those people had a 'complex stock of knowledge about the topic under study' (Flick 2006, 155) on what a good educational policy should be, and how negotiations should take place between national and supranational policy actors; nonetheless, they must have been involved in policy making and implementation in Nepal. To be precise, I tried to select those who were responsible for designing and implementing the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP, 2009-2016). However, given my research questions, it was also crucial for me to interview the people working in the field of adult education, non-formal education, and literacy because those 'beyond school sector' initiatives are equally important in Nepal's educational policy development. As all major educational projects and programmes implemented after the 1980s were funded by external sources such as the World Bank, the orientation of lifelong learning taken by the latter, have some influence on what adult education and literacy mean in the context of Nepal.

My longstanding relation with Nepal's Ministry of Education and other line agencies while working in Nepal as an educational policy researcher was an asset for choosing the 'right people'(Westby 1990) for conducting interviews. Hence, in light of all the issues mentioned above, I selected interviewees from the following pool of people in Nepal.

- a. Key personnel in the Ministry of Education and its line agencies such as the Department of Education and some District Education Offices
- Key personnel who worked in the field of adult education and literacy such as Non-Formal Education Centre
- c. Key personnel working in I/NGO focusing on the field of education as their major interventions
- d. Academicians such as teachers and professors who worked as consultants in educational projects and often involved in educational policy making

Normally, personnel listed under point 'a' and 'b' were selected on the basis of their involvement in educational policy making. In some instances, when the experts holding higher positions were not available, then the persons holding lower level were selected, however, the criteria listed above were not violated. Some interviewees were found through snowballing. I requested people to suggest some names or the organisations or institutions where I could find potential interviewees for this research. I searched for the background information of my interviewees before contacting them by visiting their web-profiles or written works published both in print and on the Internet.

5.3.2 Conducting interviews

The type of interview conducted for this research can be defined as 'semi-structured expert interview' (Kvale 2006, Rubin and Rubin 2005, Wengraf 2001). According to Kvale and

Brinkmann (2009, 124), semi-structured interview has 'a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as some suggested questions. Yet at the same time there is openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions to follow up the specific answers given and stories told by the subjects'. There was flexibility on the order of questions and interviewees had freedom to speak at considerable length on the issues raised, however 'going off tangents' (Bryman, Teevan, and Bell 2009, 159) too much was not encouraged. Necessary interruptions were made by using polite utterances while conducting interviews.

Success of an interview depends on the skills and expertise of interviewer. According to Kvale (1996), there are ten characteristics of a successful interviewer: knowledgeable, structuring, clear, gentle, sensitive, open, steering, critical, remembering, and interpreting. On this list Bryman, Teevan, and Bell (2009) add three more characteristics: balanced, ethically sensitive, and non-judgmental (p. 163). Being aware of these characteristics I tried my best to achieve maximum success in this endeavour. My aim in all interviews was to explore interviewees' experiences and opinions, something known as 'informational conversation' (Bogner, Littig, and Menz 2009). Basically I focused on their experiences and opinions rather than their personal matters something focused on 'biographical interviews' undertaken with elites (Flick 2006, 165).

Most of my interviewees were office holders with busy schedules which made it difficult to find time for the interview. I provided maximum flexibility in order to be available at the time and venue desired by them. Since I was affected by the earthquake that hit central Nepal on April 25, 2015 I had to cancel some of my appointments; interviews were then conducted through skype, also called a form of 'computer-mediated interview' (Bryman, Teevan, and Bell 2009, 174), after I returned to Canada from my field visit in Nepal. While conducting skype interviews, I faced some technical problems such as the lack of clarity in sound. I managed to solve them by transcribing the interviews with extra caution. While conducting interviewees on both online and face-to-face mode, I repeated the purpose of the interview that had already been outlined in the consent form. I described the use of the sound recorder and asked each person if they had any questions before starting interviews.

5.3.3 Interview questions and piloting

Interview questions were designed according to the research questions of this study presented in Chapter 1. As I was conducting semi-structured expert interviews, similar types of questions were asked in each interview from the list of the following potential themes. To bring consistency in the interview, similar wording and ordering were followed.

- Lifelong learning: its definition and debates
 - Example question: what do you mean by lifelong learning? In your opinion, why does Nepal need lifelong learning policy?
- Introduction of lifelong learning in Nepal (through School Sector Reform Plan)
 - Example questions: What were the motivating factors behind the introduction of lifelong learning in the ongoing educational programme of Nepal, mainly the SSRP?
- World Bank's interventions in policy making
 - Could you please share your experiences while you were at the negotiating table with major funders (such as the World Bank) of Nepal's education?
- Causes of exogenous influence on Nepal's educational policy making
 - Why do you think Nepal's educational policy is influenced often by external factors?

- Why do you think there is less focus on indigenous education such as rural adult education (for example, rural adult education promoted by the *Seti project*) in Nepal?
- Applicability of lifelong learning policy
 - Could you explain whether lifelong learning policy solves Nepal's problem such as increasing unemployment among young graduates?

The interview questions presented in the Appendix C of this dissertation are the final version of interview protocol modified on the basis of pilot study conducted with 5 interviewees. The pilot study, also called the pretesting of interview protocol (Teijlingen and Hundley 2002) was helpful for refining my questions and especially how questions should be asked with proper tone and intonation. This pretesting also gave an important insight as to whether my research questions and the interview questions were particularly important in the context of Nepal and whether talking with the policy makers on the basis of those questions was a worthwhile act. I transcribed some parts of the pilot interviews and undertook a kind of initial analysis. This helped me to determine if my subsequent interviews would be affected by the local politics and especially the views and attitudes of Nepalese educational policy makers on the potential influence of the donors, especially the World Bank. From the pilot interviews, I also learnt that I needed to make some modifications in the questions according to the type of interviewees. I also requested some experts, mainly the members of my research committee including my supervisors, to comment on those themes/questions before I embarked on my subsequent interviews.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), there could be nine different types of interview questions: introductory questions, follow-up questions, probing questions, specifying

questions, direct questions, indirect questions, structuring questions, silence, and interpreting questions (p. 135-36). All types of questions have their specific significance, nevertheless, I used mainly introductory questions, follow up or probing questions and interpreting questions in this research.

Introductory questions are some broad questions that open up discussion by providing chance for describing interviewees' experiences on the subject of investigation. For this research, I asked some introductory questions like 'Could you describe how your involvement was in the ongoing School Sector Reform program in Nepal?' Similarly, the follow up and probing questions were not necessarily the questions already listed in the interview guide (see Appendix) but improvised by picking up on things said by interviewees (Bryman, Teevan, and Bell 2009, 160). Some of the follow-up questions used in this research were: 'You indicated that Nepalese policy makers were not able to reject the policy recommendations made by the World Bank, could you please tell me your opinion why were they not able to do so?' I also asked some 'specifying questions' like 'You said that Nepalese policy makers were not able to reject the policy recommendations like, 'Do you think the current educational policy will solve some of the problems of Nepal such as poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment?'

Normally, each interview started with open-ended introductory questions and followed some probing and specifying questions. Leading questions, that are the questions 'that imply a correct or socially acceptable questions' (Bryman, Teevan, and Bell 2009, 162) which may end up with obvious answer such as 'Are you responsible for making policy' were intentionally avoided. Interviewees had maximum freedom to ask for clarifications, if they did not understand

the questions posed to them. At the end of each interview, I specifically asked 'Is there anything else you would like to bring up, or ask about, before we finish the interview?' This gave them 'an additional opportunity to deal with issues' they had been 'thinking or worrying about during the interview' (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 129).

5.3.4 Translation and transcription

My interviewees had the freedom of speaking in Nepali or in English or both while participating in interview, which, in my understanding, helped them feel comfortable to express their opinions. Policy makers in Nepal are operating at the intersection between using Nepali or English languages. One of the reasons for this is that they have to write policy and related documents in English in order to submit them to the donors like the World Bank. But as the official language of Nepal is only Nepali, these documents have to be produced in Nepali so as to make them linguistically accessible to the majority of Nepalese citizens who do not understand English. Moreover, while Nepalese policy makers are involved in discussion with the donors they have to speak in English. While talking with my potential interviewees in the past during my interviews for my Master of Philosophy dissertation-code-switching and codemixing mainly between English vocabulary and Nepali sentence structure were common. Hence, in this study, I decided to allow them to use both languages – English and Nepali – depending on their preferences. Hence, the audio data obtained from the interview included both languages. This necessitated me not only to transcribe interviews from audio to written scripts but also to translate them from Nepali to English language.

The translation and transcription process was lengthy and laborious. To minimise the amount of time needed I did not prepare transcripts in Nepali language; rather I did translation and transcription at the same time and provided only English transcripts. Some of the redundant parts of the audio of some interviews were not transcribed. However, I was extra cautious not to leave out any crucial parts of the interview while transcribing. Parts of transcripts that are used verbatim were re-checked to ensure accuracy between audio and transcripts while doing analysis.

I had been extra careful especially in translating and transcribing to ensure that I would not lose the meanings of interviews expressed by using non-verbal and non-linguistic features (Gubrium and Holstein 2001). Some of these non-linguistic features included tone of the voice, intonations, facial and bodily expressions, silences and pauses, and changes in breathing. While real interview is lively, transcripts are 'impoverished, decontextualized renderings of live interview conversations' (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 178). To minimise the risk of losing the messages and meanings conveyed by such non-linguistic features, I used two main strategies. First, I transcribed non-linguistic features by using proper symbols. For example, I used three dots (...) for indicating pauses and four dashes (----) for indicating silences. I used up-arrows for 'rising intonations' and down-arrows for 'falling intonations'. And secondly, to minimise the risk of losing such meanings I repeatedly listened to the audio not only while translating and transcribing but also while analysing the transcript data.

5.4 Thematic analysis

As noted above, this study used two types of qualitative data: policy texts and interview transcripts. I analysed both of them using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a tool for analysing qualitative data by 'identifying themes or patterns of cultural meaning; coding and classifying data, usually textual, according to themes; and interpreting the resulting thematic structures by seeking commonalties, relationships, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or explanatory principles' (Lapadat 2010, 926-927). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), there

are five phases in thematic analysis – familiarising with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and defining and naming themes (p. 87-93).

Informed by these phases of thematic analysis, I searched for the patterns in the discourse or ideas, any implicit assumptions made, and beliefs that were taken for granted. In light of three research questions of this study and theoretical framework informed by Habermas, I read those texts with some questions in mind such as: what are the implicit and explicit assumptions made in the text? Who will benefit from any particular provision in educational policy? What are the issues that are suppressed and what are the issues that are highlighted? What are the ambiguities of policy within the policy texts and in relation with other policy texts?

To familiarise myself with the data I read the key policy documents listed above for overall understanding of the issue. I made some working hypotheses and did some hypothetical coding for making signposts to the parts of the documents being analysed. Then I re-read the policy documents and highlighted major paragraphs and sentences, established connections with other sentences and paragraphs, not necessarily in terms of lexical items and grammatical structures but in terms of contents, themes, ideas and concepts. These nodes provided me with workable hypothetical themes such as the role of individual in participating lifelong learning, decentralisation of educational governance and the role some theories of economics such as human capital theory in guiding educational policy.

There is a debate whether themes have to be generated by the researcher (also called theory-driven themes) or they emerge from the data (also called data-driven themes) without explicit attempts of the researcher (Braun and Clarke 2006). The first approach sees the active role of researcher in which potential themes could be guided by the research questions and theoretical framework followed in the research. But in the second approach it is data itself, not

the research question or theoretical framework, which guides the potential themes of the data. What I did was the necessary combination of these two approaches. Hence, themes were guided by research questions that informed my readings of the policy texts and the selection of interview questions. On the other hand, my approach in the meaning making process was intersubjective; I was cautious to not undermine the meanings and understanding of the interviewees. Obviously, my interviewees were experts hence their views informed the themes being generated in the research process.

Some scholars, mostly poststructuralists, critique positivists' quest for finding single reality and argue that meanings of a text could be multiple and changeable. They are interested in 'looking for difference rather than similarity, absence rather than presence, and the local rather than the universal' (Kaufmann 2011, 148). They believe that conventional methods of analysing data by 'coding' or 'parsing' from interview transcripts into smaller bits (Erickson 2004) and searching for themes are dangerous because such tendencies tend to limit the multiplicity of meanings and manipulate participants' meanings as per researcher's own subjectivity. They claim that meanings are rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari 2004), which may not be obtained by parsing interview data into a thematically similar categories. Rather meaning can be obtained by creating 'new links between pieces of empirical matter in order to constitute new relations and ways of being' (Kaufmann 2011, 151). Hence, considering the importance of uncommon data, also called 'outliers' (Sipe and Ghiso 2004), I went beyond the act of finding mere lexical and structural patterns of sentences; instead, I took larger chunks of policy texts or interview transcripts and tried to see the meanings of particular vocabulary in relation to other words and sentences. My interpretation of the texts was not 'limited to mere paraphrases of quotations'

(Fairclough 1995, 187) rather I explored the particular meanings in relation to other texts and discourses such as the discourse related to the humanistic perspective of lifelong learning.

Moreover, while doing analysis, I did not find the policy texts and interview transcripts semantically homogenous. There were some contradictions among the policy texts produced by the World Bank itself. Semantic heterogeneity was higher at national level policy texts because, it is not only the World Bank, but there are other national and international forces (for example, the Asian Development Bank) affecting policy production process. My approach in the entire process of analysis was not only a search for similar patterns, but also for bringing the contradictions and tensions into the process of my discussion. While coding and searching for themes in interview transcripts, I encountered some sets of data not fitting anywhere in my codes or themes. I assessed the validity and significance of those data sets by relating them with interdisciplinary discourses such as the discourse of humanistic perspective of lifelong learning and human capital theory. Some of those outliers became 'the most interesting' (Sipe and Ghiso 2004, 482) part to understand the semantic subtleties of policy discourse.

After careful reading and re-reading of 13 interview transcripts and key policy documents I identified some tentative themes on the basis of two major criteria: (a) repetition of ideas within and across the two sources of data, that is, policy documents and interview transcripts; and (b) the importance of these ideas in terms of my research questions, theoretical framework and the body of scholarly literature in the field of education policy in general and lifelong learning in particular.

After familiarising myself with the data I imported the key policy documents and transcripts to NVivo, a software designed to assist with the analysis of qualitative data such as interviews and policy documents. Again, I read those imported files one by one and coded

sentences and paragraph related to the tentative themes, which are known as Nodes in NVivo. I kept on adding new nodes and sub-nodes as I came across new ideas in those documents. I coded all the interviews first and only then started coding the key policy documents to ensure that meanings expressed in interviews are not interpreted on the basis of the ideas expressed in the policy documents.

Initially, there were 91 nodes altogether but all of them did not have equal number of coded texts. For example, the node 'privatisation' was coded 52 times while texts related to 'individual responsibility' were coded only 16 times. I considered those nodes as main themes that were coded at least 15 times because, given the size of dissertation and the scope of this study, this will provide adequate data for achieving what qualitative researchers call as *theme saturation* (Bowen 2008). The nodes selected for making themes were:

privatisation,	competitiveness,
lifelong learning,	policy dialogue,
World Bank as global leader,	policy shifts,
assessment and measurement,	modernist approach,
governance,	knowledge economy,
outcome based approach,	financing,
indigeneity,	technology, and
national politics,	individual responsibility.

Table 4: Nodes selected for making themes

I re-read all the quotes grouped into those nodes listed above. I merged some of the nodes in terms of their similarities as well as differences. Given the limitation of the volume of this dissertation I decided to use only 8 major nodes as themes for detail analysis (which are presented in Chapter 6). However, some of the quotes coded in other nodes were used in this analysis while some of the quotes coded in selected 8 nodes were not completely used. While doing analysis, I have kept the quotes—both from interview transcripts and policy documents as they are in the original texts to ensure that my analysis is less influenced by my subjectivities.

5.5 Dealing with validity issues

In this research, three criteria--member checking, triangulation and reflexivity—were used to deal with validity issues.

Member checking is the practice of 'taking data and interpretations back to the participants in the study so that they can confirm the credibility of the information and narrative account' (Creswell and Miller 2000, 127). I sent the interview transcripts back to the respective participants for ensuring that the transcripts had maximum level of semantic overlapping and translational equivalence with opinion they expressed during the interview. They were asked to make comments and make some edits if they wished to do that. I received few modifications and some additional views.

Triangulation 'is a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple sources of information to form themes or categories in a study (Creswell and Miller 2000, 126). All the crucial information of interview transcripts was checked for their consistency and trustworthiness. 'Disconfirming evidences' (Creswell and Miller 2000) were seriously assessed for their credibility. Inconsistencies were found in some dates and names of educational projects, funding and so on. They were verified by consulting related sources such as policy documents and project websites.

Reflexivity refers to a process of being self-critical about one's contribution to the production of knowledge. According to Bourdieu (1973), reflexivity helps to ensure the production of praxeological knowledge, that is, the knowledge from an observer's outside perspective that makes visible the biases and values that researcher may bring in the entire process. As stated in the positionality sections (see Chapter 1.4), I tried to be reflexive by disclosing some of my values, beliefs, and biases as required. However, reflexivity was not used

as a justification for bringing more subjective judgement of my own subjectivity. As I was trying to create intersubjective knowledge I tried my best to give maximum credibility to the opinions of my participants. The concept known as 'participant objectivation' propounded by Bourdieu (2003) was taken into account. Participant objectivation is an act of 'objectivizing the subjective relation to the object' (p. 282).

There is a tendency that when a researcher gets the opinion of his/her interviewees in the form of audio recording or transcript s/he uses own subjective understanding to interpret the semantic complexity of interviewees' opinion. For example, one can use hermeneutic tools and ask what the participant 'might mean' by certain utterances. This is done, often mistakenly, for two reasons: one, the interviewer becomes over confident as if s/he has understood what the interviewee intended to say; and second, the interviewer is so influenced by his/he own theoretical framework that s/he loses critical capacity to assess his/her own judgement. To avoid both risks I used Bourdieu's notion of participant objectivation. Being aware of these issues, I tried my best to bring more objectivistic perspective while analysing interview transcripts. Subjective values and biases were minimised to a considerable degree.

5.6 Ethical issues

I followed the ethical guidelines provided by *Behavioural Research Ethics Board* (*BREB*), UBC. By consulting my PhD supervisory committee this proposal underwent through ethical approval process. I completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPC) tutorial 'CORE' (<u>http://tcps2core.ca/welcome</u>) on October 5, 2011 for the partial fulfilment of the Course '*EDUC* 503A: Ethnography and Education'. I completed the tutorial once again before going for data collection. The research proposal was reviewed by the UBC BREB and approval was granted on March 30, 2015 with UBC BREB Number H1500553.

Getting informed consent: : 'informed consent entails informing the research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and main features of the design, as well as any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project' (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 70). I explicitly stated the potential benefits and risks of participating in this research. Two sets of Consent forms were signed between me as a researcher and each of the interviewees who agreed to participate. One copy was kept in my research file and one was returned to the respective interviewees. A sample of Consent Form is appended to this dissertation (see the Appendix).

Protection of 'confidentiality in research implies that private data identifying the participants' is not disclosed (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 72). In this research some of my participants' statements obtained from the interview appeared as a part of my dissertation hence there may be a chance that they could be identified. However, even if they could be recognised by their collective names, for example Nepalese educational policy makers, their names are made anonymous. The audio of the interview and the transcripts are available only to me and my supervisory committee. As I exemplified in Consent Form (Appendix B), their confidentiality is protected by making their identities anonymous.

5.7 Limitation of the study

The study has the following limitations:

a. Even though this study is concerned with 48 LDCs, only one South Asian LDC, Nepal, is taken as a case for full consideration. Some LDCs, especially the African ones, might have different contextual realities hence the findings of the study may not be generalised in all LDCs. However, there may be some shared elements or aspects of Nepal's situation that can be useful for other LDCs.

- b. This study used two sets of data: policy documents and interview transcripts. The practice of policy transfer from the Western OECD countries to LDCs has a long historical trajectory and involves other players such as NGOs and donors associated with several bilateral as well as multilateral organisations. Therefore, this study offers a partial but significant contribution given its focus on interviews with key policy makers and analysis of key policy documents produced by the World Bank and the GON.
- c. Multiple stakeholders such as INGOs, civil society members, political activists and educational administrators have roles in educational policy making and implementation in Nepal. Thirteen people actively involved in funding negotiation with the World Bank and responsible for making educational policy were interviewed for this study. Therefore, as noted above, this research provides a partial, yet significant, contribution to the understanding of a complex field of policy implementation.
- d. The opinions and experiences of indigenous peoples, farmers, and peoples of various categories such as women activists, who work at grassroots level and follow indigenous Nepalese ways of learning and living, could inform this research especially for suggesting an appropriate model of lifelong learning for Nepal. However, because of time constrain and the 2015 Nepal earthquake that happened at the time of my field visit (Regmi 2016b), I was not able to consult them.
- e. Given the complexity of social inequality, especially the discrimination between men and women (see Chapter 2.3.6), it would have been interesting to analyse the educational issues and challenges of Nepal through gender perspective. As the focus of this study was on how supranational organisations influence educational policies and plans of LDCs, the issue of gender and class has not received the same level of consideration in my analysis as the issue of global political economy.

5.8 Summary

The first section of this Chapter presented policy sociology as an overarching methodology of this research. In the second section, I presented two major sources of data used for this study. The first source is the policy documents produced by the World Bank in the form reports for designing, implementing and evaluating various educational projects of Nepal. Some educational policy documents related to lifelong learning, higher education and the Bank's education strategy to reform educational system of LDCs were also regarded as the sources of data for this study. For an in-depth exploration of how the World Bank's policy agendas included in its documents have influenced educational policies, plans and practices of LDCs, the educational policy documents produced by the GON were also selected as major sources of data. This type of data included educational acts and regulations, and reports related to various educational programme implemented in Nepal.

The second source of data of the study included the interviews conducted with key educational policy makers of Nepal. Above all, in this Chapter, I also discussed how interviewees were selected, interviews were conducted and how interview data were made ready for analysis. This chapter also includes statements on some of the measures taken to deal with validity as well as ethical issues. It also presents how both types of data—policy documents and interview transcripts—were analysed using thematic analysis as an analytical tool. This chapter ended with some limitations of the study. The analysis of the data is presented in the next Chapter under 8 themes.

Chapter 6: Analysis and findings

As discussed in Chapter 5, the analysis of policy documents and interviews provided 8 themes. These themes are now analysed in light of the current body of literature and theoretical framework, and presented in this Chapter (Section 6.1-6.8) as the major findings of this study.

6.1 Learning as individual responsibility

In 2002, the World Bank published *Constructing knowledge societies: New challenges for tertiary education* (World Bank 2002a). One of the approaches which the Bank focused on in this document is 'the primacy of the learner' (p. 29) for promoting lifelong learning. The Bank recognised that to provide learning opportunities for different types of students — 'working students, mature students, stay-at-home students, travelling students, part-time students, day students, night students, weekend students, and so on'— structured formal education is not adequate (p. 29). The report went on to argue that 'learning to learn, learning to transform information into new knowledge, and learning to translate new knowledge into applications become more important than memorizing specific information' (p. 29). Identification of diversity in students and the recognition of learning as a continuous process are something new in this approach because in the past the Bank prioritised primary education over secondary and tertiary education.

In 2003, the Bank published *Lifelong learning in the global knowledge economy: Challenges for developing countries* (World Bank 2003a). As a continuation of the World Bank's push towards implementing lifelong learning in its member countries, this document, as reflected in the title, envisions lifelong learning as an inevitable necessity for the developing countries. However, in the World Bank's understanding, there are challenges for LDCs

especially because of their limited financial resources. To mitigate such challenges, the Bank emphasised that 'learners should be responsible for their own learning' (p. 78) which suggests that individuals should bear the expenses of their education if they want to continue their learning. The Bank further argued that learners are the ones to decide 'what to learn and when to continue learning' (ibid).

In 2011, the Bank published *Learning for all: Investing in people's knowledge and skills to promote development* (World Bank 2011). Built on the foundation of previous two documents, in this text, which is called *Education Strategy 2020*, the Bank argued that

The Education Sector Strategy 2020 lays out the World Bank Group's agenda for achieving *Learning for all* in the developing world over the next decade. The overarching goal is not just schooling, but learning. Getting millions more children into school has been a great achievement. The World Bank Group is committed to building on this progress and stepping up its support to help all countries achieve Education for All and the education Millennium Development Goals. The driver of development will, however, ultimately be what individuals learn, both in and out of school, from preschool through the labour market (p. 1).

As reflected in above quote the driver of development is knowledge and skills acquired by individuals through their involvement in schools and the labour market. In surface it appears that there is a sense of giving recognition to workplace learning but by focusing only on labour market the Bank appears to have excluded other parts of people's lives living in rural communities. Moreover, in these key documents, all focused on lifelong learning, individuals are asked to be responsible rather than the government or any other agencies taking the primary responsibility to enhance lifelong learning.

The emphasis on learner rather than on a system for the promotion of lifelong learning agenda has historical roots. When seminal documents on this perspective of education were

published by UNESCO (Faure et al. 1972) 'lifelong education' was the term used to refer to this comprehensive (life-long and life-wide) perspective of education. With the OECD's interpretation of this concept as a strategy for boosting economic competitiveness among its member countries (OECD 1996) the term lifelong learning replaced the wider vision of lifelong education after the 1990s. This notion of lifelong learning, however, is criticised because 'any failure with regard to learning is to be attributed not to the system but to the individual' which 'cannot guarantee learning opportunities to those who are economically poor and socially underprivileged' (Borg and Mayo 2005, Regmi 2015a, 558).

The construction of lifelong learning discourse within the Bank and the notion that learning is the responsibility of individuals stem from the 'economistic fallacy' (Polanyi 1977) promoted by the OECD countries to boost their competitive economies (Rubenson 2011). Even though all three documents (World Bank 2002a, 2003a, 2011) were published after the publication of UNESCO's seminal documents on lifelong learning (Faure et al. 1972, Delors et al. 1996) none of them are cited in those documents. However, the first document (World Bank 2002a) that lays the foundation of the Bank's understanding on lifelong learning makes explicit references to the understanding of lifelong learning promoted by the OECD:

Graduates will be increasingly expected to return periodically to tertiary education institutions to acquire, learn to use, and relearn the knowledge and skills needed throughout their professional lives. This phenomenon goes beyond the narrow notion of a "second chance" for out-of-school young adults who did not have the opportunity to complete much formal study. It has more to do with the updating and upgrading of learning that will be required in order to refresh and enhance individual qualifications and to keep pace with innovations in products and services. The concept of "lifelong learning for all" adopted in 1996 by the OECD ministers of education stems from a new vision of education and training policies as supporting knowledge-based development (World Bank 2002a, 27).

Analysis of the World Bank's policy documents on lifelong learning suggests that neoliberalism has been the guiding principle to interpret 'learning as individual's responsibility' (Fejes 2014). The primacy of individuals over the system stems from the hegemonic ideology of individual freedom. For this, unfettered market mechanism, which is not restricted by government interventions, is taken as ultimate guarantor of individual freedom. Milton Friedman (1962) argued that government's primary responsibility should be for protecting individual freedom that could be achieved by fostering competitive markets. He asserted that market freedom is a necessary condition for 'economic freedom' and 'political freedom' (p. 4). But this notion of freedom is very narrowly conceived. According to Polanyi (1944), freedom has both positive and negative connotations. The positive connotation of freedom entails that a society must secure a number of freedoms for its members such as freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, freedom of meeting, freedom of association, freedom to choose one's job and so on. But in the negative connotation of freedom individuals, are forced to secure their freedom within the parameters constrained by the neoliberal framework. Hence, the notion 'learning as individual responsibility' is a narrow economistic notion of lifelong learning conceived within the neoliberal framework.

A number of strategies are implemented to promote this limited notion of lifelong learning. First, some selected individual students and educational institutions are entitled to get financial support from the Bank. Unlike in the past, when governments got funding for educational projects with wider significance such as infrastructure development that benefitted all students, in this new approach, individual funding schemes have been promoted for all levels of education from primary to the university. In 2002, to support tertiary education in aid recipient

countries, the Bank decided to fund the programmes designed to promote greater equity mechanisms through individual 'scholarships and student loans intended to create and expand access and opportunities for disadvantaged students' (World Bank 2002a, xxvii). Even though the rhetoric of 'greater equity mechanism' and 'opportunities for disadvantaged students' (ibid) appear as conditionality for reform; there is almost no chance that the students from underprivileged communities would benefit from those scholarships. Most often the disadvantaged children in LDCs do not go to school hence they are virtually excluded from such competitive scholarships offered to the students of tertiary level.

The individual scholarship scheme was further emphasized in 2003. The Bank argued that 'innovative ways of increasing secondary school enrolment include offering selective scholarships and targeted vouchers...Another approach would be to increase cost recovery at the upper secondary level among those who can pay and to provide targeted scholarships for those who cannot' (World Bank 2003a, 77). This document further argued that

In cost-sharing schemes learners are expected to pay for at least part of the cost of their learning. This approach is commonly advocated in higher education on grounds of efficiency and equity... Cost-sharing is efficient because learners bear the marginal costs of their education. They therefore make better (less wasteful) choices and study harder. Cost-sharing is equitable in theory because it asks those who benefit from education to pay for it...Four main cost-sharing instruments are traditional loans, human capital contracts, the graduate tax, and income contingent loans (World Bank 2003a, 79).

In light of the World Bank's policy of individual scholarship schemes I analysed Nepal's key policy documents related to its higher education projects. Three major higher education projects of Nepal, all funded by the Bank's loan, are the First Higher Education Project 1994-2001 (US \$ 17 million), the Second Higher Education Project 2007-2014 (US \$ 60 million) and recently launched the Higher Education Reform Project 2015-2021 (US \$ 65 million). Following

the higher education policy reflected in World Bank (2003a), the Second Higher Education Project aimed at 'enhanced quality, efficiency and relevance of higher education through a set of systemic reforms and incentives to selected institutions; and improved access for academically qualified students from disadvantaged groups in higher education' (World Bank 2014c, v).

Aligned with those principles the Higher Education Reform Project 2015-2021 has aimed 'to support reforms in selected institutions for improving quality, relevance and efficiency of higher education; and to assist underprivileged students for equitable access' (World Bank 2015c, 5). The financial agreement of the project signed between the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank explicitly states that performance based funding will be the main strategy for institutional reform in Nepal.

Support to more effective public funding of higher education institutions through Performance-Based Funding of eligible higher education institutions, introduction of formula-based funding for UGC [University Grants Commission] grants to autonomous constituent campuses, and inclusion of outputs into formula based funding for UGC regular grants to community campuses (World Bank 2015b, 5).

According to the World Bank, reform in higher education means 'the achievement of better learning outcomes in selected programs' and the expansion of market-relevant areas (World Bank 2015b, 5). Analysis of this particular report (World Bank 2015b) indicates how some conditionalities are reminiscent of the SAP of the 1980s (Carnoy 1995) and requirements for getting financial aid from the Bank. The conditionalities are termed as Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs) that the 'recipient shall ensure that project is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the DLI Verification Protocol' (World Bank 2015d, 7). Some of the major conditionalities include: preparing project reports on specified time frame 'in form and substance satisfactory' to the Bank (p 9); not to preclude foreign bidders and 'no preference of any kind [...] be given to national bidders' (p.11) while procuring goods for the project; and providing satisfactory evidence to the Bank 'that the DLI Targets for the respective DLI Period for which payment is requested has been achieved' (p. 14).

The DLI Verification Protocol was prepared to implement a new lending instrument of the Bank called Program-for Results introduced in January 2012 'to formally link disbursements to the achievement of results' (World Bank 2015d). The project will disburse about US \$ 44 million in seven areas including the establishment of national accreditation system, reform in examination in Tribhuvan University, and providing autonomy to selected campuses. But the protocol states that the highest amount of budget (US\$ 11 million, about 25%) has to be spent on performance based financing (World Bank 2015d, 15-20).

When I was in Nepal conducting interviews for this study in April 2015, the agenda of higher education reform was being discussed among top level university professors and government administrators because the project was at the negotiation phase. The preparation of Higher Education Policy as a condition for getting loan from the Bank was also at the table for discussion. Even though my interview questions were not geared towards those agendas specific to higher education, those issues, not surprisingly, were raised by all of my interviewees. Some of the excerpts of interviews reflect the controversy on the new project for higher education reform in Nepal. One of my interviewees argued that:

The Bank decided to provide money to the autonomous campuses with an assumption that independent campus should be supported. If you analyse higher education projects funded by the Bank you will not find any campuses—that received loan money performing better than they were doing before the project were launched. An autonomous campus for which the World Bank is proud of its investment is [deleted to maintain anonymity]. Because of political struggle the Campus is going to collapse. They are

supporting so-called autonomous campuses of [deleted to maintain anonymity] but these campuses are not able to make decisions on their own. While expenses of those campuses are covered by government's budget—which is in fact loaned money—how could they be autonomous campuses? We asked the World Bank to settle the issue of campus autonomy by clustering, means grouping the neighbouring campuses, those campuses but the Bank does not want to do clustering. (Interview #1)

This interview raised some crucial issues regarding why the majority of Nepalese policy makers accept loans from the Bank without having clear agenda towards solving multifarious problems such as rampant poverty and brain drain. The interviewee indicated that Nepalese administrators who negotiate with the donors are trading their national interest for loans and grants. The analysis of the interview in light of the Bank's policy agenda shows that the agenda of providing autonomy to individual campuses stem from the ideology associated with the notion of 'learning as individual responsibility'. However, this ideology is not well received in Nepal. The interviewee continued,

I am at a war with those people advocating for more loans from the Bank in the University Grant Commission now. I am arguing that there is no relevance for taking loan for higher education. Even though my single voice may not and did not avert the decisions made by the majority I am continuously opposing the idea of accepting more loans from the Bank. Why I am opposing donor's money is because the initiatives taken by the donors and key functionaries in our bureaucracy is not geared towards changing our educational system. (Interview #1)

I asked another question about whether donors would be ready to invest in the areas that benefit the students of poor family backgrounds. And this is how I came to know how performance based funding targeted to individual students appeared as one of the major conditionalities imposed by the Bank. This analysis shows that performance based funding, a tool to promote the agenda of learning as individual responsibility, is accepted by Nepalese policy makers even if they know that it does not benefit poor students. One interviewee commented as follows:

I do not think they will agree but we need to operationalise it in that way. All theories do not apply in practice. Investment in the areas that benefits the most marginalised people of our society is very costly. Making investments to target poverty is not easy. Maybe greater degree of lobbying will be required. In the case of higher education, we brought the scheme of funding on performance based indicators. Which I think is not sufficient for addressing poverty. (Interview #3)

I followed up with a question about whether performance based funding, which appears as the Bank's conditionality, could have been resisted. The interviewee commented that

it was already agreed between the government [the Ministry of Finance] and the World Bank which would not be changed. What I mean to say is that if we want to make higher education beneficial to the poor people performance based funding is not an appropriate criterion. But I think if we try we can change those agreements. It is not compulsory that we have to follow old agreements for new programmes and policies (Interview #3).

Performance based funding is a global trend, however, this has been emphasised more in LDCs such as Nepal as a mechanism to promote decentralisation and 'good governance' (UNCDF 2006, 19). The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), established in 1966, is 'mandated by the General Assembly of the United Nations' to promote 'performance budgeting' in all LDCs (UNCDF 2006, 3). Most striking feature of UNCDF is that it partners with private foundations (such as Bill & Melinda Gates, and Ford), financial institutions (such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, and International Financial Corporation), multinational corporations (such as Visa and Master Card), and works closely with the IMF. As stated in *Achieving results: Performance budgeting in the least developed countries* (UNCDF 2006), 'UNCDF is working closely with the IMF and other

partners. The IMF, in particular, is the architect and principle source of technical advice on national financial management reforms, through the introduction of government financial statistics' (UNCDF 2006, 4).

The global trend for providing scholarships for selected students and funding for a few educational institutions has led to the development of an unprecedented large scale business in education (Hogan 2014). For example, as applauded in World Bank (2003a), established in 1999, MyRichUncle 'offers financing to people who want to study in exchange for a fixed percentage (1–5 percent) of their income over a specified period of time (typically 10 years for graduate students and 15 years for undergraduate students)' (p. 84). Similarly, under the rhetoric motto and 'knowledge for all', Bridge International Academies has emerged as 'the world's largest education innovation company serving the 700 million families who live on less than \$2 USD per day' (Bridge International Academies 2016). They have 'used the money from private investors and philanthropic organizations to franchise something called *school in a box'* that provides educational content using mobile application (Spring 2015, 126, Ball 2012). As stated in its official website, we have 'strive to provide the highest quality education product to the more than 100,000 students who attend Bridge's more than 400 nursery and primary schools across emerging markets in Africa and (soon to open) in Asia' (Bridge International Academies 2016).

6.2 Privatisation for efficiency

The approach of lifelong learning promoted by the World Bank gives full recognition and support to the private sector for financing and managing the education system. The Bank assumes that privatisation helps countries create policy environments and regulatory structures to align the private sector's effort with national educational goals (World Bank 2011). Privatisation

is highlighted against the backdrop of alleged government failure, especially in LDCs, to expand and allocate resources for mitigating the rising demand for education (Colclough 1996). As stated in *Education Strategy 2020* (World Bank 2011), the private sector provides not only highquality, high-class, technology-enhanced learning opportunities but also high-paying jobs for deserving graduates. Like a commodity, academic credentials can be used by their owners at their discretion, that is, whenever, however and wherever they consider them useful and beneficial. As noted above, it is not the state, but individuals who are forced to be responsible for their education and learning.

In the World Bank's understanding, like other forms of commodities, education should be traded freely both nationally and internationally so as to enhance competition among education providers. This will ensure freedom of choice for both students and families. One way to ensure this type of freedom is the provision of 'school voucher system'. The most notable proponent of this system, Milton Friedman, claimed that this system not only enables parents to choose schools for their children but also helps to smooth the transition 'from a government to a market system'(Friedman 1997, 343). Guided by this ideology, the World Bank encourages private sector not only to invest in education but to also manage it. It is argued that corrupt and ineffective bureaucracy can be prevented by the leadership of the private sector providing effective managerial skills and governing capacity. The envisaged employers are not government agencies but private institutions and corporations. Without recognising their role as 'the key stakeholders in education', the World Bank (2011, 44) argues that, countries are unable to achieve global competitiveness; nor they are able to fulfil the burgeoning demand for flexible labour force in the global market.

In the case of Nepal, privatisation in education started with the World Bank's involvement during the early 1980s, since then, the growth of schools and colleges owned by private sector 'has been rapid in urban and semi-urban areas' (GON 1997, 224, NPC Nepal 1980). The National Education System Plan (NESP 1971), an educational plan devised to strengthen Panchayat regime (1962-1990) by the late king Mahendra (Caddell 2007), had nationalised all schools in Nepal. The NESP had discouraged the operation of private schools in the country. But after the 1980s, the agenda for opening private schools was taken as inevitable necessity in the country. Analysis of the World Bank's policy documents shows that the Bank urged a change in policy from nationalised public education to the establishment of profit making private schools. According to the World Bank (1994, vii), 'in order to compensate for the low public investment, the Government can stimulate the provision of private education by providing further incentives to the establishment and operation of private schools'. Besides this the World Bank also urged for the collection of fees from the students of public schools. In 1994, the Bank claimed that free education, especially at the secondary level, is a major problem for providing quality education in Nepal: 'although secondary education already suffers from major problems of quality, efficiency and equity which are not being adequately addressed, the Government is further compounding these difficulties with the introduction of the free secondary education policy in the face of continuing resource constraints' (World Bank 1994, vi).

After the 1990s the World Bank continuously argued against the provision of free education which was well supported by the plans and policies (GON 1992, 1997) made by the GON. For example, in 2001 the World Bank reiterated its earlier claims: 'free education policies have been partly counter-productive. Due to the inadequacy of public funding for schools, free education policies have inadvertently led to a decline in the quality of the education which low

income children receive' (World Bank 2001, iv). All these initiatives taken by the Bank were ensured through the seventh amendment of the Education Act (GON 1971) in 2001. One of my interviewees echoed the Bank's rationale behind the necessity of private sector investment in education:

According to our new constitution we have said that school education up to grade 8 will be free. In my personal opinion, we should aim for something that we could achieve. The provision of providing free education up to grade 8 will create a great financial challenge to the nation. I do not think that all should get free education because for some people paying fee is not a big deal. Education should be free for those who are not able to afford. We have set up schools and made it free to some level but why parents are increasingly enrolling their children in private school that charge fee. We are asking students to study free of cost they do not go to those schools hence number of students in public schools are decreasing but in private ones it is increasing day by day. (Interview #3)

The World Bank's justification towards privatisation in education was not limited to the logic of addressing the resource constraints faced by public schools alone, which appears to have shaped, to some extent, the understanding of my interviewee. More powerful logic came from the comparative results of the School Leaving Certificate (SLC). Passing the SLC is the compulsory requirement for all students of both private and public schools to be enrolled in higher education in Nepal. This nation-wide standardised examination has provided a rational logic for the Bank to promote privatisation agenda in Nepal. The Bank claims that

Private schools outperform all other schools by a huge margin. In 1991, for example, 96% of the listed "Top Schools" in the SLC Examination' were private schools... These disparities should signal to policymakers that the community schools in particular, and many government-aided schools, are currently unable to meet the modest levels of achievement at secondary level required by the SLC (World Bank 1994, 15).

In 2001 the Bank argued that if public schools have to exist in Nepal they must compete with emerging private schools. Comparisons were also made at primary level in terms of enrolment and completion rates: 'both the low rates of primary school completion and the dramatic increase in enrolments in the private educational institutions over the past decade indicate that the outcomes of the public education system need to improve significantly' (World Bank 2001, ii). In 2003 the Bank declared that, in comparison to the performance of private schools, public education in Nepal was a complete failure: 'the large gap between the pass rates in the SLC Examinations of public and private schools...is being perceived as a glaring example of the failure of the public school system' (World Bank 2003b, 2).

While undertaking interviews, one of my major motivations was to understand the opinion of Nepalese policy makers on increasing privatisation in Nepal's education. Some of my interviewees were against privatisation, whereas others claimed that private sector involvement cannot be neglected in the context of Nepal. One interviewee argued that:

When students' achievements are discussed we automatically compare between the community schools and those operated by private sectors. In comparison to private schools the community schools have better qualified and trained teachers, have lesser workload, better school buildings, and other physical infrastructure. But despite all these investments the SLC results of these schools are far below than that of the private schools. The teachers who get better salaries from the government are not worried about the failure of their own students. Since most of the teachers of government schools are also the cadres of political parties they are worried when their parties lose elections. (Interview #2)

According to the interviewee, encouraging the private sector to open schools is relevant in Nepal mainly for creating competition pressure on public schools. For this two types of comparisons can be drawn: (a) learning achievements of the students studying in private schools with those studying in public schools; and (b) the performance of public schools' teachers, who get salaries from the government, with those who teach in private schools. While the interviewee argued that teachers' involvement in national politics has reduced public school students' performance, there is no empirical evidence. However, as noted above, from the perspective of teachers' performance, the low pass rates of public schools' students in the SLC indicate that public school teachers are not doing as much as their counterparts who teach at private schools. According to Joshi (2016), 'teachers feel more responsible for students in private schools because of better monitoring of teachers' (584) and the fear that the teachers will lose their jobs if they fail to perform as expected by the principles and owners of private schools. For another interviewee, the provision of private school is for providing choices for parents.

We should not neglect private sector. But the state should be able to provide education through public provision to those who opt for government funded schools. Government should be able to say to the people that 'if you come to the 4,000 government funded high schools, then that is fine. But if you want an advanced "five-star school" then that is ok'. I think we should allow people to study in those five star private schools. They can study and pay tax to the state. Service and amenities should be according to the amount of money paid by the consumers. (Interview #2)

The interviewee further argued that 'if there is transparency there is no harm in allowing privatisation in education'. By bringing the issue of transparency into the discussion the interviewee was referring to the development of a regulatory mechanism to monitor private sector investment in education. However, the envisaged mechanism is not about making the private sector accountable to the government; rather it is for ensuring whether "consumers" (parents and students) are getting the level of service commensurate with the amount of money they have invested. The interviewee further argued that 'if you are taking fees you should be accountable for ensuring services against that amount of money taken as fees'.

The interviewee appeared to believe that private schools always perform better than public ones. Hence, as theorised by Friedman (1997), to provide a better choice, the private sector should not be neglected in Nepal. According to this interviewee, 'when there are options, people have chances to choose an appropriate option for them. But there is no adequate provision to provide basic education to all. Now private sector is competing with the public sector which is wrong. Private sector should complement public sector but should not compete' (Interview #2). This particular idea embedded in the Friedman's notion of providing choice for students is shared by another interviewee. The interviewee claimed that 'private sector also has a role but basic education should be provided by the government'. The interviewee further argued that:

Private sector does not come for providing service; rather owners of private sectors are profit oriented. But we should have strong law to regulate the private sector. Privatisation is a mechanism that creates inequality. There is much of competition. We may create different categories of people when we encourage private sectors in education...If private sector comes that is fine but we should have public sector strong so that those who could not afford will have an option of choosing public sector. (Interview #6)

My analysis of the policy documents and interviews shows that my interviewees believe that the private sector might help to provide alternative venue for better education in the context of Nepal where government owned schools are not yielding satisfactory results. However, this assumption cannot be taken for granted when the role of the government is reduced to the minimum. Critical analysis of the Bank's documents shows that the Bank wants to reduce the role of government and takes the logic of private sector investment in education for granted. For example, in *Nepal Country Partnership Strategy 2014-2018*, the Bank claims that to reduce poverty and achieve 'higher growth trajectory' Nepal must encourage private sector investment (World Bank 2014a, 27). The Bank also claims that its private sector investment wing, the International Financial Corporation, 'has received signed mandates to invest in several private projects' in Nepal (p. 40), which indicates that private sector investment will be the focused strategy for Nepal in coming years.

Scholars have pointed out that educational privatisation has some negative consequences. And it is evident that private sector has mixed record of achievement in delivering ethical services. For example, while advocating for privatisation in education, the Bank has always been silent about the reason for the low performance of public schools in comparison to the private ones. In light of my analysis and some previous studies (Somers, McEwan, and Willms 2004) it is evident that private schools in Nepal perform better than the public schools because they are (a) attended mostly by the students of upper-class families, (b) entitled to charge high amount of student-fees, (c) mostly located in urban centres, and (d) able to facilitate learning by using libraries, science labs, and advanced technologies. Students from lower class families have almost no access to those schools and some parents who manage to afford private schools have faced severe economic challenges.

Hence, the provision of private schooling has been a major cause for reproducing the status quo of inequality between upper-class and lower-class families in Nepal (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Moreover, while endorsing the agenda of privatisation, the Bank has never considered the issue of social inequality increasing in LDCs because of privatisation of education. Some scholars have argued that in order to promote educational equity 'the public sector should expand to replace the private sector' (Hasan 2012, 495, Klees 2008). Since the World Bank, the major supranational actor to influence educational activities in Nepal (Regmi 2015b), is guided by neoliberal orthodoxy, the private sector is not only promoted but also its 'management methods' are taken as guiding principles to manage 'the public sector' (Rhodes

1996, 655). A new strategy has been promoted in the name of Public Private Partnership (PPP) to finance, manage and govern education system in Nepal. An interviewee argued that,

I think one alternative would be a public private partnership modality. I think we can do that. We did a little exercise on PPP but it did not happen well. The amount of money we have been providing to the school should be continued but we can give school management authority to private sector. If the private sector is not able to perform well, then the government can take over again. (Interview #2)

Analysis of the interviews and the World Bank's policy documents in light of scholarly literature suggests that the notion of PPP appears as a neoliberal agenda that reduces the role of government and opens up new avenues for corporations to make education business. According to Robertson (2012), 'the Bank has continued to strategically reinvent, and advance, this agenda in ways that contribute to the institutionalization of free market logics into the political, legal, and social structures within national and global regulatory architectures' (p. 204). By introducing PPP model, the Bank intends to limit national government and sees it as a poor cousin of the private sector, whose role is limited to assisting private sector in educational management and financing.

Another interviewee explicitly mentioned that education is a business where parents and students become consumers and the knowledge that the educational institutions are entitled to impart becomes a commodity. In this model, the issue of social justice and education as a social equalizer disappears and so does the role of government. In this imaginary, the role of the state is reduced whereas the role of the invisible hand of the market for striking a balance between demand and supply (Smith 2005) is regarded as an inevitable necessity for improving Nepal's education system.

I have a slightly different opinion on the monitoring of private school by the government. In the Ministry, we are debating whether the state should intervene in the free functioning private schools. I think government should monitor whether they have followed the curriculum which aim to instil some national agendas and values. But the government should not dictate private schools on fee structure and distribution of salaries to their teachers. Education, either we say directly or in an indirect way, is a business where parents buy the service provided by the private schools. Fee structure is completely a negotiation between parents and the owners of private schools. (Interview #8)

The agenda of privatisation has received some resistance in Nepal especially from the academic community. One of my interviewees blamed Nepalese policy makers, especially those who are involved in policy and funding negotiation with the World Bank:

There are comprador intelligentsia who are continuously advocating the agenda of privatisation of education in Nepal. For example, under the higher education project those comprador intelligentsias asked me to recommend for providing state funds to private schools set up in different parts in Nepal. ...the Bank asked me to write a recommendation for providing loan-money to support privately owned schools. (Interview #9)

6.3 Decentralisation for good governance

The World Bank defines decentralisation as 'the transfer of authority and responsibility for governance and public service delivery from a higher to a lower level of government' (World Bank 2008, xiv). In the context of Nepal where authoritative bureaucracy has been mostly occupied by the people from higher class who have dominated democratic practices, decentralisation is not a bad idea in itself. However, the World Bank has conceived this notion narrowly in such a way that it does not build capacity of local agencies, nor does it empower the oppressed. For the Bank, as critiqued by Carney and Bista (2009), the only cause of low quality of education in Nepal was a nationalised education system under the National Education System Plan (NESP 1971). In the project recommendation report of the Primary Education Project (1984-1992) the Bank claimed that:

From experiences gained over the previous decade the Government has decided to encourage decentralization of certain responsibilities for sector development including financing, managing and improving the education system. Many of these responsibilities hitherto borne by the central government will soon be undertaken by district offices and village communities (World Bank 1984, 7).

The project completion report of the Primary Education Project (World Bank 1993) pointed out some deficits not only in financing but also in management and governance of education in Nepal hence a reform was mandatory (Carney 2003). In the Bank's understanding, like free public education, a nationalised education system, where government is required to be accountable, was a major barrier to strengthening educational governance in Nepal (Rhodes 1996). The Bank argued that the community schools nationalized by implementing the National Education System Plan (GON, 1971b) were 'largely viewed as Government "owned" schools over which communities have little control' (World Bank 2001).

In the World Bank's understanding nationalised education reduced the role of local communities in school management hence that was an undemocratic practice: 'prior to the introduction of the NESP in 1971 when all schools were brought under the control of the Government, they are no longer formed democratically and do not always represent the most immediate stakeholders' (World Bank 2001, iv). The Bank further argued that the recruitment and transfer of teachers controlled by central agency, mainly by the Teacher Service Commission, was another problem of school nationalisation because there was 'serious politicization of the profession and the exertion of political influences' hence teachers were 'becoming increasingly unaccountable' (ibid). My reading of these policy documents suggests

that the agenda of decentralisation promoted by the Bank is fully guided by neoliberal ideology. The Bank promotes this ideology to 'get governance without government' often disrupting the existing 'regulatory mechanisms' established by the national governments (Rhodes 1996, 658) of aid-dependent countries like Nepal.

The urge for decentralisation of education in Nepal started during the 1980s following the recommendation of a study Improving Efficiency of Education Systems (Carney and Bista 2009) funded by the US. The policies and plans made after the end of the Panchayat regime in 1990 blamed the educational management nationalised by the National Education System Plan (NESP 1971). For example, the Eighth Five Year Plan 1992-1997 argued that 'the country could not make qualitative advance in the field of education as a result of the new education system; instead, there was further deterioration' (NPC Nepal 1992, 10). This agenda reached a climax in the late 1990s when decentralisation was legalised through the promulgation of the Local Self-Government Act (GON 1999). The United Nations Development Programme and the Danish Development Agency (DANIDA) assisted in the process of promulgating this Act. The Bank appreciated the Act as a crucial move towards empowering local bodies in educational management in Nepal: 'The Local Self-Government Act articulates the Government policy of devolving the responsibility for managing primary education to the Village Development Committees (VDCs), the lowest level of local body and lower secondary and secondary education to District Development Committees, the highest level of local body' (World Bank 2003b, 3). One of my interviewees argued that

Nepal should strengthen VDC authorities and develop a mechanism for channelling school funding through them. They can make better decisions on maintaining student-teacher ratio at least within their own VDCs. For example, if there are five schools in a

VDC with uneven student-teacher ratio then teacher of one school with few students can be transferred to the school that has more students. (Interview #2)

An important point to note here is that both the World Bank and the GON have not done anything special towards strengthening the capacity of local communities to manage schools. They appear to have devolved responsibilities without providing resources. It appears as a disjuncture between the Bank's 'actions and policies' (Mundy and Menashy 2014, 403). This disjuncture has resulted in confusion on whether decentralisation is the agenda for reducing the role of government so that the Bank's own global governance mechanism could be implemented. One of the interviewees argued 'there is a conceptual confusion with regard to decentralisation of education in Nepal' (Interview #4). The interviewee further argued that neither the educational administrators nor the donors have taken initiative to have clear agenda and action towards decentralisation.

A High Level Working Group (HLWG) on Education set up in 2001 supported the Bank's recommendation to convert all public schools into community schools to provide more power to the locally elected School Management Committees. The seventh amendment in the Education Act (GON 1971) was an outcome of the recommendations made by the Local Self-Government Act 1999 and the HLWG 2001. Even though the push towards decentralisation came mainly from the Bank almost all other major donors and key policy makers of Nepal accepted this move (Winther-Schmidt 2011). For example, from the Basic and Primary Education Project II (including EFA 2004-2009 programme) a new funding modality, known as Basket Funding, was implemented. In the Basket Funding modality resources from the World Bank and INGOs associated with Denmark, Norway, Finland and the European Union were pooled into a common basket for funding educational programme identified by the Program Implementation Plan (Bhatta 2011). Release of funds from the pooling agencies was 'conditional

on the production of District Education Plan' (Bhatta 2011, 18) prepared on the basis of Village Education Plans (made by Village Development Committees) and School Improvement Plans (made by School Management Committees). The Bank argued that:

The district will become the focal point of oversight and technical leadership and the District Education Offices will have to be reorganized to support participatory district education planning and implementation, including school improvement planning, ensuring compatibility with the local self-governance act. Local participation could be enhanced through legal provisions for school governance with empowered School Management Committees formed through democratic processes and empowered principals identified through competitive selection. Schools might then be transferred to communities, or more broadly to teacher cooperatives, NGOs or private operators under an umbrella act with provisions similar to those covering other user groups such as in community forestry (World Bank 2001, vi).

A strong push towards decentralisation came when the Bank launched the Community Support School Project (CSSP 2003-2008) which aimed at increasing 'the role of parents on School Management Committees and empower these organisations to appoint and supervise teachers' (Carney and Bista 2009, 189). In the project appraisal document the Bank argued that 'the transfer of government-funded schools to community management is one of the most concrete and immediate steps the Government can take to demonstrate its commitment to changing the way it serves the people' (World Bank 2003b, 4).

The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), also called the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), also took the notion of decentralization as a major strategy: 'decentralisation of the management of local schools by handing it over to school management committees at the local level, and changing the role of district and central level agencies to that of facilitator' (NPC Nepal 2002, 53). The Bank praised the objective of 'transferring the management of 8,000

schools to communities by mid-2007' (p. 3) as 'one of the basic strategies of the Tenth Plan' (World Bank 2003b, 2). The agenda of school transfer was 'negotiated between the Bank, the Ministry of Finance, and the National Planning Commission (Carney and Bista 2009, 207). But the Ministry of Education, the highest body on educational management and governance, was not fully included in this process. This illustrates how the policy shift for school transfer excluded the Ministry of Education mainly because the Community School Support Project was aimed at 'channelling over 80% of the project funds directly to schools' (World Bank 2003b, 6). In this way, the role of the central government was reduced to the minimum which did not help to empower the local community but created spaces for increasing the influence of donors.

The project appraisal document of the Community School Support Project (CSSP, 2003-2008) identified some problems in the project design and rated its outcome *unsatisfactory*: 'the project did not generate the knowledge base needed to determine what makes for successful transfer of school management responsibility to local communities and to determine what the effects of transfers are on quality of learning and efficiency of resource use' (World Bank 2010a, vii). The report further revealed that 'there is little evidence that the design of the CSSP drew on research and evaluation findings of experiences with community management of schools, particularly as it relates to learning quality and outcomes' (World Bank 2010a, viii). Unlike most other documents produced by the World Bank this particular project appraisal document makes references to some scholarly publications (Carney and Bista 2009, Parajuli 2007). It reveals that neither the CSSP took past experiences into account nor assessed Nepal's contextual realities before urging the government to transfer schools to the communities. The appraisal document acknowledges the Bank's failure and is repentant about the chaos and confusion created by the project:

Research from Latin America to Indonesia on the effectiveness of community management for promoting education quality suggests that community participation does not automatically lead to improvements in education quality and learning outcomes. These and other issues should have been explored during the preparation and implementation of the CSSP (World Bank 2010a, 22).

However, the document concludes in a rather implicit sense that its approach towards decentralisation was not wrong but the problem was on the project design. Moreover, the document reveals that one of the major causes of the failure of the CSSP is the 'poor' and 'illiterate' people who were not capable to 'implement complex schemes' (p. 18) developed by the Bank. The document portrays community people not only as poor and illiterate but also ignorant about their own rights: 'the poorest may live too far or lack the needed time to attend meetings, and may not even know what their rights are' (World Bank 2010a, 22). This shows that the agenda of decentralisation promoted by the Bank in Nepal was not supported by adequate analysis of the context. It was seriously misguided and came without any understanding of the contextual realities and the need for gradual shift combined with numerous locally relevant interventions to help build the capacity of communities. For example, if 'the poorest' people as identified by the Bank are not able to understand its 'complex schemes' then there is no point in transferring school management to the community of the 'poor' and 'illiterate' people. Referring to the Community School Support Project one of my interviewees asserted that:

In one of its documents the World Bank has accepted that the project was a 'failure'. The management of some schools might have been shifted to the respective communities with a good intention but majority of the schools so far given to the community are just for getting one time grant of 300,000 Nepali rupees; nothing more than that. This agenda of school handover came as a media propaganda triggered by the Bank itself but did nothing in improving the quality of schools. (Interview #4)

This finding on decentralisation is supports the conclusions of previous research. For example, Spring (2015) provides a succinct summary of the Bank's decentralisation agenda. Spring argues that through decentralisation the Bank 'wants local communities to rely on the Bank's high-quality global knowledge base on education' in which the rhetoric of 'local control is a method for implementing Bank policies and not a call for schools to reflect local educational traditions' (p. 39).

6.4 Standardised assessment for comparison

The three major policy agenda items promoted by the World Bank (2003a) are: the 'quest for smaller government' to promote decentralisation; privatisation in education; and 'a strong emphasis on outcomes and results' (p. 57). To implement these agendas, especially the ones associated with the standardised assessment and measurement of learning, the Bank has brought the concept of 'system approach' in *Education Strategy 2020* (World Bank 2011).

The system approach 'entails reforming relationships of accountability among the various actors and participants in an education system so that these relationships are clear, consistent with functions, measured, monitored, and supported' (World Bank 2011, 4). The Bank argues that 'failures of governance and accountability typically have their severest effects on schools serving disadvantaged groups' hence implementation of the system approach is mandatory for achieving 'educational equity as well as efficiency' (World Bank 2011, 4). According to the Bank, in a system approach 'decision making does not reside with only one group; instead, important decisions that affect learning outcomes are influenced by all of these stakeholders. This is a broader and more accurate depiction of an education system' (p. 29).

The agenda of standardised testing and measurement of outcomes has been implemented by introducing a new programme called Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) in about 100 developing countries including Nepal. As stated in the official website of the World Bank (2016c), this initiative aims 'to produce comparative data and knowledge on education policies and institutions' by evaluating 'the quality of ...education policies against evidence-based global standards, using new diagnostic tools and detailed policy data collected for the initiative' (para. 3). Major partners of this global initiative include:

- the Australian Aid,
- UK Department for International Development (DFID),
- Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA),
- The New Zealand Aid Programme,
- The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS),
- Russia Education Aid for Development (READ),
- UNESCO Institute of Statistics, and
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The World Bank produced the SABER Country Report with a focus on student assessment for Nepal in 2012 (World Bank 2012). The 41-page report, which is full of 'suggested policy options', claims that the World Bank 'has developed a set of standardized questionnaires and rubrics for collecting and evaluating data on the three assessment types and related quality drivers' (p. 3). Even though this standardised testing and measurement is a global phenomenon led by some supranational organisations such as the World Bank, the report claims that this initiative was taken by Nepalese government: 'In order to gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of its existing assessment system, Nepal decided to benchmark this system using standardized tools developed under The World Bank's SABER program'(World Bank 2012, 2). The Bank does not explicitly state that this data regime was started for promoting global governance through international benchmarking and comparison system and has a historical roots in the OECD (Rubenson 2008). Here we see that the Bank is hiding its authoritative role (Mundy and Menashy 2014) by suggesting that SABER was Nepal's own initiative. It is interesting to note that Nepalese policy makers who are involved in implementing these policies are not aware of what motivated Nepal towards the establishment of the Education Review Office (ERO). In fact, the idea of establishing the ERO was injected through the School Sector Reform Plan (GON 2009). The Plan had recommended that the ERO should be established under the Ministry of Education in 2010 as a permanent body responsible for conducting the National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) which now conducts large scale assessments throughout the country. One of my interviewees asserted that:

I do not know who took the first initiative but it appears as government's plan. It is written in the core document of the School Sector Reform Plan...I had also asked about who brought this initiative first but people ...were not able to answer my question. ERO's role is to support the work of the National Assessment of Student Achievement and auditing the activities of the ministry of education. Its main function is to do policy recommendation to the government. (Interview #4)

The ERO conducted the first National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) in 2011 in 28 sample districts for grade eight students in three subjects: Mathematics, Nepali language and Social Studies. In 2012 assessments were conducted for grade three and grade five students. In 2013 the assessment included 44,067 students studying in grade eight in 1,199 randomly selected schools across 75 districts of Nepal. An important point to note here is that 'for comparing the study results with the international assessment results, linking items were included from the item banks of international tests like the TIMSS and PISA' (GON 2015b, v).

The 2013 NASA report which was published in 2015 focuses on how the learning achievements of Nepalese students compares with the average score of the TIMSS: 'Comparing the achievement scores of NASA 2013 of Mathematics and Science with the achievement scores of an international assessment TIMSS; it is found that the achievements in both subjects are lower than the international means' (GON 2015b, ix). Comparison is also made between private schools and public schools of Nepal. For example, the NASA found that in 'Mathematics the average achievement score is 57% in the private schools whereas it is 26% in the community schools' (p. vii). In Bank's understanding establishing 'national benchmarks for measuring lifelong learning outcomes' (World Bank 2003a, xxiv) is key to promoting lifelong learning in LDCs like Nepal.

Analysing the case of the United States, Klees (2008) argues that the notion of standardised achievement tests 'has been disastrous for education' (p. 329). According to Klees, no matter how standardised tests are designed they have 'very narrow measures of desired educational outcomes'. This ultimately puts a lot of pressure on teachers and students because failure in achieving higher score in particular subjects is understood as failure in achieving learning outcomes. Klees reports that in the US 'many teachers and principals have been caught cheating to raise student scores' (ibid). As noted above, because of overemphasis on standardised testing such as the NASA the findings that Klees' drew—by analysing the case of the US—also applies to the case of Nepal. According to one of my interviewees, education system that focuses on assessment over critical thinking promotes 'rote learning of the contents written in the textbook' (Interview #5). Since the same contents are tested in the exams and students are assessed as to the extent to which they have learned the contents written in the textbooks', they have limited understanding of the society in which they live in. They might do well in those

assessments and be equipped with internationally recognised certificate, they will not have the capacity to decolonise the lifeworld maintained by rural communities (Habermas 1987).

Standardised international assessment regime may kill educational diversity by directing all educational models towards homogenous educational culture. Big corporations network with global institutions such as the World Bank to promote such culture as they are involved in publishing standardised textbooks, preparation of computerised learning software, designing educational websites, and training teachers. The supranational organisations such as the World Bank intend to promote assessment driven lifelong learning model and lend them to LDCs to justify their existence (Steiner-Khamsi 2004). Steiner-Khamsi further argues that such 'prepackaged, modularized, and checklisted programs developed at the headquarters of international organizations and subsequently transferred to their field offices are easier to manage than locally developed programs' (p. 206). According to Spring (2009), the test results of international assessments such as the PISA, the PIAAC and the TIMMS put pressure on national governments to borrow and implement the models of other nations that score higher.

Justifications that the World Bank provide in their emphasis of learning assessment has historical roots in human capital theory. The early proponents of this theory (Becker 1962, Schultz 1961) found 'a positive correlation between investment in education and Gross National Product (GNP) but a negative correlation between investments in other sectors (e.g., agriculture) and the GNP. They declared that investment in education was necessary to achieve a higher GNP' (Regmi 2015b, 505). However, the notion of investing more in education for higher GNP has now been replaced by a new policy-shift in the World Bank. In its *Education Strategy 2020*, the Bank has abandoned the notion of 'more investment'. Rather the Bank claims that the increment in standardised test scores is associated with the increase in GDP; but not mere investment in education. The study conducted by Hanushek and Woessmann (2008), which is cited a number of times in the Bank's *Education Strategy* 2020, 'estimates that an increase of one standard deviation in student reading and math scores on international assessments of literacy and mathematics is associated with a 2 percentage increase in annual GDP per capita growth' (World Bank 2011, 2, Klees, Samoff, and Stromquist 2012). Given the impoverished conditions of LDCs like Nepal, there is almost no chance for them to score higher in such assessments hence to achieve higher GNP.

6.5 Decisionism in policy making

From Habermasian perspective, policy making is an intersubjective process where the decisions are made through rational discussion and debate among all concerned stakeholders. This process of decision making follows some principles of deliberative democracy such as equitable chance of all stakeholders to provide thoughts and inputs in policy making process, and non-coercive and non-hierarchical environment for participating in rational discussion (Habermas 1996). From this perspective, decisionism is the tendency of making policy decisions by a handful of people holding top positions and imposing them on people who are not involved in making those decisions. Review of scholarly literature (Klein 2007, Stiglitz 2002, Williamson 2000) suggests that the decision-making process at the World Bank is undemocratic as well as biased. It is undemocratic in the sense that, according to Klein (2007), the Bank functions as a cooperative where five industrialized nations—the US, Japan, Germany, the UK, and France—hold 37.4% of the shares, with the US alone holding 16.4%. These nations appoint one director each and the president is appointed by the US—'a superpower persuasively promoting the neoliberal economic agenda'(Klees, Samoff, and Stromquist 2012, vii)—as the biggest

shareholder. The proportion of share translates into voting power while making the Bank's decisions that affect all countries receiving aid from the Bank (Moutsios 2009).

Most of the decisions made within the World Bank are constrained by the predetermined agendas of 'privatisation, government deregulation and deep cuts to social spending' (Klein 2007, 8). These predetermined agendas that have colonized the thinking of the Bank's economists by 'the Chicago School was a largely unspoken process' (p. 163), which became official in 1989 when John Williamson, one of the chief advisors of the Bank, theorised this orthodox policy making process as the 'Washington Consensus' (Williamson 2000). Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, the author of *Globalization and its discontents*, argues that decisions at the World Bank and the IMF are 'made on the basis of what seemed a curious blend of ideology and bad economics, dogma that sometimes seemed to be thinly veiling special interests' (Stiglitz 2002, xiii).

Interviewing with those economists working at the World Bank's headquarters was beyond the scope of this study. However, one of my questions for all interviewees with whom I had access was to understand from their perspective whether educational policy making of Nepal was an outcome of rational discussion. At the heart of my inquiry was an exploration of who sits at the negotiation table and whether power dynamics between Nepalese policy makers and delegates from the donors' side becomes an issue. Informed by Habermasian notion of decisionism as a counter of deliberative policy making process I was also interested to know whether policy decisions made at the World Bank headquarters are reproduced by its consultants while dealing with Nepalese policy makers. One of my interviewees commented that:

In Nepal those who negotiate with donors are mainly Nepalese bureaucrats. If you analyse the existing practices of policy and funding negotiation between the donors and

Nepalese bureaucrats, you will find that a single person holding the topmost position in Nepalese bureaucracy makes decisions and other people who are in the system have to follow those decisions. Most of the decisions are made not according to the interest of the nation and the society but vested personal interests of those at the top level. (Interview #9).

According to Harmon (1998), who employed Habermasian notion of decisionism to analyse organisational theory, 'the uncritical acceptance of the decision as a morally neutral and empirically self-evident beginning point' (p. 822) in policy making process lacks political discussion hence policies made through decisionism also lack empirical evidences. The selection of particular policy agendas through decisionism has less chance to reflect collective agreement; rather such decisions prioritise 'individual preferences, which individuals need not defend to others or even justify to themselves' (Harmon 1998, 824). The interviewee continued that

Therefore, what I would like to say is that donors are benefitting by bribing, I would stress it is a BRIBING, our weaker bureaucrats. The bribing is done in the form of providing scholarship to their children for abroad study and providing top level bureaucrats with opportunities to visit developed countries such as the US. To fulfil their vested interests, these bureaucrats keep on signing loan agreements with the donors. As I said already our existing practice is that once a high level bureaucrat signs the agreements other people cannot say 'No'. (Interview #9)

A better policy for LDCs like Nepal needs 'communicatively shared intersubjectivity' (Habermas 1984, xxi) fostered by collaborative interaction between key educational stakeholders. By doing this, real problems and needs of the people can be identified, contested and consensus can be achieved towards solving their problems. Rational policy discussions can

take place in a situation where 'all are heard, no one is excluded, all have equal power⁴ to question the ideas and justifications of others, to ask questions, all are equal in making a decision and reaching a conclusion'(Murphy and Fleming 2010, 7). To understand the power dynamics between Nepalese authorities and the Bank's delegates at the negotiation table, I asked my interviewees to comment on how educational policy and funding decisions are made. One interviewee commented that:

Discussions between donors and us are mostly structured, means there is less flexibility. Even though perceptions of individuals—for example, the extent to which individuals are positive or negative to the proposed agenda and associated issues—matter there is little chance that people at the negotiating table could come up with decisions that were not predetermined. (Interview #2)

After Nepal adopted the Sector Wide Approaches (SWAp) in education (Acharya 2007) most of the decisions are made through Joint Financing Arrangement signed between the Ministry of Finance and the nine-pooling donors known as the Development Partners (MOF Nepal 2011). The interviewee further commented that while the Nepalese bureaucrats and the Bank's delegates sit at negotiation table for making policy decisions, their discussion 'follows a structure of Joint Financing Arrangement signed by both parties that already decides—on what to do, how to do, and what not to do—all major agendas to be approved at the negotiation table. This means, whatever educational programmes we want to have are already within the boundary decided by donors' (Interview #2).

⁴ The notion of everyone having equal power is part of the critique that some feminist scholars such as Fraser (1990) bring to Habermas' ideas of communicative rationality. Here this notion is used in the sense of providing equal right and opportunity for Nepalese educational policy makers in making educational decisions.

According to another interviewee there are two sources of power influencing educational policy making in Nepal. The first source of power is national bureaucracy and the second source of power is donor agencies. The interest of these two sources of power aligns in making policy decisions such as selecting particular policy agendas. In my curiosity on how the two sides—the representatives of Nepal government and delegates from the World Bank—interact and engage at the negotiation table, the interviewee commented as follows:

Some forms of discussion take place between donors and Nepalese delegates [bureaucrats] when donors come to Nepal, usually every six months. The main objective of the discussion is informing and educating Nepalese delegates about the expectations of the donors and their terms and conditions that Nepal must obey. Nepalese delegates ask some questions such as how certain task could be done as expected by the donors. (Interview #4)

From the analysis of the interviews I have come to a conclusion that there are two reasons behind why some decisions of donors are taken for granted in Nepal. The first is lack of financial resources and the second is the lack of power of Nepalese authorities in making policy decisions as per the needs of the rural communities. Both reasons stem from a *deficit approach* promoted by the global financial institutions such as the World Bank. Another interviewee argued that 'in the country like ours, where major problem is lack of resources, we have to make many compromises. In a sense, I would say that bureaucrats accept conditionalities because of the lack of national resources. If conditionalities are not accepted donors do not lend money for our educational programmes' (Interview #5).

Another interviewee opined that it is not merely the lack of resources that constrains aid recipient countries capacity to have a rational discussion with donors; rather it is a matter of expertise of those who sit at the negotiation table. The interviewee argued that to minimise the

domination of donors in policy negotiation, aid recipient countries should select the people who have a certain level of capacity and expertise.

One of the weaknesses of the underdeveloped countries like ours is that—without having equal footing rationale dialogue cannot take place—we have capacity but the concern is that whether we made placements of those capable people according to their expertise and capacities or not. If there are capable people in the system, then we need to guarantee the continuity of their position and take measures towards boosting up their morale. (Interview #3)

The interviewee further argued that not only academic and professional expertise but also the economic capital possessed by the people sitting at the negotiation table determine the degree of influence they could make on the discussion. Giving an example of how Nepalese authorities appear inferior as compared to the delegates from the World Bank, the interviewee highlighted a bitter reality of donor-recipient relationship:

For example, we sit at the negotiation table and dialogue till 9:00pm, then when the meeting is over, we have to ask for a lift with them for reaching our residence. This means that whatever our rhetoric on critical dialogue is, it will not work unless we have equal footing. Rhetoric is not enough. The intelligence and expertise of our people to discuss with donors is a different thing which does not work when they are compared with well-off people participating from the side of donors. In underdeveloped countries this aspect of donor-recipient relationship is highly neglected because politics of these countries have great role in influencing this relationship. (Interview #3)

Another interviewee argued that 'since last couple of years the Ministry of Education has some Secretaries capable of debating with donors. Even though they are not able to oppose policy guidelines provided by the donors, they are able to convince donors that some of their implementation strategies would be changed according to the capacity of the Ministry and its line agencies working at local levels' (Interview #4). For another interviewee, decisionism stems

from the two types of mentality that informs the connection between the donors and Nepalese bureaucrats. The interviewee thinks that Nepalese bureaucrats have a 'slave mentality' whereas donors have 'feudal mentality': 'We have not learnt how to be free rational human beings. We try to be either leader or the slave but not free human beings. We have not been able to convince donors. We lacked that kind of capacity which would have enabled us to negotiate with the donors. We could have changed their priority as per the priority of the nation if we had developed that capacity' (Interview #6).

The deficit approach keeps propelling decision making process in Nepal because the modernist ideology has created a desire for making Nepal a modern and prosperous nation. My analysis of educational policies and especially periodic plans (NPC Nepal 1980, 1985, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2010, 2014) shows that Nepal is often compared with wealthy OECD countries and differences between those countries and Nepal are labelled as Nepal's deficits. For example, the report of the National Education Commission 1992 argues that

The people of Nepal can no longer live in isolation. They have to project themselves on the world stage. To this end, the education system of Nepal should be equivalent to, or be compatible with, the international standards, especially the qualitative norms of the SAARC countries. Viewed from the angle of the ever-increasing international linkages, failure to work out coordination with the educational environment of the world, more especially with the neighbouring countries, would mean a disastrous shrinkage of educational opportunities (GON 1992, 9).

6.6 Economic determinism as guiding principle

While decisionism focuses on how certain individuals holding power constrain the possibility of rational discussion in the policy making process, the notion of economic

determinism highlights how the Bank's policy decisions are shaped by the economistic fallacy (Polanyi 1977) which the World Bank takes for granted.

The World Bank is not only the largest multilateral investor in education but also a powerful institution which recommends educational policy agendas to LDCs. In this role 'the Bank thinks itself as a "knowledge bank" and aspires to be both a generator of new knowledge and a synthesizer of existing knowledge' (World Bank 2011, 53). As a 'global policy advisor for national governments' it imposes particular reform packages that includes the agendas of privatisation, decentralisation, and standardised assessment regime (Steiner-Khamsi 2012, 5). For example, in the case of Nepal, as stated in *Country Partnership Strategy for Nepal 2014-2018*, the Bank has moved 'away from its current role as financier and administrator toward providing the global knowledge needed to increase education quality and more inclusiveness, especially for the poor' (World Bank 2014a, 48). However, educational policy agendas recommended by the Bank are guided by narrow economistic vision in which market economy determines everything.

As most of its top level employees are the graduates of economics, the Bank has restricted capacity to undertake sociological analysis while making policy decisions. According to Mundy and Verger (2015), during the 1960s and the 1970s, the Bank hired a number of development economists and 'pioneered the development of country economic reviews and other types of development policy research based in the discipline of economics' (p. 11). Towards the end of the presidential tenure of Robert McNamara (1968-1981) 'a new generation of human capital economists were hired at the Bank' who were mostly the graduates of the Chicago School of Economics and were trained for analysing the connection between investments in education and 'the increase in the productivity of workers' (Mundy and Verger 2015, 11). During

Thatcher-Reagan regime in the 1980s the human capital economists further pitched the neoliberal orthodoxy. They defined education as a tool for producing flexible human resources as per the need of the job market; these economists argue that to remain competitive in the global knowledge economy everyone has to continuously update their knowledge and skills (Rubenson 2008).

The Bank encourages 'economists with doctoral degrees to carry out educational research' (Steiner-Khamsi 2012, 11). As specified in the official website of the Bank 'the analytical rigor brought by economists has contributed to a coda of analysis on education inequality, role of peer effects, class size, vouchers, cash transfers, school management, and education expenditures' hence they are at 'the forefront of leading impact evaluations on a range of interventions shaping the knowledge base needed to inform the education policy discourse' (World Bank 2016a). As Spring (2015) notes 'in spreading the economization of education' the Bank focuses on building 'a network of education economists and build bridges to all those who are interested in their work' (p. 32).

Hiring economists for analysing educational issues would not have been a problem if such analyses were based on empirical as well as ethical research norms. The analysis of interviews and the Bank's policy documents suggests that the rhetoric that evidenced-based research informs the Bank's policy decisions is 'seriously flawed' (Steiner-Khamsi 2012, 15). One of my interviewees pointed out a serious problem in the methodology followed by the Bank's consultants: 'those people responsible for assessing the effectiveness of the World Bank's projects do not include the chronological development of schools they study. They just select schools which are already better than others and present the result and claim that their projects became successful' (Interview #9). As noted by Verger, Lubienski, and Steiner-Khamsi (2016), most of the Bank's decisions are based on reports written by consultants that it hires not from the pool of educationalists but from the selected group of economists trained in technical analysis of social problems (Resnik 2006). According to Mundy and Verger (2015), the Bank is 'highly reliant on consultants, in large measure because it has mismanaged its core cadre of experts' (p. 15). One of my interviewees commented that the Bank asks consultants to write reports in favour of its own agenda.

While I was working as a consultant of the World Bank one of the employees of the Bank asked me to write a recommendation for providing its loan-money to support privately owned schools. I was one of the consultants who opposed the Bank's request. ... In the meeting one of the top-level World Bank employees asked me, 'Do you know the difference between consultant and researcher?' I replied, 'No idea'. Then he said 'researchers write what they hear and see but the consultants follow what donors say'. In this country, we have many consultants, but no researchers. (Interview #1)

In my exploration of whether Nepalese educationists are consulted in policy making processes so that improvement of the Bank's policy agendas are discussed, one of my interviewees commented that 'there is no formal mechanism to establish regular connection between academic circle and the authorised people who sit at the negotiating table. Some committees—such as a recently formed committee for recommending a National Qualification Framework for Nepal— comprise members of the academic community but there is not any regular formalised mechanism or forum for providing scholarly input to the proposed educational goals and agendas' (Interview #4). Another interviewee commented that:

They consult but, you know, we are like hired labourer. It is different to have those works done by the people fully responsible for that and done by those who are hired for short-term or just consulted for momentary suggestions. They call us sometimes but not

always...We cannot take the full responsibility while we are consulted just for a specific task. This type of consultancy is inadequate given the broader scope and demand of non-formal education in this country. When there is no permanent mechanism for doing that nothing can be done and our suggestion does not work. (Interview #6)

Analysis of the Bank's reports related to educational projects shows that consultants hired by the Bank 'review the education sector, identify a reform package, lend the money for implementing the reform package, and evaluate its effectiveness' (Steiner-Khamsi 2012, 10). This has been the tradition of the Bank, which stems from a deficit perspective that sees lifelong learning as a 'challenge' (World Bank 2002a, 2003a) for developing countries. It comes from the Bank's own imaginary and assumption, which takes knowledge as 'a private commodity' that has only economic values (Shields 2013, 89).

For example, in 2002 the Bank argued that 'developing and transition countries are at risk of being further marginalized in a highly competitive world economy because their tertiary education systems are not adequately prepared to capitalize on the creation and use of knowledge' (World Bank 2002a, 6). The same statement was repeated in another document' (World Bank 2003a, 101). After identifying this deficit, the Bank went on to outline a solution: 'most developing countries will need to make many changes as they move toward a lifelong learning system... an important step is to identify the current situation, particularly with respect to systems of international peers' (p. 102).

This deficit perspective has historical roots in modernisation theory. As I noted in Chapter 2 some key underlying assumptions of this theory—such as fixed stages and routes towards development and prosperity, the law of comparative advantage, and the inevitable necessity of foreign aid—have guided educational policy making in LDCs. For example, in *Education Sector Strategy 1999*, the Bank argued that it 'wishes to use its comparative advantage

where the pay-off is greatest...The Bank's comparative advantage lies in its ability to bring together a wide range of stakeholders, offer access to finance, provide objective advice, employ a multi-sectoral approach, sustain a long-term commitment, and share knowledge drawn from around the world' (World Bank 1999a, vii). The flaw with the logic of comparative advantage within the Bank's policy is that industrial Western countries are the model of development to be followed by LDCs. In 2002 the Bank further argued that 'based on the experience of industrial countries that have emphasized the role of education in supporting economic growth and social cohesion, it would seem that an appropriate range for the overall level of investment in education as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) would be between 4 and 6 percent' (World Bank 2002a, xxiii).

Even though, in rhetoric, the Bank appears to have reversed modernist top-down thinking by including statements like 'wealthy countries have no monopoly on good educational practice' in its policy documents (World Bank 2011, 64) there is little substance. Contrary to what it says the Bank forces LDCs to participate in standardised assessments such as the PISA and the PIAAC as its loan conditions (Rizvi and Lingard 2010). Forcing LDCs, in this way, to compete in the global knowledge economy virtually reduces their national autonomy and ability to decide the type of lifelong learning they want to implement. The Bank argues that 'the newly released PISA 2009 results show that previously low-performing countries can catch up with higher-performing countries within a relatively short period of time' (World Bank 2011, 74). In *Country Partnership Strategy for Nepal 2014-2018* the Bank asserted that the Bank engages into fewer sectors where it 'has a comparative advantage and can leverage its financing and analytical resources for greater development impact' (World Bank 2014a, 38). In this way, the rhetoric of lifelong learning understood by the Bank boils down to 'few sectors' that provide comparative

advantage to the Bank such as 'a proposed shift to skills building from the current broad engagement in primary, secondary, tertiary education and vocational training' (ibid).

In the context of neoliberal globalisation, the modernisation thinking criticised by many scholars (Escobar 1995, Prebisch 1950) has become more pervasive; in this view, progress is 'associated with accepting triumphant capitalism' (Stiglitz 2002, 5) and if LDCs 'are to grow and to fight poverty effectively' they 'must accept it' (ibid). One of my interviewees argued that:

our whole idea on development is guided by modernist approach, which means that our rural communities should be supported by external agencies such as donors. Our assumption has been that Nepal is a poor country where people do not know what is right for them; they have no capacity to prosper without external support...development is more an inbuilt process rather than something imposed by external factors' (Interview #4).

According to Polanyi (1977), the fallacy of economic determinism has shaped the thinking of the financial institutions such as the World Bank hence the economists working for the Bank have the tendency of 'equating the human economy in general with its market forms' (10). Polanyi drew a distinction between the economy and society and argued that it is the notion of 'self-regulating market' propounded by Adam Smith that separated the human economy from the society (Polanyi 1944). Some economists such as Hayek (1944) and Friedman (1962) gave this market fundamentalism a neoliberal turn and as a consequence human society was further colonised by this orthodoxy. The global financial institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and the WTOs including the US Treasury—take the neoliberal orthodoxy for granted; furthermore, they—have emerged as major actors in shaping social policies of LDCs. As Polanyi notes 'the delusion of economic determinism, as a general law for all human society, not only influences the rest of the society but actually determines it' (Polanyi 1977, 14).

This economistic fallacy based on the supply-demand-price mechanism has shaped LDCs development activities. This has redefined the aim of education as something limited to mere economic growth. One of my interviewees commented that: 'our development is mostly guided by economic perspective. Economics is needed but the question is whether education fits into that economic development framework' (Interview #9). Another interviewee believes that the role of education is not for producing human beings to be fit in the existing market rather

Our education system should teach learners to haunt [enabling learners to understand the changing nature of the market and take steps accordingly] the market but not for teaching them to be fit with the changing market. I am not a person who advocates for creating human resources that fit with the market. What I believe is that, the demand of the market changes faster than we are able to change school curricula. The learners who undergo through schooling today have to learn to fit with the market that will prevail after a decade. That is to say, the issue of making students fit with the market is a nonsense agenda (Interview #1).

6.7 Lifelong learning as new policy for LDCs

The document *Constructing knowledge societies* (World Bank 2002a) associated the notion of lifelong learning with tertiary education. In this document the Bank argued that promoting lifelong learning means 'increasing institutional diversification (growth of non-university and private institutions) to expand coverage on a financially viable basis and establish a lifelong-learning framework with multiple points of entry and multiple pathways' (xxvii). This vision of lifelong learning has a connection with the OECD's *Lifelong learning for all* (OECD 1996), an outcome document of the meeting of the educational committee at Ministerial Level during 16-17 January, 1996. The OECD document is cautious that 'the different pathways between organised learning and work in the OECD countries...do not necessarily correspond fully to the experience of any specific country' (p. 135). But for the Bank the concept of 'lifelong

learning for all' adopted in 1996 by the OECD ministers of education is a new vision of education and training policies for promoting knowledge-based economy. This (mis)reading of the document leads the Bank to a conclusion that educational agendas conceived at the OECD level should be implemented in all LDCs (World Bank 2003a, 27). This shows that the policy agendas such as establishing 'multiple points of entry and multiple pathways' for the promotion of lifelong learning appears to have moved from the OECD to LDCs 'without their context' (Bourdieu 1999, 221).

In Nepal, the mobility of graduates and employees, basically across different organisations, may not happen because most of the people continue their traditional professions such as agriculture. Hence, the idea of establishing multiple points of entry and pathways is not a necessary agenda for Nepal because it does not support nor reflect the Nepalese contextual realities. An interviewee of this study argued that

if my learning is not according to my own context such learning does not become lifelong. It takes a long time, it is almost impossible, for one to implement knowledge learnt in one context to implement in another context. Hence, contextualisation is very important for enhancing lifelong learning. That context should be national culture, national belief, and national values. (Interview #5)

Another interviewee gave a similar opinion: 'in my opinion lifelong learning should be defined according to the context of individual nations. We cannot implement lifelong learning model practised in Europe' (Interview #9).

Rather than helping Nepal to create learning environment to support their traditional occupations, the model of lifelong learning promoted by the Bank assumes that the rural communities of LDCs have to abandon their traditional occupations. For example, in 2003 the Bank argued that 'people in countries in which a high proportion of employment is in the

informal sector are especially disadvantaged. Since employers pay for most training, the unemployed or people who work in small companies— who are more often the poor and poorly educated and therefore most in need—are least likely to be able to access learning' (World Bank 2003a, 45). In the Bank's vision learning is not something that happens in traditional community or the lifeworld maintained by the community people, rather learning is something provided by private institutions that serve the interests of employers and the market. In fact, in many LDCs there are no employers as it has been understood in the OECD context.

In Bank's documents lifelong learning is envisioned as a tool for supporting LDCs to be a part of global knowledge economy. According to the report (World Bank 2003a),

Lifelong learning is education for the knowledge economy. Within this lifelong learning framework, formal educational structures — primary, secondary, higher, vocational, and so on — are less important than learning and meeting learners' needs. It is essential to integrate learning programs better and to align different elements of the system. Learners should be able to enter and leave the system at different points. The learning system needs to include a multitude of players, such as learners, families, employers, providers, and the state (p. xiii).

In 2011 the World Bank argued that its new strategy focused on lifelong learning should 'encompass all learning opportunities in a given society, whether within or outside of formal education institutions' (World Bank 2011, 29). The report went on to argue that 'in this definition, an education system consists of all parties who participate in the provision, financing, regulation, and use of learning services' (p. 29). In this respect, the report further argues that, educational stakeholders are not only national and local governments but also students and their families, communities, private sectors, and non-state organizations. For the Bank 'this larger network of stakeholders makes up an education system in the broader sense' (p. 29). This strategy, however, opens up new avenues for private sector including corporations to provide learning opportunities. But the comprehensive vision of lifelong learning—that encompasses multiple dimensions of human learning such as intrinsic dimension, intersubjective dimension and critical dimension—has been neglected.

While the Bank's reports focused on lifelong learning echo, to some extent, the vision of lifelong learning embedded in some of the seminal documents (Faure et al. 1972, OECD 1973, Delors et al. 1996, OECD 1996), critical analysis of the Bank's documents show that the Bank has picked a narrow 'economic view of lifelong learning' (Rogers 2004, 189). The major aim of the investment in lifelong learning, as stated in these reports, is to support global capitalism by 'preparing workers to compete in the knowledge economy' (World Bank 2003a, 3). These reports argue that 'being successful in the knowledge economy requires mastering a new set of knowledge and competencies' (p. xix). Some of the competencies envisaged by the Bank include basic academic skills, such as literacy, foreign language, math, and science skills, and the ability to use information and communication technology. But in reality the Bank 'portrays lifelong learning in purely instrumental terms as a set of technical skills and competencies directed towards passive labour market adjustments' (Hyslop-Margison and Sears 2006, 75).

In light of the disconnection that I observed between the World Bank's approach to lifelong learning and the contextual realities of LDCs, especially Nepal, while undertaking interviews, I focused on (a) how lifelong learning was understood by Nepalese policy makers, and (b) what perspective(s) of lifelong learning should be promoted in Nepal. My interviewees were concerned not only with some potential benefits of lifelong learning but also some critical challenges towards its promotion in Nepal.

According to Aspin and Chapman (2001), lifelong learning may have at least three benefits: (a) lifelong learning for economic progress and development; (b) lifelong learning for

personal development and fulfilment; and (c) lifelong learning for promoting social inclusiveness and democratic citizenship. The first benefit of lifelong learning has been highlighted by the major supranational organisations such as the OECD, the European Union and the World Bank. While highlighting this economic agenda of lifelong learning, these organisations appear to have neglected the third benefit of lifelong learning that is increasing social inclusiveness and democratic citizenship. According to Deakin Crick and Joldersma (2007), who apply the Habermasian notion of the lifeworld to their research, 'citizenship centrally involves participation in civil society, as a way to maintain and enhance social integrity through mutual understanding and consensus' (p. 81). The foundational documents on lifelong learning, mostly those produced by UNESCO (Faure et al. 1972, Delors et al. 1996), focused on lifelong learning for social inclusiveness and democratic citizenship.

The interviewees of this study expressed their concern for the wider benefit of lifelong learning. However, they have mostly highlighted the second benefit of lifelong learning, which is lifelong learning for personal development and fulfilment; rather than the third one, that is, lifelong learning for social inclusiveness and democratic citizenship.

...lifelong learning is whatever you learned today that should help throughout your life. It may include certain competencies and skills such as information technology literacy, health literacy, and earning skills. (Interview #5)

... [lifelong learning] should not be limited to the market employment; rather it should aim for all-round development of individuals such as spiritual, social, cultural, and economic. We should have defined education in that way. (Interview #2)

According to Biesta (2006), this personal dimension of lifelong learning is beneficial 'not only in terms of developing one's potential and talents, but also in terms of learning from the encounters and experiences that make up one's life, finding the meaning of one's life, and maybe even learning to live one's life in a better way' (p. 173). Referring to Faure et al. (1972), Biesta further argues that even though the Faure report focused on the individual fulfilment as a major objective of lifelong learning the promotion of democracy is the main driver. Biesta insists that the basic function of lifelong learning lies in the combination of the personal and the democratic dimension. The aim of education, in this respect, is 'to enable man [sic] to be himself', yet learning-to-be always has to be understood in democratic terms, i.e. as learning-to-be-with-others' (Faure et al. 1972, xxxi).

From the above discussion, it is evident that if lifelong learning has to be a national educational policy for LDCs, the policy makers both working at supranational and national levels should strike a balance between these three benefits of lifelong learning: the economic, the democratic and the individual. However, the analysis of policy documents and interviews shows that there is much more focus on the economic benefit, almost no mentioning of the democratic benefit, and a very narrow focus on the individual benefit. As one of my interviewees expressed,

Lifelong learning does not happen if you teach me to live a life that you think is appropriate for me. Lifelong learning should enable us on: how do I take care of myself, how do I protect my life, how do I secure my glorious future, how do I develop myself so that I won't be in trouble in my life? (Interview #9)

As depicted in the above quote, my interviewee has a very explicit focus on lifelong learning as an individual fulfilment. This is a good example of the individual benefit of lifelong learning; however, this notion of lifelong learning does not take up how education system can perpetuate social inequalities. For example, in the context of neoliberal globalisation, where individual freedom to be trained, skilled and qualified for the job market is taken as the ultimate human freedom, there is no space for the prosperity of the whole community that is historically marginalised. Some people, those who are well-off to go to school and afford learning resources

might be able to 'take care', 'protect', and have a 'glorious future' but it does not bring justice to all individuals. In highlighting what kind of lifelong learning is suitable for the citizen of the economically poor countries like Nepal, my interviewee expressed that:

Lifelong learning should make individuals self-sufficient. My knowledge becomes lifelong leaning when I learn to live in the context of my own. If I am educated with the knowledge brought from outside I will not be able to live in my context. Hence, my understanding of lifelong learning is developing myself and my future generations to learn to live in the context where we have been and will be in future. (Interview #5)

The above quote not only focuses on the idea of making individual self-sufficient but also indicates that the knowledge and skills transferred from one context to another. For example, transferring policy from the West such as the developed countries of Europe and North America, to LDCs such as Nepal, does not lead towards lifelong learning because it does not help the current citizens as well as the future generation to be self-dependent. In the context of educational globalisation and homogenisation of global models of education, the interviewee's opinion makes a very important education policy implication. It indicates that educational policies of LDCs should focus on the knowledge and skills that are contextually appropriate and useful for the current and future generations of these countries on their own terms, not images of the future as espoused by the World Bank.

The review of current bodies of literature, especially texts produced by the OECD, the European Union and the World Bank shows, that emphasis on 'individual benefit' is reflected in the shift from the responsibility of the state to provide educational opportunities to the private sector. In this changed context, understood as the knowledge economy, learning has ceased 'to be a collective good' and the state has become 'less and less a provider and promoter of lifelong learning' (Biesta 2006, 175). From the Habermasian perspective of communicative action,

lifelong learning is 'a social process dependent on our membership of speech communities in which we pursue intersubjective understanding' (Brookfield 2005, 1151). In communicative action, learners are 'not primarily oriented to their own individual success; they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonise their plans and action on the basis of common situation' (Brookfield 2005, 1152, Habermas 1984).

From the perspective of communicative action (Habermas 1984), the social process of learning can yield the second benefit of lifelong learning, that is promoting democratic citizenship. According to Brookfield (2005), in his application of communicative action to the field of adult learning and education,

a speech community is also a democratic community, and the rules that govern communicative action are the same as those informing the democratic process. If learning to participate in communicative action is a universal adult learning project, then learning democratic process is its political counterpart (Brookfield 2005, 1160).

One of my interviewees expressed this wider vision of lifelong learning:

If we talk about continuing education there are a lot of things that we should promote. We have to set up community libraries and other learning venues. People's gatherings and community meetings were good practices for rational discussion at community level but now such practices disappeared. (Interview #3)

Beside the three benefits of lifelong learning noted above, one of my interviewees highlighted additional benefits of lifelong learning.

Knowledge is always useful. Maybe it matters the type of knowledge we are supposed to gain but knowledge is never useless. I also think that when people are engaged in acquiring new knowledge and remain busy the rate of social crime will decrease. When people have opportunity to learn and take part in discussion they will have less time to develop negative thinking. I think continuing education has a long-term impact on every

society...I have realised that people have to be engaged even after retirement. (Interview #7)

Whether people, especially adults, are intrinsically motivated to remain busy in learning new ideas is a complex issue. From my experience and observation in Nepal rural communities, I assume that some people waste a considerable amount of their leisure time by just criticising other individuals. If they used the time otherwise, for example by doing some productive work such as farming or talking about their problems and potential solutions, there would have been some benefits economically, socially and individually. Many people of this category, who waste time in unproductive ways, are retired security personal and those having the record of some form of social perversions such as too much indulgence in alcohol and gambling. If these types of people are motivated to learn, then, as my interviewee claimed, lifelong learning may reduce social crime. To achieve this, the idea of 'learning as individual responsibility and benefit' does not work because such individuals may not be interested in learning. Neither would all individuals be convinced by this logic of continuous learning nor would they be able to take the responsibility for their learning.

Some of my interviewees focused on the potential challenges towards promoting lifelong learning in Nepal. Unlike the World Bank which assumes lifelong learning as the responsibility of individuals, and also their challenge, one of my interviewees opined that the challenge is also one for the state in making necessary provisions in deciding what to learn, when to learn, and what resources to use for learning by individuals.

When people are in poverty and are dying because of the lack of food then it makes almost no sense to say that education should be a priority for them. Children from the families of those people are not sent to the school not because they do not want to but because of their obligation. Unless we address those fundamental problems of poor people education does not work. We [state] may need [to make] some forceful interventions. Again I would say that demand side intervention is not enough; we need to have supply side intervention. State should find areas where interventions are required. We have 34,000 schools. We should be clear on whether all of these schools could be converted into lifelong learning centres...on the days when schools remain off or invite people to come to the centres in the morning and evening when schools are not on. For this, we need to have strong political leadership and continuity of those provisions on national agenda. (Interview #3)

As the above quote illustrates the challenges for promoting lifelong learning in poor countries like Nepal are many. One of the challenges is identifying learning venues and providing learning materials according to the need and interests of the community. This interviewee is interested in using existing schools as venues for lifelong learning. For this, the idea of establishing, and further extending the existing, Community Learning Centres (CLCs) appears as a most viable solution. CLCs can be defined as the local educational institutions 'usually set up and managed by local people to provide various learning opportunities' for community development and improvement of people's quality of life (Middelborg and Duvieusart 2002, Zimmer 1998, Haddad 2008, 2). As the interviewee indicated, one of the strategies for promoting lifelong learning is the establishment of more CLCs. It can be an effective community-based approach as envisioned by some global initiatives such the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) under the framework of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD, 2003-2012) that took community participation as a key of initiative towards promoting literacy and lifelong learning in the global South (UNESCO 2006). According to my interviewee,

There are not enough venues to enhance lifelong learning in this country. The provision of setting up Community Learning Centres was initiated for this purpose. Now there are about 3000 learning centres. I think if we add 1000 more we can provide learning

opportunities to larger mass of people. CLCs can provide formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities. (Interview #6)

Despite substantial amount of monetary investment in education, about 21% of total annual budget since 2001 (World Bank 2016d), formal education system has not reduced the average (2001-2013) adult literacy rate of Nepal; which is just 57.4 % (UNDP 2015). Adult illiteracy is high in rural communities especially among underprivileged group of people such as *Dalits* and women. Establishment of CLCs or using existing community schools as CLCs (Zimmer 1998) could be an important strategy for promoting lifelong learning. As some of my interviewees commented, the idea of CLCs is to strengthen lifelong learning by bridging the gap created by the formal education system between those who could participate in formal education and those who could not. One of them argued that:

without strengthening non-formal education sector lifelong learning cannot be promoted in Nepal. To promote lifelong learning, we should combine different modes of learning. Existing schools can be expanded into continuing education centres. For example, we can use even our primary schools into library (Interview #9).

Another interviewee emphasised the same:

If we really want to adopt lifelong learning approach in Nepal we have to start from nonformal education. In non-formal education we have only focused on the three R's of literacy. Non-formal education of our country does not focus on post literacy and continuing education. The people declared literate today are turned into illiterate after five years. That is why we have started adopting lifelong learning approach in Nepalese education system (Interview #5).

Despite my interviewees' emphasis on a more comprehensive vision of lifelong learning and its importance for Nepal, lifelong learning is not clearly defined in Nepalese educational policy documents. As noted in Chapter 3, even though the term 'lifelong learning' is mentioned

in some of the major policy documents such as School Sector Reform Programme (GON 2009, 2014a) and the Non Formal Education policy (GON 2007a) it is not clear what lifelong learning means in the context of Nepal. This confusion was reflected in the interviews as well. One of the interviewees noted that,

There are no documents in Nepal that specifically defines lifelong learning. Some people take literacy improvement or adult education as lifelong learning. I think literacy and adult education are also parts of lifelong learning but we have not defined what lifelong learning really is. Nepalese policy documents have borrowed terms; for example, we find statements like 'learning will be lifelong' but we have not specifically provided any specificity such as how it might happen in the context of Nepal. That is why lifelong learning as a concept has not yet developed in this country. (Interview #6)

There is confusion not only because Nepal does not have documents specifically on lifelong learning but also because donor agencies are providing different terms when they go to Nepal often with small projects. The interviewees further commented that:

Lifelong learning—such as re-entry into schooling system for the learners of 1-5 grades through condensed schooling system—came as a scheme along with the amount of money provided by an external funding agency that supported the notion of lifelong learning. New terms such as lifelong learning are used without proper logic. For example, we called integrated grades of 1-5 as Flexible Schooling but for 6-8 we called it Open Schooling programme. In this sense, both are same because both refer to the same condensed schooling system. We followed the name given by the funders of those programmes. (Interview #6)

In the next section, I explore the extent to which the key assumptions of neoliberal orientation in education such as privatisation, decentralisation, standardised assessment, and economic determinism noted above have influenced key educational policies and plans of Nepal.

6.8 Lifelong learning in Nepal

In this Section, I analyse how the neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning is adopted in Nepal's major policies and plans related to education. I focus on two types of Nepalese policy documents: (a) major educational policies and plans prepared by the leadership of the Ministry of Education such as the Report of the National Education Commission 1992 (GON 1992), the Basic and Primary Education Master Plan I 1991-2001 (GON 1991), the Basic and Primary Education Program Master Plan II 1997-2002 (GON 1997) and the School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2015 (GON 2009); and (b) major Periodic Plans produced by the National Planning Commission especially those prepared after the 1980s (NPC Nepal 1980, 1985, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2010, 2014). I focus on how some neoliberal strategies such as privatisation and decentralisation recommended by the World Bank are adopted (or resisted) in Nepal.

As noted in Chapter 3, a strong desire for modernisation has been a major thrust towards the expansion of mass education in Nepal. All periodic plans starting from the First Plan 1956-1961 (NPC Nepal 1956) to the Thirteenth Plan 2014-2015 (NPC Nepal 2014) aim to make Nepal a prosperous and modern nation through the expansion of mass education. However, the strategies taken by those policies and plans towards achieving the goal of modernisation are not exactly the same. For example, the Sixth Plan 1980-1985 (NPC Nepal 1980) stressed integrated rural development, development of cottage and small industries, and the production of trained manpower to meet national need. But the Seventh Plan 1985-1990 (NPC Nepal 1985) focused on the promotion of the private sector as a major vehicle towards achieving modernity.

The Seventh Plan argued that Western nations achieved modernisation by promoting the private sector: 'the experience of the developed countries shows that private sector can play an extremely important role in the process of economic development of a country' (NPC Nepal

1985, 170). The Plan further argued that 'entrepreneurship, professional skill, decision making process and freedom of management of the private sector, enable it to influence the economy constructively and according to the changing situation' (ibid). Hence, the Plan took significant initiative 'to encourage private sector and people's participation in the establishment of lower secondary and secondary schools and campuses' (p. 395). The duration of this Plan 1985-1990 occurred during the time of the Structural Adjustment Programme. Therefore, it is not surprising that the World Bank's agenda towards privatisation of education, health and banking system were adopted in Nepal. But what is important here is that the production of human resources was not particularly aimed at fulfilling the demand of the global neoliberal market rather 'to prepare capable citizens and to furnish manpower necessary for various nation building works' (p. 396).

The hegemonic assumptions of neoliberalism, however, became more pervasive after the political change of 1990 from the Panchayat regime to the multiparty democracy. Nepalese policy makers took this political change as a chance to open Nepal's borders to international market. For example, the Eighth Plan 1992-1997 (NPC Nepal 1992) noted that 'while, on the one hand, the government will definitely have to make some harsh decisions, the development perspectives, on the other hand, will need to be compatible with the prevailing national situation and the economic changes in the international scenario' (p. 61). Pointing out the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 and subsequent global political change, the Eighth Plan noted that

It is evident from the changes occurring in the socialist countries that the traditional state directed socialism is no longer suited to the existing global economic scenario. Therefore, the state directed and controlled economic systems pursued for the last thirty years [during the Panchayat regime] will be gradually phased out and policies will be adopted to carry out development through free market-oriented liberal economic systems (p. 61).

To expand the participation of private sector in economic activities, the Eighth Plan introduced 'new monetary, fiscal, industrial and commercial sectors' (NPC Nepal 1992, 15). The *National Education Commission 1992*, formed to reform education according to the spirit of new political system aimed towards the 'modernization of the society' (GON 1992, 48), redefined education as a form of commodity, and parents and students as its consumers. In this respect, the Plan argued that educational provisions should be 'geared to the real needs of the consumers' (GON 1992, 28). Another important educational plan made during the Eight Plan was the *Basic and Primary Education Programme Master Plan* (GON 1997). Unlike the report of *National Education Commission 1992*, the Master Plan tried to focus on rural development:

primary education produces, not only a literate and numerate population ready for further education, but also competent citizens who can in the real life situation deal with problems at home as well as at work concentrating their learning outcomes on issues such as nutrition, environment, population, sanitation and rural productivity (p. 1).

Despite the fact that the Master Plan was formulated with 'the full support of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank' (GON 1997, 96) a more comprehensive vision of education was proposed especially with a significant focus on non-formal adult education as a follow up of the Seti Project (UNESCO-UNDP 1985) for promoting rural education: 'increase access to locally relevant post-literacy supplementary reading materials relating to community life' in local languages (p. 2). The Plan further argued that 'the extension activities have been a vehicle to pass expert generated knowledge to the grassroots. The people's knowledge has yet to be explored and incorporated in the education system' (p. 57). This Plan allocated about 9% of the total budge of the Basic and Primary Education Project II (World Bank 2004) for the nonformal sector. Interestingly, it introduced the concept of Popular Education (Braster 2011, Rubenson 2013, Regmi 2016a) for the first time in Nepal and allocated about 12.2 million Nepali rupees for its implementation. Introduced as 'a substratum to adult literacy program' (GON 1997, 58) the Plan aimed to implement Popular Education programme through 'dialogue and discourse sessions' twice in a month in rural communities. The Plan argued that

A dialogue/discourse session to generate people's popular knowledge is a need as a substratum to literacy program... Nepali villages have oral culture. This culture is untapped to promote written culture and eventually develop literate culture... Many literate people relapse into illiteracy in the absence of post literacy and continuing education opportunities (p. 57).

The Plan also aimed to implement community-based lifelong learning approaches. It recognised that 'many cultural and linguistic group do not have cultural capital to realize the importance of education' (GON 1997, 57). Highlighting the special needs of these groups the Plan suggested that bringing 'a special package encompassing awareness to continuing education program...to facilitate learning for all age group people of a particular community' (p. 57).

The Master Plan defended the agenda of free education: 'Parental good intentions about sending children to school are thwarted by their inability to afford the costs associated with this theoretically free primary education' (p. 100). The Plan recommended developing 'a regulatory framework to regulate privately managed schools, particularly their fee structure, contents of curricula, teacher qualifications and training, job security of teachers and minimum physical facilities (p. 6). However, the agenda of decentralisation was still promoted: 'institution of decentralized financial management system by adoption of lump-sum grants modality to fund schools on an experimental basis and by enhancing the role of School Management Committee in the management of school finances' (p. 15). Referring to an independent evaluation of the project undertaken in 2005, one of my interviewees commented that only 75 million dollars, out of 135 million US dollars pledged by the Bank, was spent: 'The evaluation found that the Bank

pledged to give but in fact did not give enough money... mainly because work was not done as recommended by the Bank' (Interview #5).

The Ninth Plan 1997-2002 (NPC Nepal 1997) reiterated the aim of creating the Nepalese 'society that is cultured, modern development-oriented and endowed with skills through alleviating the prevailing wide spread poverty in the country' (p. 31). However, guided by the deficit modernist approach, the Plan further emphasised the requirement of 'the foreign capital and technology flow as an important means to supply the increasing demands of capital in the country' (p. 160). Like the previous periodic plans, it took illiteracy as 'a main barrier to the development' (p. 579) and aimed at producing 'internationally competitive manpower' by expanding the use of 'modern and scientific technology' (p. 585). It argued that government should not bear the financial burden of Tribhuvan University and recommended to undertake cost recovery approach for higher education. In this respect, the Plan argued that emphasis should 'be given to bear economic cost of higher education by isolating it from the system of depending upon government grants only to ensuring cost recovery system, people's participation, private sector for long-term resource mobilisation for higher education' (p. 585).

The Tenth Plan 2002-2007 (NPC Nepal 2002) is particularly important because it was prepared as a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The concept of PRSP was introduced in 1999 by the World Bank and the IMF 'as a requirement for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) to gain access to debt relief and concessional loans' (Elkins and Feeny 2014, 228). In the Tenth Plan, a free functioning private sector was regarded as the primary solution towards poverty reduction. The Plan suggested that 'Nepal can do a number of things to promote private sector development, enhance competitiveness and boost the growth of the non-agricultural sector' (NPC Nepal 2002, 48). In this respect, the Plan argued that 'the core objective of private

sector development is to enhance the scope for private participation in economic activities through the creation of a private sector friendly environment' (p. 48). According to the Plan, promotion of the private sector is important because it 'can make a meaningful contribution to poverty eradication' (p. 48). To ensure maximum level of market freedom the Plan 'redefined' (p. 38) the role of the Government: 'As per liberal economic policy, the government will gradually reduce its role in economic activities, while private involvement will be encouraged in a wide range of economic activities, such as investments in social and economic infrastructure and service delivery' (p. 48). The Plan took a significant step towards making Nepal a member of the WTO as a novel step to boost Nepal's 'international competitiveness' (p. 48).

Though the agenda of educational decentralisation was introduced during the Panchayat regime—to maximise the use of 'local resource according to the capacity of the local community for development of the district through the medium of local leadership and organisation' (NPC Nepal 1985, 163)—the Tenth Plan redefined decentralisation as a strategy to reduce the role of government in school management. This is how the notion of decentralisation became 'a confusing idea' (Interview #4) and the Bank—through its involvement in the preparation of PRSP and other project document—interpreted decentralisation for strengthening governance (Rhodes 1996) where non-state actors such as private sector and donors imposed new form of governing mechanism bypassing the government. The agenda of decentralisation, hence, became 'a major strategy of the Tenth Plan' (NPC Nepal 2002, 53). It is important to note here that because of ongoing Maoist insurgency (1996-2006) during that period the Tenth Plan faced the lack of government agency at local level. Despite this fact, the Plan recommended for the 'decentralization of the management of local schools by handing it over to school management committees at the local level, and changing the role of district and central level agencies to that

of facilitator, monitor and evaluator' (p. 53). In this respect, the agenda of educational decentralisation in Nepal was the Bank's strategy to increase its own influence on education by reducing the role of the Ministry of Education.

Moreover, for the first time in Nepal's modern history, the Tenth Plan declared that development efforts made in Nepal should be for fulfilling the need of the donor community: 'It is also important to keep the Plan's objectives in perspective. First, the Plan is expected to meet the needs of multiple audiences. The donor community—Nepal's important development partners—are a vital part of that audience' (NPC Nepal 2002, 64). In this way, the Tenth Plan assumed that the goal of the production of human resources through mass education is mainly for fulfilling the need of global market. As a member of neoliberal world economy, according to this Plan, Nepal must remain competitive through privatisation and liberalisation of trade. Hence, as noted above, neoliberal strategies were accepted in the Tenth Plan.

As I elaborated in Chapter 3, in 2006 another political change took place in Nepal. The Maoist Party that had been waging war for a decade (1996-2006) came into mainstream politics. With the coalition of other political parties, 238 years of Monarchy was abolished thereby declaring Nepal a federal republic. In its preface, The Eleventh Plan 2007-2010 (NPC Nepal 2007) stated that, unlike previous plans that desired a modern and prosperous Nepal, the creation of 'prosperous, modern and *just Nepal*' was the major goal of the Plan. However, the Plan did not bring any new strategy towards achieving the goal of creating a *just Nepal*. It took liberalisation policy including the membership of the WTO, which was achieved in 2004, as an opportunity to adopt market economy through the promotion of private sector.

In the Eleventh Plan the main goal of education was 'to produce human resources capable of competing in the international level' and educational expansion was necessary mainly

'for complying with the commitments made by the State in national and international forums' (NPC Nepal 2007, 261). This shows that the EFA and the MDGs had to be achieved by Nepal not because the nation needed them but simply because they were 'international commitments'. The Eleventh Plan not only continued the agenda of educational privatisation and decentralisation, but also adopted other strategies such as individual scholarship schemes for school level students and the provision of student loans for tertiary level students. It recommended increasing collaboration with local bodies, NGOs, civil societies, teachers union and institutional schools to make reforms on monitoring, evaluation and supervision systems (NPC Nepal 2007, 278).

In 2009 the GON made the School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2015 (GON 2009). As a continuation of some ongoing projects—the EFA 2001-2015 (GON 2003), the Secondary Education Support Programme 2003-2008 (ADB 2011), the Community School Support Programme 2003-2008 (World Bank 2010a) and the Teacher Education Project (ADB 2012)—the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) aimed at expanding access and equity, improving quality and relevance, and strengthening the institutional capacity of the entire school education system. Unlike in many previous projects—such as the Basic and Primary Education Project for which donors' shared significant amount of project cost—in the SSRP the GON decided to bear more than 80% of the project cost. The allocated budget for school education (Grade 1- 12) was more than 85% whereas tertiary education received about 9% and adult education received just 1%. The following table provides the percentages of Subsector-wise budget allocation from year 2010 to 2015.

Percentage of Subsector-wise budget allocation from FY 2010/2011 to FY 2014/2015					
Education sub-sector	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Early Childhood Education	-	-	-	-	1.78
Basic Education	63.99	68.86	64.53	60.3	54.28
Secondary Education	16.94	16.69	17.87	19.0	19.89
Technical Education &	3.41	3.62	3.34	3.6	4.37
Vocational Training					
Tertiary Education	13.79	9.02	9.32	9.1	8.19
Education Management	1.82	1.77	2.54	2.5	2.30
and Administration					
Literacy and lifelong	-	-	-	-	1.46
Teacher pension and	-	-	-	-	7.08
retirement Facilities					
Others	0.05	0.04	2.4	5.6	0.65
Total	100	100	100	100	100.00

 Table 5: Subsector-wise budget allocation from 2010 to 2015

Source: GON (2014b, 14)

Even though the Nepalese government covered more than 80% of the total budget (US\$ 4.040 billion), the neoliberal assumptions promoted by the Bank and adopted in the previous projects continued. The SSRP took donors as *partners* of the government where they have active role in educational management, monitoring and evaluation. The government agencies—the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance—were asked to be accountable to the donors. In the past, those government agencies used to discuss achievements and failure of educational programmes at the National Planning Commission (Interview #10). The Plan argued that information should be directed to clients' satisfaction, which literally meant the satisfaction of the donors, and that this 'will contribute towards developing a better understanding of how clients value the educational programmes and services' (GON 2009, 52).

The SSRP gave too much emphasis on monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes and assumed an increased role of the donors for this purpose: 'The participation of stakeholders in the monitoring process is expected to improve transparency and accountability' (GON 2009, 51). Whereas 2.56% of the total budget was allocated for literacy and lifelong learning, the Plan allocated 7.15% for monitoring and evaluation. This shows an overemphasis on measuring learning outcomes rather than creating an environment for better learning. A major strategy promoted towards the promotion of lifelong learning, understood as non-formal and informal learning, is the establishment of Community Learning Centres (CLCs).

The Plan encouraged the GON for further decentralisation and privatisation of education: 'Local governments have the authority to encourage private providers through a contractual agreement to deliver such services by providing subsidies, scholarships, or any other appropriate support' (p. 18). The notion of performance based funding was taken as another reform strategy. The Plan argued that the performance based funding scheme 'has created a positive environment in schools for improving efficiency' (p. 54). The plan assumed that both students and schools would compete with other students and schools to get more funding from the government. As the country is highly diverse—some schools located in urban centres such as Kathmandu and some located in remote districts—the idea of competitiveness further marginalised those who were already weak in the performance indicators taken as standards. Moreover, with the establishment of the Education Review Office, the standardised assessments, such as National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA), has been adopted in Nepal with the implementation of the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) (World Bank 2016c). As noted above, NASA aims to align learning assessment system with international assessments systems such as PISA.

The Twelfth Plan 2010-2013 (NPC Nepal 2010) and the Thirteenth Plan 2014-2015 (NPC Nepal 2014) repeated the same rhetoric and policy agenda of the Eleventh Plan such as producing globally competitive human resources, individual scholarship schemes for selected

students, student loans, and the decentralisation of education. However, these two latter plans took some initiatives towards minimising the disparity between public and private schools through coordination and through sharing best practices with each other. For example, the Thirteenth Plan argued that privatisation in education is really good but Nepal has not created environment for private sector involvement. In this regard, it adopted the idea of Public Private Partnership in financing and management of school system. Both Plans aimed at graduating Nepal from the status of LDC category by 2022 mainly by creating investment friendly environment for foreign investors (see p. 51).

In this way, the normative and hegemonic assumptions of neoliberalism embedded in the Bank's project documents were reproduced, sometimes with some changes, in national educational policy documents (Levinson, Sutton, and Winstead 2009). As I elaborated above, especially under the section *Decisionism* the policy making process at the World Bank is not based on rational communicative actions in which ideas are freely contested among all parties. Rather a handful of top level economists make decisions on the basis of neoliberal imaginary. This study found that the same tendency has trickled down into national level policy making processes. Top level bureaucrats associated with the Ministry of Finance and the National Planning Commission played key roles in promoting key educational agenda in Nepal (Interview #9). Educational programmes such as adult education and literacy were not funded by the Bank because they do not fall under the parameters of the human capital theory as interpreted by the financial institutions in the present context.

Those top level economists and bureaucrats working in Nepal uncritically accepted neoliberal policy prescriptions for two reasons. Firstly, through hegemonic assumptions, neoliberalism has shaped the subjectivities of these people hence they have become

'subordinated political subjects' (Levinson, Sutton, and Winstead 2009, 774) who take those assumptions for granted (Lingard 2006). Academicians such as university professors could have provided critical viewpoints, however, because of the lack of proper communication mechanism they are often excluded from the policy making process. Sometimes they are hired by the World Bank as consultants but they are not able to make recommendations beyond the framework provided by the Bank.

Secondly, even if some bureaucrats are aware of the fact that some policy recommendations are not according to the contextual realities of Nepal, they do not reject them simply because of vested personal interests. As two of the interviewees commented (Interview #1 and #9) these top level bureaucrats accept those recommendations on conditions that they would have the chance to have international visits and their children would get scholarship for abroad study. For example, in the *Basic and Primary Education Program Master Plan II 1997-*2002 a provision was made to 'provide opportunity to pursue graduate studies overseas' for 45 personnel and 'opportunity for study tours to 150' personal working in the Ministry of Education (GON 1997, 51). Those personal were allowed to stay 24-48 months abroad and their expenses, about 277 million Nepali rupees (GON 1997, 56) had to be covered by the money loaned by donors to implement the Basic and Primary Education Project (World Bank 1992).

Some bureaucrats just accept those recommendations simply because they do not have capacity to have a rational discussion with international donors. Those bureaucrats have gained top level positions in the Ministries and the National Planning Commission not on the basis of merit, but on the basis of their affiliations with political parties in power (Interview #9). Hence, neoliberal ideology continuously influences the education system of Nepal not only because the

nation lacked economic capital (Lingard, Taylor, and Rawolle 2005, Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) but also because of the lack of its intellectual capital, especially of Nepalese bureaucrats.

Since multiparty democracy was restored in 1990, political instability has been a major problem in Nepal. There are more than 30 political parties and three of them—Nepali Congress, Nepal Communist Party United Marxist-Leninist and Nepal Communist Party Maoist—have formed coalition governments 21 times since 1990. One common agenda of these governments is to present bigger budgets than the previous ones, while the national GDP has not increased. For example, as one of my interviewees (Interview #5) indicated, the Finance Minister presented about 7.25 trillion Nepali rupees as a national budget for the fiscal year 2015/2016. The deficit amount within that budget is about 35%. The GON aims to recover that amount from donor agencies as grants and loans. With those grants and loans, the donors force the government to accept certain policy recommendations; otherwise the hefty amount of money to complement the budget deficit cannot be recovered.

6.9 Summary

In this Chapter, the key policy documents selected for the detail analysis and 13 interview transcripts were analysed under 8 thematic topics: learning as individual responsibility, privatisation for efficient management of education, decentralisation for good governance in education, standardised assessment mechanism for comparing within and across countries, the effect of decisionism in making educational policies and plans in Nepal, economic determinism as a guiding principle especially in the World Bank, lifelong learning as a new educational policy agenda for LDCs, and adaptation of lifelong learning discourse in Nepal's educational policy and planning documents. In light of my analysis of the major educational policies and plans prepared by the leadership of the Ministry of Education (GON 1992, 1991, 1997, 2009)

and the major Periodic Plans produced by the National Planning Commission (NPC Nepal 1980, 1985, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2010, 2014), this study found that the Bank's understanding of lifelong learning is partially adopted in Nepal by implementing some of the strategies such as privatisation, decentralisation, and standardised assessment.

While analysing the data, I critically examined those themes using some of the Habermasian theoretical constructs such as communicative rationality, colonisation of the lifeworld, decisionism and global governance. I referred to scholarly publications that relate to deepen the critical perspective in my analysis. In the next Chapter, I have discussed the key findings of this study in the light of the three research questions mentioned in Chapter 1. I have also provided some recommendations for Nepal and the World Bank towards the end of the next Chapter.

Chapter 7: Discussions and recommendations

The first half of this final Chapter summarizes the key findings of the study in light of the three main research questions. Section 7.1 explores the first question with regard to what understandings of lifelong learning are being promoted by the World Bank. In section 7.2, the second question is addressed regarding how the World Bank's lifelong learning policy discourse was adopted or adapted in Nepal as an LDC. In section 7.3, findings that relate to the third question which focused on the limits and possibilities of these policies to address the key challenges faced by Nepal are summarised. While the findings have been summarized according to the three main research questions, it is important to note that there is some overlap such that some of the issues addressed in one section may have relevance for another section.

The findings are discussed in light of the theoretical framework and scholarly literature currently available in the field. The second half of the Chapter (section 7.4 to 7.6) presents key recommendations to the World Bank and Nepal; and finally some directions for further research in the field of lifelong learning and LDCs.

7.1 Lifelong learning and the World Bank

This study found that the understanding of lifelong learning promoted by the World Bank takes learning as an individual responsibility. While this notion appears to be logical, it has promoted a narrow vision of lifelong in the context of LDCs such as Nepal. This notion is a product of individualism and social Darwinism—a feature of the Western world which contradicts the collective communal settings found in LDCs—that creates barrier towards providing learning opportunities for LDCs citizens. The case of Nepal shows that this notion of 'learning as individual responsibility' is not resisted by the GON. There are several implications. First, the governments of LDCs, like the GON, are no longer required to be responsible and accountable for the lack of learning opportunities for their own citizens. Second, it has become easier for international organisations such as the World Bank to promote particular policy agendas such as the privatisation of education. While making individuals responsible might mean learners have more freedom to decide what, how, and why to learn, from a critical perspective, this notion undermines the possibility of promoting a public education system and revitalising its role as social equalizer. This is significant given that all LDCs are suffering from a history of social discrimination and inequality.

The third consequence of this policy orientation is that it widens the gap between a few privileged class and rest of others struggling for survival. Under this policy orientation, marginalised people, especially adults, must take responsibility in terms of paying school fees, buying a computer, or bearing opportunity costs. When an individual fails to secure a job in the labour market it is assumed that individuals lack necessary skills and qualities to be hired by employers. Within this hegemonic policy framework it is also assumed that those who have not been hired must continue their learning which could include changing their academic discipline and doing another degree in order to succeed in the job market.

There is a lack of resistance to the hegemonic notion of learning as individual responsibility. This is related to some of the assumptions of a modernist top-down development model that guide all developmental activities including educational policies of LDCs. As noted in Chapter 2, the survival of the fittest and the imperative of becoming competitive and flexible in relation to finding jobs in the labour market have been powerful forces shaping educational policies and practices. As noted in Chapter 6, most of the educational policy schemes of LDCs—such as voucher schemes, merit pay, cost-sharing approach, standardised assessments—are

conceived in economically rich Western countries such as the US. These ideas are transferred to LDCs through supranational organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank.

Some of the policy makers I interviewed appeared to have little interest in a critical analysis of educational policy agenda as well as the potential of such agenda to solve the problems and challenges of LDCs. They seemed to be interested in promoting competition and seeking solutions of LDCs development challenges through market mechanisms such as the privatisation of education. As some of my interviewees expressed, in the countries like Nepal educational policy making processes follow decisionism in which decisions are made by top-level bureaucrats with little opportunity for rational communication with all stakeholders who are affected by such policy decisions. By virtue of having high social capital, mostly those individuals who come from elite family backgrounds are able to hold the top-level positions in bureaucracy. Since this elite group is able to afford costly privatised education they further benefit from the current education system that perpetuates social inequality.

As one of my interviewees commented, top-level bureaucrats enjoy similar kinds of social and professional status as do consultants associated with the World Bank; they have similar views of Nepal's educational problems and challenges and little interest and motivation to understand the problems as well as potentialities of the people living in remote communities. They see Nepal through a deficit perspective and seek solutions to its problems and challenges from this view. This 'donor-elite ideological coalition' (Interview #9) has silenced all other alternatives—such as the promotion of local knowledge, skills and practices useful for bottom-up development (Peet and Hartwick 2009)—that could challenge the neoliberal orthodoxy. As a consequence, the hegemonic assumptions of neoliberalism—such as freedom of market, private investment in education, and decentralisation as a means of strengthening transnational

governance—diffused through the Bank's policy documents, are accepted by LDCs like Nepal. With increasing involvement of donors in making educational policy decisions and increasing interests of elite groups to perpetuate the status quo through privatised education, these neoliberal assumptions shaped LDCs' educational policies and plans.

In the next section, I discuss the notion of 'privatisation for efficiency' presented as a major finding in Chapter 6.2 with a focus on how this agenda of privatisation has become, in recent decades, a global phenomenon in the form of large multinational business industry. For this, I draw on the post-Westphalian facet of policy analysis presented in Chapter 5.1 and the assumptions of developmental model presented in Chapter 2.1. In this discussion, I highlight how a multinational business industry might impact education systems of LDCs and the goal of lifelong learning proposed by the international community as a new 2030 educational agenda.

7.1.1 Privatisation of lifelong learning

This study found that the World Bank sees education as a market commodity that has certain economic value and promotes investing in education because, like other sectors such as hydropower, investment in education has 'the greatest pay-off' (World Bank 1999a, viii). Guided by the logic of the invisible hand of the market (Smith 2005), the Bank assumes that free market will maintain a balance between demand and supply in education. Hence, the Bank encourages private investors to extend their businesses in education. As presented in Chapter 6.2, the Bank takes the private sector as a more effective education provider than the public sector. The rationale behind this logic stems from comparing private and public schools in terms of standardised test results. This type of comparative study, which seeks to find whether private or public schools within the nation-state perform better, has its historical roots in the West (Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore 1982, Friedman 1997). Coleman et al.'s US study found that

private school students performed better than public school students. Parents were encouraged to enrol their children in private schools through the voucher system—'that would enable parents to choose freely the schools that their children attend is the most feasible way to improve elementary and secondary education' (Friedman 1997, 341).

As noted by Somers, McEwan, and Willms (2004), I would argue that the difference between the test results—which are often used to make such comparisons in the World Bank's documents—cannot be the sole determinant with which to declare that private schools perform better than public ones in contexts of LDCs (Klees 2008). As some of my interviewees argued, if privatization was regulated by the state (Stiglitz 2002), never a priority of the Bank, the private sector might help to strike a balance between demand and supply. It might provide parents with more choices in selecting schools for enrolling their children (Friedman 1997).

The research supporting private school (Friedman 1997) and contesting the role of privatisation in education (Somers, McEwan, and Willms 2004) were undertaken within the context of nation-state. But in the post-Westphalian world order educational privatisation has been a global phenomenon in which multinational corporations such as Pearson Affordable Learning Fund (PALF)⁵ have extended their business in the educational sector of LDCs. As

⁵ Pearson Affordable Learning Fund (PALF) is an interesting example to showcase how multinational corporations are increasingly interested in making large scale investments in the education sector of LDCs. As stated in its official website, the vision of PLAF is 'to help millions of children in the world access a quality education in a cost effective, profitable and scalable manner' (Pearson 2016, para 1). By doing this, PALF 'wants to demonstrate to governments and donors that private education can help to educate their youngest citizens in an efficient way' (ibid). With its investment in more than 70 countries, and obviously many of them are LDCs such as Uganda and Bangladesh, Pearson claims that it 'is the world's leading education company' that provides 'educational materials, technologies, assessments and related services to teachers and students of all ages' (ibid).

Santori, Ball, and Junemann (2016, 193), note multinational investors are 'taking a greater interest in key educational sectors' of LDCs. Experienced and capable to produce consumer goods in mass quantities and constructing consumer culture (Featherstone 2007) to sell these goods, multinational companies are increasingly interested in making profit by investing in education. Their investment sectors are not limited to constructing school buildings; they are increasingly involved in providing training for teachers, preparing learning/training modules, publishing books and testing manuals (Verger, Lubienski, and Steiner-Khamsi 2016). The notion that 'education is an investment' stems from the first generation of human capital theory (see Chapter 4.1) in which investment is made by a nation and the outcomes of the investment is expected to fulfil the human resources shortage of that particular nation. In the present context, as the multinational corporations have emerged as new colonisers, as noted by the critics (Frank 1978, Jaffee 1998) of the developmental model, they repatriate their profit to the Western countries.

As some of my interviewees noted, the governments of LDCs such as the GON have not resisted this trend of privatisation in education because they are more concerned with the amount of Foreign Direct Investments (Kalanje 2002) coming through multinational corporations; rather than how such investments would benefit poor citizens. As I noted in Chapter 2, even if some governments want to resist they cannot do so because they are constrained by the General Agreement of Trade in Services (GATS). The GATS regulation forces these countries 'to open up their borders to foreign investors in education' (Klees 2008, 335).

Since key supranational organisations such as the World Bank and the WTO endorse the privatisation of education (Tooley and Longfield 2015), LDCs' educational policies and practices have conformed with the understanding of lifelong learning promoted by these organisations. By networking with these organisations, multinational corporations have established monopoly on producing computer programmes including learning apps such as 'school in a box' (Spring 2015) and digital books, testing material for large scale international assessments such as the PISA and TIMMS, and training manuals for teachers. In this context, educational materials used in LDCs are increasingly produced and sold by these corporations as their own commodities.

As these corporations are headquartered mostly in developed countries of the West the exploitation of LDCs (see Chapter 2.4.1) by the Western countries continues. Now the concern is not only how much money these corporations make, but also who are involved in producing those teaching-learning materials and what understanding they have about the context of learners/students and LDC communities. As the corporations have emerged as new 'apparatuses of knowledge production' (Escobar 1992, 23) they assume that they are key authority to define what is true knowledge for LDCs.

While comparing the picture of LDCs (see Chapter 2) with the power of multinational companies and their growing interest in making investment in the public sector, mainly health (Schwartz 2011) and education, it is not hard to gauge what challenges LDCs, their citizens (especially adults and women living in marginalised communities) and their social institutions that maintain the lifeworld (see Chapter 4), would face. As noted in Chapter 2, about 12% of world population live in 48 LDCs but share 1% of the global wealth. More than 30.8% of world's extreme poor people – that is about 53% of the total LDC population (878.2 million) –

live on less than \$1.25 per day (OECD 2013). But it is unfortunate that about 147 multinational corporations and financial institutions have established a network to control global wealth (Vitali, Glattfelder, and Battiston 2011, 1). These top corporations are now controlled by the richest 1% individuals who hold more 'wealth than the rest of the world combined' (Oxfam 2016, 1). It means more than 50% of the global wealth is controlled by 1% and rest of the 99% share other 50%. As revealed by Panama Papers 'a global network of tax havens further enables the richest individuals to hide' their wealth (Oxfam 2016, 1). Hence, placing the problems and challenges of LDCs in the larger global context, it becomes evident that the issue of enabling LDCs to make autonomous and sovereign decisions is at great risk. The future of the people living in rural communities with indigenous occupations such as subsistence farming is bleak.

In the context of increasing control of multinational corporations, there is a greater emphasis on investing in some specific sectors of education 'that has the greatest pay off'. In this respect, the notion of lifelong learning (UNESCO 2010, 2009, Faure et al. 1972, Delors et al. 1996, UNESCO 2015b) conceived of several decades ago—and recently endorsed as *Education 2030: Towards equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all* (Incheon Declaration 2015)—is more likely to remain a utopia (Rubenson 2011, Elfert 2016) especially for LDCs. The goal of lifelong learning for all by 2030 is less likely to be achieved by LDCs not only because of funding problems but also because of increasing trend of interpreting education as a form of multinational market commodity.

For achieving the SDGs the UN has established the Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN) which includes development partners such as the USAID and the DFID; multilateral financing institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF; and multinational corporations such as Royal Dutch Shell, Exxon Mobil and Wal-Mart. The main role of the SDSN

is to recommend solutions on financial matters mostly for LDCs. The SDSN recommends that all LDCs should spend about 11.5% of their national GDP on developmental activities for achieving SDGs by 2030 (Schmidt-Traub 2015) and argues that 'approximately half of these investments in the SDGs can be privately financed' (p. 1).

The proposed SDG funding modality, understood as Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA 2015, 4), has encouraged the primary funders of the SDGs such as 'banks and corporations' (SDSN 2015, 8) and discouraged investment in adult education as well as literacy because, in their calculation, these sectors do not have better payoff. As noted by Pingeot (2014), who examined the process towards the Post-2015 agenda, the representatives of large multinational corporations were provided with 'privileged access to UN policymaking' (p. 29). With their involvement in key decision making bodies, such as High Level Panel (2013) and SDSN (2015), they 'actively' influenced the SDG financing modality that promotes corporate financing towards achieving the SDGs and the Education 2030 goals.

In the next section, I discuss the agenda of 'decentralisation for good governance' presented in Chapter 6.3. Employing the notion of global governance (Rhodes 1996, Habermas 1998) the discussion focuses on how the agenda of decentralisation promoted by the Bank appears as a strategic neoliberal agenda conceived to reduce the role of government thereby to strengthen global governance in education.

7.1.2 Global governance of lifelong learning

The notion of decentralisation defined as 'the transfer of authority and responsibility for governance and public service delivery from a higher to a lower level of government' (World Bank 2008, xiv) is not a bad idea in itself. However, the way that the World Bank has conceived this notion is part of the neoliberal ideology and not simply a part of an effort to free the

education system from 'political' control as the World Bank claims (p. xiv). For example, the notion of school transfer is tied to the narrow version of decentralisation. It is constructed under the guise of neoliberalism to undercut the role of national governments so as to increase the role of global organisations such private sectors and multinational corporations in educational governance (Rhodes 1996).

Instead of supporting governments of LDCs to develop effective monitoring mechanism to regulate privatised education systems, the World Bank has advocated the agenda of decentralisation based on its own imaginary. Increasing community participation in the governance and management of schools (World Bank 2008) is not a bad idea but the problem is that the World Bank has promoted its own neoliberal logic of decentralisation that puts all blames squarely on the national governments⁶ and does not acknowledge problems with its policy recommendations.

In the context of neoliberal world order characterised by free trade and corporate governance, one of the perplexing questions is whether globalisation has increased or decreased the power of national governments. Scholars such as Hall and Soskice (2001), who analysed this issue in the context of industrial Western nations, indicate that in the face of globalisation, national governments are not 'defenceless' (p. 56); whereas others such as Rhodes (1996), who include developing countries in their analysis, argue that national affairs are increasingly shaped

⁶ Even if arguments like this appear to be less critical to the governments of LDCs and more critical to the international organizations such as the World Bank there is no point in romanticizing the act of national governments. The findings of my research suggest that it is the responsibility of LDC governments to ensure educational access and lifelong learning opportunity for all LDC citizens. For this international organizations such as the World Bank have a crucial but a complementary role.

by global institutions such as the OECD, the World Bank, and regional organisations such as the European Union. Looking through Habermasian lens, I would argue that LDCs' prerogatives have eroded because of: (a) the decline in the state's capacities for control; (b) the growing deficits in the legitimation of decision making processes; and (c) an increasing inability to perform the kinds of steering and organizational functions that help secure legitimacy (Habermas 2000).

As I illustrated using the case of Nepal, all governments do not have the same degree of power to influence the global political economy controlled by supranational organisations and big corporations. As world system theorists argued (see Chapter 2.4.2), economically powerful nations (the countries of the core such as the US) have 'used international institutions' to pursue reforms they want (Hall and Soskice 2001, 56) according to their own political and economic interests. But LDCs (countries in the periphery such as Nepal), as they cannot exert same level of pressure to influence policy decisions of those institutions, are increasingly governed by them (Habermas 1998). The countries in the core of the world system institutionalise their policies and agendas using international platform. For example, Nepal's NASA initiative (see Chapter 6.5) has a historical roots in the OECD's World Indicators Project (WIP). As Rubenson (2008, 246) notes, the WIP, which came 'after heavy pressure from the United States', has become the global norm in the field of international comparison affecting educational systems of all LDCs.

The WIP is now jointly sponsored by the OECD, the World Bank and the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (Rawolle and Lingard 2008), which aims at bringing all developing countries into the international assessment framework by implementing several programmes such as PISA, PIAAC, Trend in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the International Adult Literacy Study Survey, and the Adult Literacy and Life-skills Survey. As presented in Chapter 6, the World Bank assumes that participation in those assessments can help LDCs such as Nepal to 'identify their relative weaknesses and strengths within an internationally developed framework' (World Bank 2003a, 102). LDCs are recommended to follow this global assessment regime such as 'PISA for Development' in the post-2015 development decade (World Bank 2014b, OECD 2016). The findings of this study (see Chapter 6.4) shows that the assessment regime manifests a new form of global capitalism (see Chapter 2.4.2), which has almost no potential for solving LDCs' problems and challenges.

By promoting global agendas such as standardised testing and measuring learning outcomes, supranational organisations shape LDCs' educational policies and practices (Kickert 1993). LDCs have gradually relinquished their power and expertise in managing educational activities on their own (Habermas 1998). The form and function of this new governing mechanism differs from the traditional notion of government. According to Rhodes (1996), 'governance is broader than government' since it covers 'non-state actors' where 'boundaries between public, private and voluntary sectors become shifting and opaque' (p. 660). Under this global governance framework multilateral organisations (the OECD, the World Bank and UNESCO), bilateral organisations such as the USAID, and multinational corporations such as Pearson Education are increasingly involved in making educational policies, designing educational projects and planning educational programmes for LDCs. According to Kickert (1993, 275),

The control capacity of government is limited for a number of reasons...Government is only one of many actors ...[which] does not have enough power to impose its will on other actors. Other social institutions are, to a great extent, autonomous. They are not controlled by any single superordinate actor, not even the government... [and] have a much larger degree of freedom of self-governance. Deregulation, government withdrawal and steering at a distance are all notions of less directed government regulation and control, which lead to more autonomy and self-governance for social institutions.

In this new global mechanism, performance based indicators are used to measure the success and failure of educational institutions as well as the nation states. Even though government and its line agencies such as the Ministry of Education have some roles in implementing educational programmes, they are constrained by the policy framework prescribed by those organisations (Regmi 2015b). An important point to note here is that even though the global actors are widening their control they are not putting additional effort to improve the quality of education in LDCs. In rhetoric, they have 'direct control' (World Bank 2011, 9) on setting educational outcomes and measuring them but in reality national governments are blamed if the latter fail to achieve the set objectives and outcomes. For example, if a country ranks low in PISA results, the onus of the failure goes to that country; but not to the World Bank or the OECD. As Rhodes (1996) notes, where so many actors contribute, none of them are held fully 'accountable' for the failure of their joint venture (p. 663).

A peculiar feature of the actors involved in global governance of education is that they do not work independently or compete with each other as the proponents of the invisible hand of the market had previously assumed. Rather these actors form networks with, and sometimes without, national governments. The networking is not only hierarchical that stretches from national to supranational level but also horizontal that stretches between private sector and national bureaucracy. Introduced in LDCs such as Nepal as 'Development Partners' (see Chapter 6.5), this new form of educational governance executed by non-state actors has taken 'an organizational form somewhere between hierarchy and network that draws upon diverse horizontal and vertical links that permit different elements of the policy process to cooperate (and/or compete)'(Ball and Junemann 2012, 138).

Global networking among supranational organisations for governing the education of LDCs increased after the 1990s, something that Elkins and Feeny (2014) theorise as the New York Consensus. For declaring the MDGs, the UN worked in 'closer coordination' with the IMF, the OECD, and the World Bank to focus on 'specific development priorities' including education (Mundy and Verger 2015, 13). For example, with the initiative of the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) programme was initiated in 2002. It brought together developing and donor countries, multilateral agencies, and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to accelerate progress toward the EFA goals (GPE 2013, 2). Now the GPE is involved in educational financing and governance of more than 60 developing countries including Nepal. As stated in its website, Nepal joined the GPE in 2009 and received a US\$120 million GPE grant for 2010-2014 with the World Bank as the supervising entity. The funds were pooled with the government and other development partners' funds, to support the implementation of the School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2016 (GPE 2015).

In sum, the understanding of lifelong learning promoted by the Bank has made educational privatisation a multinational business industry. In this new development, corporations have emerged as key actors to shape the nature of educational delivery. Using their own multinational business model, they are now able to shape the form and function of lifelong learning. According to this new rhetoric of lifelong learning, people should continue to learn so as to adjust themselves with the capitalist system (Habermas 1987); otherwise, they will not be able to survive in the fast-changing competitive market. Investment of the multinational corporations in the educational sector is justified on the grounds that global competition cannot be achieved by the investment of LDCs alone. Supranational organisations including big

corporations have promoted global governance to 'advocate unconditional subordination of the state to the imperatives of market-led' educational provisions (Habermas 2000, 53).

7.2 Lifelong learning and LDCs

In this section, I discuss the findings presented in Chapter 6 (mainly sections 6.7 and 6.8) with regard to how the World Bank's lifelong learning policy discourse was adopted or adapted in LDCs like Nepal. This study found that the World Bank's understanding of lifelong learning is partially adopted in Nepal by implementing some of the strategies such as privatisation, decentralisation, and standardised assessment. For this discussion, I employ key assumptions of the developmental model presented in Chapter 2 as well as human capital theory presented in Chapter 4.1. The discussion focuses on some of the key problems and challenges of LDCs presented in Chapter 2.3.

7.2.1 Poverty and lifelong learning

One of the major problems of all LDCs is the lack of production capacity to reduce poverty. The neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning—that takes modernist and human capital principles as major strategies to increase productivity—has been adopted in LDCs like Nepal. I would argue that the implementation of these strategies such as privatisation and standardisation of education does not reflect the contextual realities of LDCs' rural communities. Therefore, these strategies are not contributing towards increasing the productive capacity of LDCs.

Guided by the assumptions of developmental model (particularly the notion of stages of development) and the human capital theory, the governments of LDCs assume that their agriculture based economy should move to the stage of knowledge based economy. They assume

that their education systems should be 'more innovative and responsive to the needs of a globally competitive knowledge economy and the changing labour market requirements for advanced human capital' (World Bank 2002a, 6). This reflects how educational and economic strategies adopted by LDCs have promoted the 'Western ideas about how education and the economy are' to be connected (Phillip 2007, xii) for achieving a higher stage in development ladder. In light of my findings, I would argue that under this neoliberal framework of governance this kind of shift—from agricultural based economy to knowledge based economy—may not be possible because of the following reasons.

First, the rhetoric of 'preparing students for the needs of the knowledge economy' (Spring 2009, 50) is problematic because LDCs are not able to create a proportionate number of jobs. While multinational corporations are increasingly interested in investing in LDCs and may provide employment opportunities for some graduates, I would argue that, the corporations neither work for the social welfare of LDCs nor for the permanent benefits of their employees. As Brown and Lauder (2006) note, 'it is not just a matter of the oversupply of skills that threatens the equation between high skills and high income' but the matter is how 'knowledge' is routinized to produce 'less skilled and cheaper workers' (p. 29). Multinational corporations, the envisaged employer in the era of globalisation, 'are able to keep salaries low by encouraging nations to invest in schools that prepare for the knowledge economy' (Spring 2009, 50), which has almost no relevance for LDCs.

Second, the neoliberal approach to lifelong learning assumes that students should be provided with human capital education, that is, education acquired from formal educational and training institutions. In the Bank's understanding, 'labour mobility from rural areas to urban centres' increases their productivity, whereas international migration of labour can leverage this

opportunity (World Bank 2014a, 26). In light of my research findings and the critiques of developmental model presented in Chapter 2.4, I argue that emphasis on human capital education will further increase brain drain. The Bank recommends the following measures to deal with the problem of brain drain: '(a) increased reliance on joint degrees; (b) inclusion in donor-funded scholarships of allocations for purchasing the minimum equipment and materials needed by returning scholars and for travel to update knowledge; (c) a preference for sending grantees to top-quality training institutions in other countries' (World Bank 2002a, xxx). Again all these measures stem from the modernist and top down approaches (see Chapter 2) that further perpetuates the problems of LDCs than really solving them.

Furthermore, the Bank's imaginary of creating competitive knowledge based economy, in a sense, has clashed with the realities of LDCs, mainly poverty and increasing rate of migration of young people. A few of them, the best and brightest of all, have benefitted personally. But since they have migrated from rural communities to urban centres and to the developed countries the rural communities have continuously lost productive capacity. Hence, the notion of creating competitive knowledge economy and achieving economic growth through investment in human capital education in its present form has no potential to address unemployment problems in local communities. As noted by Stiglitz (2002, 18), if 'markets are opened up for competition too rapidly, before strong financial institutions are established, then jobs will be destroyed faster than new jobs are created'.

And finally, since LDCs like Nepal have adapted neoliberal strategies while making development policies and plans (see Chapter 6.8 for my analysis of Nepal's Periodic Plans), traditional occupations such as agriculture, which is the primary means of national GDP, is in a decreasing trend. On average the agriculture sector share decreased from 41 percent in 1987 to

27.2 percent in 2008, whereas the share of industry that accounted for only 5.4 percent in 1970 reached 30.8 percent in 2008. Services increased from 9.4 percent in 1970 to 42 percent in 2008 (United Nations 2011a). Even though agriculture still contributes to a major share of national GDP, the agricultural sector has become unable to feed LDCs' own populations leading to chronic malnutrition, diseases, and famine (United Nations 2010, Qadir 1982). This has happened mainly because young people, under neoliberal human capital education, are trained to discontinue the traditional occupations of LDC communities. Rather they are schooled and trained to seek employment opportunities in an uncertain labour market. Because of the neglect of traditional and indigenous skills in comparison to human capital education, unemployment especially among youths has been a major problem in all LDCs.

7.2.2 Illiteracy and lifelong learning

In societies where 'the majority of people do not have access to school' literacy should have been the primary importance (Bélanger 2011, 87) but neither the government nor the funding agencies of LDCs have prioritised literacy. As a consequence, more than 40% of the people in LDCs are still unable to read and write. The neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning does not prioritise literacy because, in the analysis of its supporters, investment in adult literacy may not have economic returns (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 2004).

Before the 1980s, many LDCs had focused on literacy programmes. As Bélanger (2011) notes, newly liberated African LDCs such as Ethiopia had started 'fighting illiteracy movements, events, programmes and campaigns' in the early 1960s (p. 84). African ministers of education held five regional conferences between 1961 and 1982 to develop literacy in poor countries of Africa (Bélanger 2011). UNESCO's attempt to improve educational status, basically adult literacy, in LDCs had been aborted twice because of funding problems which it had to secure

from other donor agencies basically the World Bank. For example, the *Experimental world literacy program*, launched in the mid-1960s had aimed at including 'adult literacy in national educational development plans' but the project ended up without achieving its objective in 1974 because of funding problems (Mundy 1999, 35).

As I presented in Chapter 3.3, with the initiative of UNESCO, a rural adult literacy programme was launched in Nepal (UNESCO-UNDP 1985) during the late 1970s. But adult literacy was relegated to a lower priority during the early 1980s because, under the SAP, the World Bank and the IMF forced to cut budget for literacy education. According to Bélanger (2011, 84), 'in many countries of sub-Saharan Africa, as well as of southern and eastern Africa, and the Arab region, literacy was then taken off national policy agenda, while non-formal literacy departments and services were dismantled'. The Jomtien EFA world conference held in March 1990 emphasised literacy as a major agenda for LDCs but their educational donors such as the World Bank did not provide funding for literacy programmes (Bennell and Furlong 1998). In LDCs like Nepal where neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning is adapted, literacy programmes are not emphasised because literacy is not connected with the idea of privatisation (see Chapter 6.2), standardised assessment (see Chapter 6.4) and economic benefit (see Chapter 6.6).

Therefore, the educational programmes launched as the MDGs initiatives did not focus on adult education and literacy related goals. As a consequence, the millennium initiative (2000-2015) ended without bringing any significant transformation in the lives of millions of adults living in LDCs. According to UNESCO (2015a), more than US\$ 13 billion was spent on EFA worldwide whereas about 90% of the total budget was spent to achieve universal primary education alone. It is unfortunate that even though millions of adults living in LDCs are illiterate

less than 1% of the total EFA budget was spent on adult education and literacy. In an obvious sense, the majority of the countries which failed to achieve EFA Goal #4 were LDCs.

As the major supranational organisations governing global educational movements such as the EFA, have promoted a narrow vision of lifelong learning, the agenda of 'lifelong learning for all' proposed as the SDG #4 for 2016-2030 has been misleading particularly in relation to deciding whether literacy should be the priority of LDCs. For example, rather than encouraging marginalised adults such as poor people, including women to 'voice their own learning needs and aspirations' to solve their practical problems (Bélanger, Duke, and Hinzen 2007, 249), the new agenda of lifelong learning assumes that 'once the internet is available to learners in all countries, learners will no longer be at the mercy of poorly qualified teachers' (Preece 2009, 41). But the assumptions as such ignore the problems brought about by the 'digital divide' between those who are able to afford Information Technologies (IT) and have capacity to afford IT-based education and training and those who are not. Technologies can leverage adult learning, but major problems of LDC citizens such as poverty, unemployment, degradation of indigenous and traditional occupations, and the adverse effect of climate changes on their agriculture, cannot be adequately addressed by adopting technology-based lifelong learning policies and plans.

7.2.3 Inequality and lifelong learning

As the legacy of colonialism (see Chapter 2.4.3) continues in different forms, social inequalities in terms of gender, class, geography, and caste have been major problems in LDCs. The findings of my research suggest that the understanding of lifelong learning adapted by LDCs like Nepal does not solve the problems of social inequalities. As I noted in Chapter 6.6, the neoliberal perspective of lifelong learning is guided by the principle of economic determinism.

In this understanding 'the value of education and learning are reduced to—calculated and constructed as—assessments of their contribution and cost' (Bagnall 2000, 21).

Therefore, this perspective of lifelong learning has almost no potential in addressing social inequality within and across nations. This perspective of lifelong learning does not focus on the progressive, ethical, liberatory nature of education hence the issues of social justice and equity are not considered as the objectives of lifelong learning (Bagnall 2000). Hence, the real beneficiaries of educational investment have been private markets and multinational corporations and the already educated elites who hold top positions in decision making bodies. It is a part of an effort to 'impose particular economic and political agendas that benefit' the owner of multinational corporations at the expense of increased social inequalities (Spring 2009, 13). As noted by some postcolonial theorists (Preece 2009, Preece and Hoppers 2011), the neoliberal perspective of lifelong learning is a part of neo-colonialism that promotes market economies, human capital education, and the interests of rich nations for producing 'better workers to serve multinational corporations' (Spring 2009, 14).

One of the major facets of social inequality in LDCs is gender inequality. According to United Nations (2012b), 'female students remained at a distinct disadvantage in most LDCs' where only 56 women were enrolled in tertiary education for every 100 men in 2010/2011. As Martinez (2012) notes, the pathetic condition of women is a major obstacle to the development of the global South where majority of women are 'disadvantaged in terms of their access to property, housing, credit, inheritance, technology, education, health services, and quality of jobs' (Martinez, 2012, p. 86). Women's illiteracy has resulted into unemployment with poor and discriminatory remuneration both in urban and rural agricultural settings (Martinez 2012). Moreover, female illiteracy is associated with early marriage and uncontrolled population growth in LDCs. Lack of literacy has direct correlation with lack of knowledge about family planning and control over reproduction. For example, in Mali, where 'the average number of children is seven per women, only 16 percent of women are literate' (Martinez 2012, 87).

Rather than helping LDCs to reduce inequality as noted above, the neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning adopted by these countries has promoted performance based funding, cost-sharing scheme and greater involvement of private sector. As one of my interviewees argued, it leads to a 'disaster' when funding is provided to schools and individual students on the basis of their performance because those who perform better 'are already well-off and using maximum state resources' (Interview #3). The notions of performativity, and outcomes-led approach to education (Allais 2007) have been key ideas to inform educational policies of LDCs because of the World Bank's urge for developing standardised assessments mechanism. For example, the World Bank (2003a) argues that 'assessment-driven learning is based on defining clear standards, identifying the point from which learners start, determining the progress they are making toward meeting standards, and recognizing whether they have reached them' (p. 32).

Assessment-driven lifelong learning might do well for the institutions like the World Bank for comparing countries through international assessments systems such as PISA and PIAAC; such comparisons might 'inform education policies' (World Bank 2011, 39) but they have almost no potential to solve LDCs' multifarious problems and challenges including inequality. For example, international assessments such as PISA have less potential to measure peoples capacity to face pressing challenges of LDC societies such as adopting measures to mitigate the hazards brought by climate change in farming (Anderson 2010), creating peaceful living environment by reducing internal conflict (Cortez and Kim 2012), developing capacity for

rational communication (Habermas 1984), and critically examining their own limitations and potentialities (Freire 1970). Hence, implementation of neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning as such will further perpetuate inequality not only within individual LDCs but also between LDCs and other countries.

In the discussion presented above, I highlighted that the adaptation of the neoliberal perspective of lifelong learning has resulted in several consequences such as almost no funding for adult literacy and education programmes because in the Bank's understanding adult literacy has almost no economic return or comparative advantage. Similarly, the promotion of educational decentralisation has provided a superior role to non-state actors in making policy decisions. This has resulted into the promotion of private sector investment that has forced individuals to bear the expenses of their learning especially at tertiary level. I also highlighted that the notion of competitiveness injected in LDCs' educational policies and plans as a strategy to immerse them into global knowledge economy has clashed with the contextual realties of their rural communities.

This narrow version of lifelong learning adopted by LDCs like Nepal has its roots in the OECD and economically rich countries such as the US. The wider vision of lifelong learning conceived during the 1970s to address the world crisis in education (Coombs 1968) has ceased to inform educational as well as labour market policies of both developed OECD countries and LDCs. In the next section, I extend this discussion and argue that the neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning promoted by the World Bank and adapted in educational policies and plans of LDCs like Nepal has created a world crisis in lifelong learning. I discuss these findings in light of my third research question and some of the ideas drawn from my theoretical framework (see

Chapter 4), especially Habermasian conceptualisation of lifeworld and communicative rationality.

7.3 The world crisis in lifelong learning

Looking through the Habermasian lens, some of the major problems in education such as the domination of economistic and neoliberal imperatives of lifelong learning, misuse of human capital theory, globalisation and corporatisation of education are the 'pathological conditions' negatively affecting the foundations of educational theory and practice. In this respect, the findings of this study suggest that there are three major crises in lifelong learning: hegemony of instrumental rationality and the loss of intrinsic dimension of learning; creation of technocratic society and the loss of intersubjective dimension of learning; and diminishing role of civil society and the loss of critical dimension of learning. In what follows, I would argue that the neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning has almost no potential in addressing the problems and challenges faced by LDCs because of these crises in lifelong learning.

7.3.1 Loss of intrinsic dimension of learning

If people are not motivated to learn, lifelong learning cannot happen. As McCombs (1991) notes 'a motivated person is a lifelong learner, and the lifelong learner is a motivated person' (p. 117). To explore this further it is important to note that there are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. 'Intrinsic motivation is a type of motivation based in people's inherent interest in activities that provide novelty and challenge' (Deci 2004, 494) hence intrinsically motivated people are interested in learning without external reinforcements. As suggested by Deci, I argue that those people are active, curious and display eagerness 'to learning and explore' that helps them to 'acquire knowledge about themselves and their world' (ibid). In this respect, I conceptualise this type of learning as 'the intrinsic dimension of learning'

and argue that, the neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning has no potential in fostering the intrinsic dimension of learning as it promotes only the instrumental value of education and learning.

In the perspective of lifelong learning promoted by the Bank knowledge is commodified as the market imperatives value only certain forms of knowledge that yield monetary gains. For example, indigenous epistemologies such as traditional occupational skills are not valued because they are understood as non-monetary assets of the society. Some forms of such knowledge are converted into market commodity (Scherrer 2005). To increase the market value such knowledge is 'decontextualized' (Lave 1993) or detached from the original context, which is the lifeworld maintained by indigenous people. As noted by Plumb (1995, 185), in the perspective of lifelong learning promoted by the Bank the value of knowledge 'is determined not by what they disclose about the world, about social relations' and about how lifeworld is sustained but the amount of money they could make.

There may be several causes behind the loss of intrinsic dimension of learning. It is not only the commodification of knowledge but also the 'commodification of labour power via the institutionalisation of the wage-labour relation' (Habermas 1984, xxxiii) that is responsible for this loss. In this sense, people's participation in lifelong learning is limited to increasing their productive capacity, not for their own well-being but to boost national competitiveness. It has discouraged 'deep cooperation with a concomitant emphasis on the need to cope with pressure and stress' not on the employers but on the knowledge workers, because it is ultimately the individuals that are responsible for strengthening their performance (Hinchliffe 2006, 96).

The overemphasis on performance has undermined the intrinsic value of education and people's natural curiosity to learn throughout their lives about themselves and the world that

surround them. The commodified labour market has reduced the power and value of trade union and labour welfare; instead individuals are now asked to manage their own skill portfolios to compete with each other. This has benefitted multinational employers to hire employees in minimum wages. Thus what starts off as 'an emancipatory ideal is transformed into a weapon of market discipline' (Hinchliffe 2006, 96). Therefore, the problems and challenges faced by LDCs such as social inequality, internal conflict, unemployment, and illiteracy cannot be solved by adopting neoliberal perspective of lifelong learning.

7.3.2 Loss of intersubjective dimension of learning

The philosophical notion of subjectivity assumes that learning comes from one's experiences and biases whereas the notion of intersubjectivity recognizes that learning is 'based on one's position of reference and is socially mediated through interaction' (Anderson 2008).

As noted above, the perspective of lifelong learning promoted by the World Bank assumes that individuals should be responsible for their learning. The notion of individual responsibility can have two interpretations. On the one hand, it may refer to how learners are at the centre of learning with full autonomy to decide their future course of action as opposed to traditional notion of teacher autonomy as an authority. On the other hand, it may refer to how individuals are forced to learn, remain flexible, and take responsibility of their own learning to fulfil the need of the market. This is the second interpretation that applies to the perspective of lifelong learning promoted by the World Bank. Lifelong learning is for the benefits of individuals hence it is their responsibility to constantly adapt to new living conditions, technology and work environment. For this, they must 'keep pace with the constantly changing global job market' and should 'act autonomously in devising a life plan and being prepared to work in a multicultural workforce' (Spring 2009, 49). In critiques of this claim, as noted by

Schuetze and Casey (2006), I argue that some individuals may make meaningful choices among the various options open to them but for the majority of LDCs 'to make an informed choice can be very difficult as information is often incomplete, misleading or outright wrong' (p. 281).

The World Bank appears to have adopted the notion of learning as an individual responsibility against the backdrop of the technological advancement made by big corporations such as Google, Microsoft, and Apple. As a consequence, the rural communities of LDCs and their lifeworld are gradually turning into technocratic societies. But Using Habermasian lens, I argue that the shift from communal society to technocratic society has resulted into the loss of intersubjective dimension of learning. Even if the development in science and technology has some benefits it has been a problem because of its 'inappropriate deployment' (Habermas 1984, 12). Technology has not been developed 'according to the value of efficiency (guided by the empirical-analytical sciences), but rather according to the particular interest in controlling and disciplining the labour force' (Welton 1995, 150).

In a sense, societal knowledge is lifted up from the community, filtered on the basis of their possibility to yield monetary gain, and reproduced in the form of computer programs, compact disc, and online learning programs (Raduntz 2007, 242). Both learners and teachers are gradually losing their personal engagement. This phenomenon is not limited to the communication that takes place between teachers and learners. Because of the excessive use of technology we have lost the face-to-face engagement of human agency for rational discussion and the possibility of producing contextually useful knowledge. Because of the use of mobile phones and the Internet people might assume that the scope of people's connection has increased. But looking through Habermasian lens, it appears that the use of technology has

reduced the ability and opportunity of individuals to take part in rational discussion and appreciate what other people say and believe.

In this context, the ability to take part in lifelong learning is limited to the ability to obtain information through the use of media and technology. In the face of extreme poverty, hunger, corruption, disease, illiteracy, internal conflict and lack of democracy, LDCs are less likely to benefit through the development of technocratic society. Instead there is rather unchecked flow and use of information technology and the massive amount of 'knowledge as information' spreading through media and technology (Appadurai 1990) which is eroding the remaining traces of the lifeworld from the rural villages and tribal communities.

I argue that the creation of technocratic society and subsequent loss of direct interaction among people has reduced the intersubjective dimension of learning. To make a sense of 'intersubjective learning' we need to go back to the concept of the lifeworld that Habermas borrowed from Durkheim's concept of mechanical solidarity and Tonnies concept of *gemeinschaft* (see Chapter 4). Intersubjectivity, in this sense, is the fundamental characteristics of the lifeworld. People in the lifeworld are connected in such a way that the invisible network of norms, values, cultures and shared understandings provide each member of the society with an implicit, invisible and tacit mental map that enables them to be involved in a meaningful discussion. In doing so, they continuously test and validate existing 'implicit reservoir of knowledge' (Habermas 1984) and add new knowledge generated through discussion into the reservoir. This reservoir of tacit knowledge, in this sense, is not the knowledge generated by a single human subject. Rather it is a collection of ideas, experiences, and rationalisations of all the members of the society and their ancestors. This is what Vygotsky, nearly a century ago, defined

as 'constructivist learning' that is 'passed from one generation to the next' (Hyslop-Margison and Sears 2006, 111).

Therefore, this kind of learning process, that is the act of involving in interaction against the backdrop of existing knowledge as presuppositions, is responsible for 'intersubjective learning' (Habermas 1996, 35). Intersubjective learning is also a process of socialisation for the new members of the society, and the new members of the societies including new born babies. The new generations of the society continuously involve in the process of intersubjective learning until their death. From Habermasian perspective, this is the concept of 'lifelong learning' in its fundamental sense that needs to be revitalised and valued while making educational policies for LDCs. But as the lifeworld is increasingly colonised by the system, the tacit reservoir of knowledge is diminishing thus affecting both ability and opportunity for rational interaction and lifelong learning in its true sense.

7.3.3 Loss of critical dimension of learning

The colonisation of the lifeworld has resulted in the diminishing role of civil society and the subsequent loss of critical dimension of learning (Habermas 1989). The concept of civil society manifested in the present body of literature is associated with welfare state of the Western world, especially how this particular sphere differs in terms of role and function with other two spheres: state and the market (Esping-Andersen 1990). This notion comes from Gramsci, who argued that civil society and its institutions including educational ones, 'have the potential to form the basis of resistance to the state and the market' (Bunyan 2014, 541). While comparing this conceptualisation with the Habermasian theory, it seems that 'civil society' is equivalent to the 'lifeworld' and other two spheres with the two imperatives of the 'system': bureaucracy and the market.

However, while looking through Habermasian lens a distinction is found between civil society and the lifeworld. Civil society is 'composed of more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organisations and movements that attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private sphere, distil and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere'(Habermas 1996, 367). In this respect, civil society is a higher order of social cohesion than the one understood as mechanical solidarity and *gemeinschaft* which form the bases of 'lifeworld'. In this conceptualisation, civil society plays a role in critical discussion to keep the state and the market in balance. While participating in critical discussion – in the sphere where civil society makes its presence – a kind of learning takes place, which is the critical dimension of learning.

As this public sphere is diminished in the capitalist society people are reduced to mere voters of the democratic system that is highly affected by the market imperatives. They have almost 'lost their ability to make political decisions on matters that really concerns' them (Fleming 2010, 114). Now money is not only the medium of capitalistic exchange as elaborated by Marx, rather economic agenda and values have completely dominated public discourse as the society goes 'to great lengths to implement the requirements of the economy' (Fleming 2010, 115). The civil society is almost colonised by the market and the administrative power of the state has supported the latter providing a legitimate power. This has direct impact on the policy and practice of education because civil society has lost its role to guide educational praxes in the right direction. As I noted in Chapter 6, the market imperative has shaped the understanding of lifelong learning at both supranational level such as the World Bank and national level especially in the context of LDCs.

In Habermasian sense, 'a vibrant civil society is essential for democracy – the conviction that free, open, public discussion' has an emancipatory and transformative function' (Fleming 2010, 114). Civil society is a crucial component of public sphere where people are involved in rational discussion on matters of public concern. This is an open forum for all where decisions are made through better argument rather than coercion and intimidation. Hence, knowledge is not generated through subjective thoughts of an individual, something that Habermas calls 'decisionism' that was a justifiable process of learning in the Kantian philosophy of consciousness. Following Habermas, I would argue that learning takes place through 'communicatively shared intersubjectivity' (Habermas 1984, xxi) that involves interaction between two or more people in social and political settings, similar to the notion of *conscientization* (Freire 1970), through which real problems and needs of the people can be identified, contested and consensus can be achieved to solve their problems.

Hence, for enhancing lifelong learning in LDCs people should be encouraged to participate in rational discussion. As suggested by some scholars, mainly feminist critics such as Fraser (1990) noted in Chapter 4, appropriate mechanism should be developed for increasing inclusion, fairness and justice so that individuals from marginalized groups and communities are not excluded from rational discussion. A greater degree of awareness is required so that the interaction is not dominated by one or more participants due to asymmetric power dynamics. As Murphy and Fleming (2010, 7) note, rational discussion of this nature can take place only when 'no one is excluded, all have equal power to question the ideas and justifications of others ...all are equal in making a decision... coercion is excluded and the only power exercised is the power of the most reasonable argument'.

Reflecting on the findings of this study that I drew by employing Habermas, I would argue that lifelong learning policies and plans of LDCs should be geared towards enhancing the potentials and capabilities of the people living in rural communities. The capacity of ordinary people to question, challenge, and even resist the market imperatives is possible through critical dialogue and, as noted by Antonio and Kellner (1992, 281), 'pathologies of the lifeworld can be diagnosed and cures can be suggested'. I stress that all humans including the ones who are oppressed and marginalised in the capitalist society can take part in rational communicative action, if they are provided with some enabling conditions geared towards developing their communicative competence (Boman 2006). A focus for achieving this, however, depends on the value and importance that each LDC will place on adult education, for making people able to identify their real needs through their participation in 'the free discourse of communicative action' (Fleming 2012, 130).

7.4 **Recommendations to the World Bank**

In light of the findings of this study I would like to make the following recommendations to the World Bank.

First, as an economically powerful donor organisation the World Bank should promote a more comprehensive perspective of lifelong learning that is geared towards solving the problems and challenges of LDCs, especially of marginalised rural communities. Lifelong learning should not be limited to an economic strategy to increase competitiveness and the production of flexible labour force; rather lifelong learning should be the principal means for fostering 'a deeper and more harmonious form of human development' so as 'to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war' (Delors et al. 1996, 13). Rather than promoting privatisation and

marketization in education, lifelong learning policies should be geared towards reducing all forms of inequality by 'building relationships among individuals, groups and nations' (p. 14).

Second, in the context of LDCs the notion of making individuals responsible for their own learning should not inform educational policy decisions. This notion of lifelong learning may have some relevance in the societies where people already have some formal qualifications and are already having jobs. For gaining promotion in the current job or changing profession people may take some responsibility for, what is known as 'continuing education', which assumes people already have some level of education, which they should continue. But in the context of LDCs, where more than 40% of the people mainly adults are not able to read and write simple sentences, there is almost no chance that these people are able to take the responsibility of their learning. They need 'basic education' first then only we can think about continuing education. Hence, the World Bank should not hesitate to provide funding for nonformal and literacy programmes such as Community Learning Centres as I noted above (see Chapter 6.7).

Third, the majority of adults in LDCs are involved in agricultural works. In the current agricultural practices neither they are provided with any training for the promotion of their occupation nor any monetary incentives. As noted in previous section, one of the important strategies to enhance sustainable production capacities of local communities—which I would argue is more suitable to local needs—would be to focus on indigenous and traditional occupations such as agriculture. Agriculture is the main source of GDP of almost all LDCs except some oil producing ones such as Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, and Yemen. Agriculture could be one of the aid-free investments – that is less dependent on foreign assistance – that could lead LDCs towards sustainable domestic production. Adult education

programmes such as agricultural extension programmes may be helpful not only for enhancing literacy but also for boosting production and reducing poverty.

Fourth, this study found that the notion of school decentralisation in Nepal, despite a good intention of devolving centralised power to local authorities, has become a controversial policy issue. While implementing this policy both the GON and the World Bank appear to have devolved the responsibilities of managing and financing schools to local bodies without providing adequate resources. The World Bank should really be careful about whether this kind policy rhetoric really applies to the context of LDCs. In light of the findings of this research, I recommend that the state authorities of LDCs should take the responsibility of providing learning opportunities for its citizens. For this, given the resource limitation of these countries, the World Bank may help them by providing resources for designing and implementing lifelong learning programs that really support, especially, the adults living in rural communities.

Furthermore, lifelong learning is a community asset that cannot be regulated by the market forces alone. Whatever the organisation or degree of decentralisation or diversification of a system is, 'the state must assume certain responsibilities to its citizens' (Delors et al. 1996, Lee and Friedrich 2011, 159, Green 2000). In this respect, this study recommends that the World Bank should stop promoting market orientated policy agendas that treats education as a market commodity. Education should not be seen as a form of commodity. Neither could we apply the economistic and neoliberal imperatives, such as the idea of the invisible hand of the market to address educational problems. This market oriented view is inadequate and often misleading for guiding LDCs' educational policy making and implementation. Education needs investments, however, not in the same way as other market commodities for which investments are made on the basis of tangible returns. Even if investment in education such as in adult literacy

programmes may not have immediate monetary returns, social returns of such investment in the form of improved health conditions, reduction of social crime, and promotion of democratic practices may be much higher.

Fifth, as noted in Chapter 6, standardised assessment of learning outcomes has been one of the focused agendas of the World Bank in recent decades. The Bank has implemented this agenda in LDC by introducing the System Approach for Better Education Results (SABER). For example, in Nepal the Education Review Office has been established to conduct standardised assessment of students learning achievement. The ERO has involved in conducting a large scale standardised assessment throughout the country under the framework of the National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA). The NASA not only aims to align the test contents with international learning assessment mechanisms such as PISA and TIMSS but also locate Nepal's position in international benchmarks.

My research suggests that this tendency not only promotes global homogenisation of educational culture (mainly in terms of selecting course contents) but also sees LDCs educational practices through a deficit perspective. And more importantly this kind of testing regime does not encourage people to learn through non-formal and informal learning means. Hence, my recommendation is that the World Bank's effort to support LDCs education should be geared towards promoting diversity in educational delivery, recognising and further promoting nonformal and informal modes of learning and helping LDCs to establish connection between contextual needs of rural communities and the learning contents offered in schools and postsecondary institutions.

Sixth, the World Bank should help LDCs to promote not only schools but also alternative venues of learning. Public spaces that allow for rational discussions, debates and argumentations

as conceptualised by Habermas could be important learning venues. However, the local communities of LDCs should be encouraged to open such spaces for providing access to learning. It will be helpful for reconstructing the boundary between formal schooling and the society. This conceptualisation helps the Bank to recognise the wider vision of lifelong learning by creating, what some notable scholars call, learning societies (Husen 1974, Jarvis 2008, Schuetze and Casey 2006, Schuller and Field 1998). As I discussed in Chapter 4, the lifeworld maintained by community provides crucial venues for fostering learning by allowing community members to participate in rational discussion (Habermas 1984). Formal learning venues, especially the ones focused on producing graduates may not be enough for providing opportunities for rational discussion because students participating in formal educational institutions are forced to achieve certain instrumental goals of education.

Moreover, for the development of a more comprehensive model of lifelong learning communities especially the lifeworld sustained by rural communities should be taken as learning venues. This could lead towards the creation of learning society where lifelong learning can be fostered and made useful for solving social problems. As noted by Welton (2005), all human society should be taken as a vast school to avoid the rule of 'predatory corporations and dominated by a technocratic and instrumental rationality' (p. 12). This way, as noted above, the loss of intersubjective dimension of lifelong learning can be regained where everyone is provided with opportunities to foster their communicative competence so as to participate in rational discussion and redeem each other's validity claims (Habermas 1984).

And finally, instead of promoting private and corporate governance in education—that tend to produce graduates having some technical skills useful only multinational corporations the Bank should reorient lifelong learning towards creating active citizens. Drawing on my

findings as well as the available literature on this issue (Biesta 2011, Martin 1999, Nicoll et al. 2013, Odora Hoppers 2009, Preece 2002, Zepke 2013), I recommend that the Bank should reorient its approach to lifelong learning for providing LDC people with the capacity to become active citizens. The concept of becoming active citizens may have two interpretations: one, those citizens who are active because they are more efficient to work and provide better productivity to the market so that corporate market can gain maximum benefit through the minimum possible expenditure in labour-costs. And the second interpretation is, those citizens who are not just assumed to be mere human capital to fulfil the need of the job market, but are active members of civil society and political community able to participate in rational discussion and challenge different forms of oppression and domination. This is the second interpretation of active citizenship that is useful for addressing the problems of LDCs. Moreover, citizenship education should not be interpreted as a means for individual self-fulfilment. Rather it should impart everyone 'the sense of rights and responsibilities we feel towards our communities, fellow citizens and humanity as a whole' (Tandon 2013, 15).

7.5 Recommendations to Nepal as an LDC

First, Nepalese policy makers should examine whether particular policy agendas emanating from donor agencies including the World Bank such as standardised assessment, performance based funding, merit based scholarship, and privatisation of education are based on the contextual realities of nation's rural communities. Uncritical borrowing of policy ideas and the reproduction of policy texts and discourses found in the Bank's documents may bring formidable misunderstanding and mislead the process of policy formulations (Bourdieu 1999). This study further recommends that donors like the World Bank have entered Nepal not only with money but also conditionalities in the form of policy-reform agendas. The reimbursement

of the pledged loan depends on the measures and progresses defined by them. Often donors make calculations following their own criteria but do not analyse the problems and challenges in implementing educational projects in LDCs like Nepal. The donors often see the amount of money spent and whether the amount is spent as per their recommendations and protocols. The amount of money spent is not the only determiner to assess how the works are being done at the ground level. Nepalese bureaucrats who sit at the negotiation table with donors should be clear on this. Rational discussions, not decisionism, between donors and Nepalese policy makers and planners can help to solve such problems.

Moreover, formulation of a better educational policy is not possible without having rational discussion 'in which individuals bring different perspectives to an ongoing process of communication' (Englund 2010, 19) where 'methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion' (Habermas 1996, 304) are based on principles of 'discourse ethics'. While negotiating for policy agendas 'only those norms can claim to be valid that meet (or could meet) with the approval of all affected in their capacity as participants in a particular discourse' (Habermas 1990, 66). In ethnically diverse country like Nepal—with 92 separate languages and cultures associated with similar number of ethnic groups—people may have different views and ideas. However, 'it is possible and desirable to transform each other's preferences and positions in consideration of the view of others' through good reasons and debates among those who are affected by the decisions being made (Habermas 1989, Joldersma and Crick 2010, 140). As suggested by Habermas (2015, 547) 'heteronomy becomes unavoidable when the body of citizens who elect representatives and legitimise their decisions does not coincide with the range of citizens who are affected by these decisions'. Therefore, no authority should be allowed to

impose decisions on the groups of people, such as marginalised ethnic communities, if they were structurally excluded in the process of making those decisions (Fraser 1990).

Many LDCs like Nepal have a hierarchical state mechanism in which top-level bureaucrats make policy decisions without proper consultation and communication with other individuals working in lower-level positions including major stakeholders of education such as parents, teachers and students. The lack of rational communication among key stakeholders has resulted into the lack public participation in policy decisions. As noted in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.5), making a better policy for LDCs like Nepal requires communicatively shared intersubjectivity supported by thoughtful interaction between key stakeholders such as educational administrators, academician, donors, and most importantly adults from marginalised communities.

Second, the majority of the people of Nepal who send their children to the school live in rural communities. This study found that almost all of them try their best to send their children to the school but what their children learn at school is often unrelated to their parents' profession or something that they are familiar with. This means that school activities are not contextual. For contextualising school curricula greater participation of community people is mandatory. This type of education and learning will have greater accountability and participation of both parents and their children. This type of contextualisation will ultimately minimise the boundary between formal education and informal learning. In this way, LDCs like Nepal can make lifelong learning 'a matter of public responsibility' to embrace equity and capture the notion of all kinds of learning for all ages and beyond formal provision for economic growth and social development' (Preece 2009, 3).

Third, Nepalese educational policy makers should stop looking at Nepal through a deficit perspective; rather they should try to utilise an asset view to see what Nepal already has. Rather than trying to achieve something that is not really useful for its people Nepal should focus on empowering rural communities and recognising the knowledge and skills of the people especially adults. For example, Nepal has a rich indigenous heritage in terms of knowledge, skills, cultures, and natural resources. Educational policies geared towards the revitalisation of indigenous heritage could be more appropriate than producing internationally competitive human resources. Very few graduates will be able to become internationally competitive and for the majority, educational policy geared towards that end, does not help. Rather it will further alienate youth and adults from their community contexts.

And finally, major problems and challenges of LDCs like Nepal are poverty and the lack of productive capacity, unemployment, illiteracy and the mismatch between educational provisions and local needs, social and gender inequality, and internal conflict and lack of democracy. These problems are complex and hence do not have immediate simple solutions, however, a contextually appropriate comprehensive lifelong learning model can lead LDCs towards solving those problems. For this a shift in focus from the narrow neoliberal notion of lifelong learning to a wider vision of lifelong learning discussed in this dissertation is mandatory.

7.6 Further research

This study has offered at least two major directions for further research: (a) the relevance of lifelong learning for LDCs like Nepal; and (b) the influence of supranational organisations such as the World Bank on the educational policies and practices of LDCs. Let me make these two directions more specific so as to open up new avenues for further research in these fields.

7.6.1 The relevance of lifelong learning for LDCs

Lifelong learning is no longer limited to some UNESCO documents, nor is it only the economic agenda of the OECD and European countries. Lifelong learning has become a global goal after it has been included as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2016-2030). This new global initiative, on the one hand, shows the recognition of the importance of a wider vision of human learning; on the other hand, this is an attempt towards global diffusion of educational agenda associated with the developed countries of the West. In major educational policy documents produced by powerful supranational organisations, lifelong learning is interpreted as an economic policy. However, the global diffusion of such discourses might create a formidable misunderstanding about whether lifelong learning is an economic policy for sustaining global capitalism or a universal human right. Because of this misunderstanding, policy makers might formulate educational policies without examining the usefulness of such policies in addressing the problems and challenges of individual countries. As illustrated by this study, the possibility of uncritical acceptance of such hegemonic policy discourses is much higher in the case of LDCs.

Hence, future researchers, especially those interested in understanding the problems and potentials of individual LDCs, might explore: (a) what does the notion of lifelong learning mean to other LDCs? (b) Why (or why not) lifelong learning should be adopted as LDCs' national goal? (c) To what extent lifelong learning (for example, SDG #4) helps LDCs to solve their problems such as poverty, unemployment, gender inequality and environmental sustainability? I am hopeful that this study will contribute towards initiating a new line of inquiry that interfaces between the problems and challenges of LDCs and the relevance of lifelong learning to address those problems and challenges.

7.6.2 The influence of supranational organisations

Future researchers, especially those whose research relates with the problems and challenges of LDCs, may be interested in examining the influence of other supranational organisations such as the OECD on educational policy making and implementation of economically poor countries.

This study explored how the World Bank has influenced educational policy making in Nepal. There are several supranational organisations influencing educational policy making and implementation in Nepal and other LDCs. For example, during my interviews with key educational policy makers of Nepal, I came to know that it is not only the World Bank but other bilateral and multilateral donors that are influencing Nepal's educational development. Those interested in studying Nepal's education might explore, for example, how the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has influenced Nepal's education. As I noted in this dissertation, other external agencies such as the European Union, the DFID, and the USAID have been some of the key power players in Nepal's educational development. In this respect, this research has opened up spaces for further discussion and research that may focus on: (a) How other supranational organisations like the ADB have influenced Nepal's education? (b) Have these organisations coordinated or competed with the World Bank in influencing Nepal's educational policy decisions? And (c) in the networks of external agencies, what the role of the GON has been and to what extent the GON has resisted such influences?

Similarly, the group of countries highlighted by this paper, known as LDCs, includes 48 countries. This categorisation is not a gold standard; however, it provides a context for researchers about the most vulnerable countries not only to economic shocks and natural disasters but also the influence of non-state actors including supranational organisations and

multinational corporations. Future researchers might explore: (a) what are the most influential non-state actor(s) in educational policy making and implementation in each LDC? And (b) how have LDC governments managed to accept or resist such influences? Other researchers might be interested in exploring how the new network of governance—among private sectors including multinational corporations, donors, and INGOs—have affected educational sector of individual LDCs.

Finally, as noted in Chapter 2.3 LDCs have several problems and challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, and gender inequality. Future researchers might be interested in exploring the extent to which the educational policies and plans adopted by individual LDCs have contributed towards solving or perhaps even exacerbating those problems and challenges. For example, future researchers could be interested in exploring the connections between Nepal's educational policies and the challenges it faces.

7.7 Summary

This is the final Chapter of this dissertation. In this Chapter, I discussed the major findings of this study under sub-headings: lifelong learning and the World Bank, privatisation of lifelong learning, global governance of lifelong learning, lifelong learning and LDCs, and the world crisis in lifelong learning. In the discussion, I argued that the understanding of lifelong learning promoted by the World Bank (a) takes learning as individual responsibility, (b) promotes privatisation, (c) advocates for the decentralisation of educational management to promote global governance, and (d) sees education through a narrow economistic perspective. Likewise, I discussed the potential and the limitations of the neoliberal understanding of lifelong learning to address major problems faced by LDCs.

In this Chapter, besides an extensive discussion of the key findings of this study, I have provided some recommendations to the World Bank and the GON. To avoid the

misunderstandings about lifelong learning, I recommended to the World Bank that its policy recommendations about lifelong learning should be geared towards making policy capable of addressing the problems and challenges of LDCs. Similarly, I recommended to the GON that Nepalese policy makers should examine whether particular policy agendas emanating from donor agencies including the World Bank—such as standardised assessment, performance based funding, merit based scholarship, and privatisation of education—reflect the contextual realities of Nepal's rural communities. Informed by the Habermasian notion of communicative rationality, I recommend that Nepalese policy making authorities should avoid decisionism at all levels: formulation of a better educational policy is not possible without having rational discussion among national and supranational policy makers.

The Chapter and this whole dissertation completes with two major directions for further research: exploration on the relevance of lifelong learning for individual LDCs and the exploration of how supranational organisations such as the World Bank influence the educational policies and practices of individual LDCs.

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of LDCs

List of LDCs with year of inclusion (as of May 2016)

1	Afghanistan (1971)	25	Angola (1994)
2	Bangladesh (1975)	26	Benin (1971)
3	Bhutan (1971)	27	Burkina Faso (1971)
4	Burundi (1971)	28	Cambodia (1991)
5	Central African Republic (1975)	29	Chad (1971)
6	Comoros (1977)	30	Dem. Rep of The Congo (1991)
7	Djibouti (1982)	31	Equatorial Guinea (1982)
8	Eritrea (1994)	32	Ethiopia (1971)
9	Gambia (1975)	33	Guinea (1971)
10	Guinea-Bissau (1981)	34	Haiti (1971)
11	Kiribati (1986)	35	Lao People's Dem. Republic (1971)
12	Lesotho (1971)	36	Liberia (1990)
13	Madagascar (1991)	37	Malawi (1971)
14	Mali (1971)	38	Mauritania (1986)
15	Mozambique (1988)	39	Myanmar (1987)
16	Nepal (1971)	40	Niger (1971)
17	Rwanda (1971)	41	Sao Tome and Principe (1982)
18	Senegal (2000)	42	Sierra Leone (1982)
19	Solomon Islands (1991)	43	Somalia (1971)
20	South Sudan (2012)	44	Sudan (1971)
21	Timor-Leste (2003)	45	Togo (1982)
22	Tuvalu (1986)	46	Uganda (1971)
23	United Rep. of Tanzania (1971)	47	Vanuatu (1985)
24	Yemen (1971)	48	Zambia (1991

Source: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc_list.pdf

Appendix B: Consent Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Department of Educational Studies Faculty of Education 2125 Main Mall Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4 Tel: 604-822-5374 Fax: 604-822-4244 Web: http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca

Research topic: Lifelong learning in "Least Developed Countries": The case of Nepal

Principal Investigator:

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Mr. Kapil Dev Regmi (student) Department of Educational Studies, UBC

Purpose: We would like to thank you for your willingness to participate in this research. Now we would like to request to sign this Consent Form. We would like to repeat some of the crucial things that Kapil shared with you while he first contacted you for this purpose.

Study Procedures: Interview will be conducted at your convenient time by Kapil. If you opt for Skype interviewing that can be done by managing suitable time for both of us. The interview questions will include some of the issues related to educational policy of Nepal, especially the ongoing educational programme the School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2016). The major focus will be on how Nepal's educational policy is influenced by the global educational agendas such

as lifelong learning. The interview will take approximately two hours and medium will be either Nepali or English. You can use both of the languages whenever you feel comfortable. You will be requested for follow of up of the first interview, if necessary. As stated in the first contact letter interview will be audio-taped then translation and transcription will be done after each interview. A copy of the tape and transcription will be provided to you for checking accuracy.

Potential Risks: There are no anticipated risks for participating in this interview. If the discussion on some of the critical issues such as the influence of the World Bank on Nepalese educational policies make you uncomfortable you are free to not to speak in such issues or fully withdraw from the research process.

Potential Benefits: Your views could be important assets in understanding how the educational policies endorsed by supranational organisation mainly the World Bank are affecting educational practices of Nepal. Furthermore, participating in this interview will be an opportunity to reveal your thoughts and opinions with another person who has some common interests such as burning educational challenges of Nepal. It will be a kind of knowledge production practice in which your thoughts, experiences and opinions will get proper acknowledgements.

Confidentiality: All documents including the audio file and transcripts including this consent form (that includes your signature and name) will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Transcript files will be saved with a password known only to Principal Investigator and Co-investigators. You will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study, unless you wish your direct quotations to be attributed to you. The raw data may include your name and/or other identifiers, such as a code, which can be used to link the data to your name. Unless you want, your names and other identifiers will be completely removed from the dissertation and other forms of disseminations.

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Remuneration/Compensation: There will be no remuneration except a pen and a notebook that will be provided when we meet for the interview.

Contact for information about the study: If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Principal Investigators and Co-investigators (Phone and emails addressed are given above)

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects: If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

Consent: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy. Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Your name

Signature

Date

Appendix C: Interview Questions

- 1. Please say a bit of background about yourself and your experience with respect to policy making in Nepal
- 2. What does the idea of lifelong learning mean to you? In your experience and perspective, what kind of lifelong learning policy is useful for Nepal?
- 3. From your perspective, what influenced the introduction of lifelong learning in the ongoing educational programme of Nepal, mainly the SSRP?
- 4. Could you please share your experiences of connecting and negotiating with major funders (such as the World Bank) regarding Nepal's educational policy, mainly the SSRP?
- 5. What are you views about the influence of external forces on Nepal's education policies?
- 6. What are you views of indigenous education such as rural adult education (for example, the education focused on Seti project) in Nepal and what are your thoughts about their connection to lifelong learning policy development in Nepal?
- 7. From your perspective, what dimensions of lifelong learning policy would contribute to addressing Nepal's problems including poverty, illiteracy, and increasing unemployment among young graduates?
- 8. Are there other issues that we have not discussed so far that you would like to comment on?
- 9. What has been your experience of participating in this research?

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me.