

How Institutional Autonomy Affects Professionalism of University Teachers:

Case Study of Tribhuvan University, Nepal

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Master of Philosophy in Higher Education
Department of Education
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Trykk: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

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ABSTRACT

Institutional autonomy and professionalism are the main concepts on which this study is based, and are instrumental to examining the different understandings of teachers at the Faculty of Education at Tribhuvan University, the main Nepalese higher education institution. This thesis asks: How does institutional autonomy affect professionalism of university teachers? Followed by these sub-questions: What are the policies of appointing teachers? How is the curriculum designed? What are the perceptions of higher education in Nepal and how are academic careers structured? What are the practices of higher education in Nepal regarding academic freedom and professionalism? What barriers do the teachers come up with to protect institutional autonomy and professionalism in university teaching? to approach to the main thrust of the research topic under consideration.

The entire edifice of this research restored on a case study, as a methodological approach; hence, this research is qualitative in nature. In this study, the researcher has used qualitative research strategy to capture the essence of how university teachers understand institutional autonomy and professionalism. Further, multiple methods of data collection are used with semi-structured interviews and policy document analysis.

The results indicate that Tribhuvan University is a centralized agency of the national government, where institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and professionalism remain in the vault without any clear-cut policy. Therefore, respondents point to the needs of Tribhuvan University to function as a responsible, autonomous, and decentralized institution with a clear-cut policy and walk in the proper direction. From a more practical perspective, university teachers feel the need to formulate a higher education policy in order to safeguard institutional autonomy and professionalism.

The study identified various multi-pronged problems, which have been limiting the full-fledged developing potential of the Tribhuvan University as an autonomous institution of higher education in Nepal. Institutional autonomy at the Faculty of Education of Tribhuvan University is found restricted, as the university is not free to appoint the academic and administrative staffs at the Faculty and Departments due to the pressure of teacher associations and unions, and government political interference. The faculty boards and the head of the department do not hold decision-making power as they act as recommenders' to

the management. For the quality control the faculty is responsible to regulate the student enrollment, however, it is not effectively implemented as the management is unable to hold the pressure from the highly politicized student unions. Similarly, professional aspect and academic freedom are constrained, as the teachers are not free to bring changes in the curriculum, and their participation is limited to the discussion of the course contents. Teaching is confined to the classroom for the purpose of the examination, which is held annually. The teachers are bound to complete the course on time; thus, they are not free to decide what and how to lecture their students. The research development dynamics is highly constrained since it is almost impossible for researchers to conduct independent research of their interest and a potential provided with the interest loaded terms and conditions of the donor agencies. University relies on government and external fund to run academic and administrative activities; the funding source is scarce for independent activities.

Writing and publications of teaching and learning materials are purely academic activities. However, universities lack the provisions on how to regulate unauthorized materials. Faculties and Departments need to regulate the production of such materials

Most of the interviews indicated restricted managerial function affect Tribhuvan University's decision-making and policy planning aspects. The staffs carried out their job without any clear assignment of the roles and the duties. On the other hand, procedural delays on passing the decision to the implementation stage are most problematic. Political and bureaucratic influence in the universities internal and external affairs has hindered academic development and created a rule of anarchy in the educational world. Competence in teaching and administration has declined, influenced by the unchecked politicization. Political ideologies have become the functioning instruments of higher education. This has raised a question on ownership of university. Who is the owner: the government? Political parties? University Senate? or the public? None of them bear the responsibility of ownership. Furthermore, the weak decentralization and less freedom of the faculty, departments, and affiliated and constituent campuses prove that the university does not enjoy autonomy either way.

This study found the pressing need for wider participation of diverse stakeholders and adoption of innovative policy measures to follow the pace of progress in the higher education to address the current challenges.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I heartily express the deepest appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Tatiana Fumasoli, at the University of Oslo, for her expertise, generous guidance, constant support and feedback to make it possible for me to accomplish the work in this form.

I offer my sincere gratitude to the professors of Higher Education especially Prof. Peter Maassen who conceptualized my knowledge in the field of higher education.

I would like to thank executive officer Kristi Barcus and other administrative staffs of Department of Education for their direct and indirect support on the administrative arrangement to carry out this work in the present form.

I am equally thankful to the participants and Respondents involved in this study, who shared with me their invaluable information for the purpose of my thesis.

I would also like to thank my family for their patience and support to my study. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my wife, my little boy and my brother for their encouragement and constant moral support during the study. Without their support, it would have been impossible to accomplish this task.

At this point, I would like to take opportunity to thank all well-wishers and those directly or indirectly helped me to complete my study. Thanks all, it's over!!!

Padam Raj Joshi

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CDC	Curriculum Development Center
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
MoE	Ministry of Education
NEC	National Education Commission
NNEPC	Nepal National Education Planning Commission
NESP	National Education System Planning
TU	Tribhuvan University
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
WB	World Bank

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1 INTRODUCTION

The global objective of higher education is to produce skilled and competent labor force through quality education. However, Nepalese students most often consider their weak national higher education system as hampering the further development of university teaching as an academic task as well as a profession. The professionalism of university teachers' is a catalyst to produce competent human resources fit for contemporary labor markets and can contribute to align the national economy to the broader national goals of a developing country. The professionalism of university teachers is further affected by institutional autonomy. In this context, the present thesis aims to explore how institutional autonomy affects professionalism of the university teachers at government funded Tribhuvan University (TU) Nepal. TU is the largest and the oldest higher education institution established in 1959 (Act, 1992). According to the Act, TU is an autonomous higher education body funded by the state. It enjoys the legal autonomous status through supreme decision-making body called Senate, who works on policies, budget, rules and regulations to run the university (ibid.).

However, this autonomous institution is under pressure: internally due to the growth of higher education activity and student population and externally because of scarce resources and an increasingly, competitive environment (Schmidt and Langberg 2008). Equally, it is requested to produce a professional and result-oriented labor force to meet market expectations in a developing country like Nepal. The-report of the National Education System Plan is focused on prioritizing privatization and de-centralization of higher education, cost-sharing, and attracting international educational institutions to upgrade, and internationalize current education system of the country (NESP 1971). Most Nepalese higher education institutions are comprehensive, while others are assigned vocational purposes. The central government funds all these higher education institutions through the University Grants Commission (UGC).

Professionalism builds the academic career, and institutional autonomy provides freedom to the institution and its staff as a whole. Thus, professionalism and institutional autonomy enhance academic achievement, not only of teachers but also of students and higher education institutions. Institutional autonomy and professionalism are the main concepts on which this study is based, and are instrumental to examining the different understandings of teachers at the faculty of education at TU.

1.1 Background to the study

The words “globalization,” “internationalization,” “knowledge society,” and “knowledge economy” (Clark 1983, 1994, Castells 2000, Altbach 2013), are widely used in the scholarly debate about higher education. On this ground, the university plays an important and worthy role to meet societal demands for broader access to high quality and practice-based teaching. On the one hand, access to Higher Education (HE) helps to increase the literacy rate in the developing countries; on the other hand, high quality and practice-oriented teaching contribute producing intellectual individuals who can meet the labor market needs in competitive environments. Against this backdrop, institutional autonomy and professionalism are central concepts for the university teachers. Similarly, academic work, academic profession, and academic freedom should also be considered critical dimensions of the teaching profession (Berdahl 1990, Musselin 2006, Evans 2008). Hence, teaching can be regarded as the mirror of societal anxieties vis-à-vis the challenges of high-quality education (Tremblay, Lalancette et al. 2012).

In general, teaching is conceived of as dissemination of knowledge and sharing of experiences. Teaching is characterized in a traditional way in Nepal: it is often viewed as a sacred and an honorable profession where the teacher holds a moral value in society. Such a view on teachers is linked to the Humboldtian ideal, the outside force (religious power) (Askling, Bauer et al. 1999) and the concept ‘the third mission’ of the university which is connected to the relevant expectations of the society (Fumasoli, Goastellec, & Kehm 2014: 7). Thus, society, at large gives a distinctive focus on teacher and teaching and on their role in the society.

In the field of higher education academic work is considered as the intellectual craft (Musselin 2006) which is tough to deal with in the context of institutional autonomy in university teaching where higher education institutions are under state interference model (Cloete et. al, 2006). The dream of university teachers in teaching comes true through intellectual personalities: who enjoy significant freedom; and dedicated to the profession to fulfill the demands of the changing society.

Different groups in society have varied expectations from a university teacher. It is accepted that university teaching plays a central role in academia as teachers have more academic freedom (English 2006) than school teachers. At the same time being a professor signals the

highest status in the scientific community and the academic reward system (Enders 2007). It is widely recognized that with research teaching represents the central mission of University (ibid).

1.2 Relevance of the study

Autonomy and professionalism in teaching are two distinct but interconnected elements forging a competent teacher. The state plays a central role in this respect, as it has a responsibility through funding to run the academic organizations as well as maintaining institutional autonomy, academic freedom and legitimacy of the teaching profession. At present the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) need to with stagnating or even shrinking public funding; maintain the relationship of university teachers with professionalism, and exercise institutional autonomy based on the organizational frame and function accordingly.

TU is the largest, oldest, and most prominent university in Nepal according to student enrolments, academic staff, and number of campuses. Besides, being a national educational hub, as a national university, it has become an area of high political interest for different purposes. However, the general public and the media, heavily criticized the role and the performance of the university, due to the perceived poor academic achievements and lack of practical and scientific education. For instance, the university is accused of still prioritizing bookish knowledge, rote, and a memory-based examination system. Thus it is attempted here to find how institutional autonomy and teaching profession influence teachers' performance and identity. In other words, this thesis investigates the relationship between institutional autonomy and professionalism with respect to university teaching.

To the best of my knowledge to date there has not been any research on institutional autonomy and professionalism of university teachers in Nepal. In this context, the present study will contribute to the extant literature bridging the gap and offering valuable insights for researchers, policy makers and. To do this I have collected and analyzed the voices of the teachers linking them to the broader literature on autonomy and professionalism.

1.3 Higher education in Nepal

1.3.1 Historical periods and political development

The history of HE in Nepal is not very old. The establishment of Tri-Chandra College and the 'Teacher Training Centre' in 1947 marked the beginning of modern higher education; it also ended the exclusiveness centralization of education to the elites and became a cause of downfall of Rana regime (1846-1951) (Shakya 1977, Pradhan 1981, CERID 1997, Marlow-Ferguson 2002).

Student enrollment growth, decentralization of higher education, and the concepts of autonomy and community control over universities have characterized the development of HE after the introduction of democracy in 1951 (Khanal 2013). In the year 1959, the establishment of TU was the first step to develop higher education in Nepal (Act 1992). According to the Act, Tribhuvan University (TU) became the only authorized institution to conduct postgraduate degrees, award academic as well honorary degrees, and grant affiliation to the colleges spread all over Nepal. The new political system introduced in 1961, changed the entire philosophy and historical development of higher education with the formation of National Education System Plan (NESP) (Marlow-Ferguson 2002).

The extreme centralization and nationalism of higher education began from 1971-1990 (Khanal 2013) with greater involvement of government, for the purpose standardization in higher education. The proposed five-year National Education System Plan (1971) recognized the profession of teaching; and changed the education structure from school education to research in the University (CERID 1997). NESP (1971) also tried to manage higher education through system changes in TU and suggested a multi-university concept, downsized TU and brought quality improvement in higher education through competition among Nepalese universities. This period of expansion of HE saw the establishment of several new universities and affiliated colleges of Nepalese universities.

With the removal of the Panchayat system and the restoration of democracy in 1992 (Marlow-Ferguson 2002), projects were initiated to improve the access and quality of higher education. Following the spirit of decentralization and community support, privatization of education and involvement of international donors in education marked the uncontrolled growth of HE institutions. (Khanal 2013). Furthermore, TU failed to provide attention to the quality of

higher education provision and lagged behind on critical analysis of the philosophical and practical structures of Nepalese education (RBF 2003).

1.3.2 Education system in Nepal

The Ministry of Education takes the general responsibility for the overall development of education through policy making from primary school to higher education (MOE 2010). However, it has a very limited influence over Nepalese universities, as these are autonomous to their functioning as per the provision of University Act (Act 1992).

The current university education system is organized around Bachelor, Master, and PhD. The duration of Bachelor's programs varies from 3 to 5 years, Master's level – 2 years, and PhD 3-7 years (CEDA 2007, MoE 2015). Universities have constituent and affiliated campuses across the country. The main task and responsibility of university is to supervise academic programs and examinations (CEDA 2007).

For the proper allocation of public funding and to manage and develop the status of the universities University Grants Commission (UGC) was established under the University Grants Commission Act, 1993, (UGC 2004). The UGC is the main administrative agency that works as buffer organization in between the government of Nepal and universities (UGC 2012). The universities receive the budget from UGC in a block and small token grants.

HE in Nepal is rather small, newly emerged, with fast-expanded institution from which the large market expects to full-fill the human resources required. However, HE has not been able to meet those expectations adequately (WB 2015). In spite of significant achievement in the HE sector in the last decade, inadequate and unequal financing has been a major threat and a challenge.

Relevant funding in TU can lead to quality teaching, promoting revision of curricula, learning material, library and laboratories, qualified instructional staff, delivery and assessment system. However it has been widely observed that TU needs much attention in developing analytical and problem-solving skills of its students (ADB 2011, UNESCO 2014, WB 2015).

Efficient and systematic functioning of higher education needs policy. In Nepal, generally, higher education policy is prepared by the MoE with the consultation of UGC. MoE asks UGC drafting committee to initiate a consultation process, based on the results drafted on the

discussion of various stakeholders. On the completion of the draft the MoE seeks after relevant clearance from the Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Law and Justice, and the National Planning Commission (ADB 2015). Then the policy is submitted to the government cabinet for the final endorsement.

1.3.3 Current universities in Nepal

Universities in Nepal are established by individual acts of the parliament and are autonomous institutions. The acts authorize them to formulate their internal rules. The university senate approves the rules. The Prime Minister is the chancellor and the Education Minister is the pro-chancellor. The university executive council holds the power to frame rules and regulations. The vice-chancellor is the head of the authority to exercise executive powers (WB 2015). Universities award academic degrees, hire and fire staffs, create academic positions decide tuition and miscellaneous fees for students. Currently, according to the Education Management Information System (2014), nine universities and four academic institutions equivalent to universities function in Nepal (MOE 2014).

1.3.4 Tribhuvan university (TU)

The first and the largest university in Nepal TU was established in 1959 (Act 1992). The objectives were to produce skilled manpower for the overall development of a country through standard higher education, as well as to develop, preserve and promote historical and cultural heritages of the nation (UGC 2012). TU is the largest regarding the number of constituent campuses and the number of students enrolled every year. The time gap between TU and the establishment of other universities establishment has been a very long one; thus, TU has grown as the largest regarding both the number of campuses and the number of students enrolled each year (ibid.).

The TU Act (1992) recognizes TU as an autonomous, corporate body. It is a corporate structure of different organs such as the University Council, the Academic Council, the Executive Council, the Service Commission, the Institutes, the Faculties, the Research Centres, the Central Departments, as well as the constituent and affiliated campuses. TU consists of five institutes and four faculties and research centers. The institutes¹ offer courses

¹ <http://tribhuvan-university.edu.np/institutes/>

in various specialized technical fields and natural sciences (UNESCO 2008, UGC 2013) while the faculties are liberal arts and social sciences. The faculties and research centers are four in number². Some faculties administer academic programs; others supervise and monitor academic programs (WB 2015); whereas research centers enhance research and innovation (UGC 2013).

TU offers its academic programs through affiliated and constituent campuses. The affiliated campuses and constituent campuses are spread all over Nepal. Concerning students' number, TU occupies 84.4 percent of the regular enrollment through 60 constituent and 982 affiliated campuses (WB 2015).

1.3.5 Summary

The expansion of higher education in Nepal is a success story along with its challenges; expansion of graduation program prepared instructional staffs to serve the undergraduates and increased national economic development through research and innovation (UNESCO 2014). There are a set of goals proposed by the national education planning commission for each level including higher education. There is a necessity for the higher education to be good and achieve these goals. Moreover, it has to be widely seen to be good by the international community as well (ibid.). Since the modernization of the education system of Nepal, a number of international agencies such as WB, ADB have been working as the main partners of the governments to reform the education sector of the country.

A large number of undergraduates and graduates are going abroad to get a higher education degree from international ranking universities (UGC 2013); Nepalese HE is under pressure to provide quality which is the basic requirements of all the institutions of higher education (UGC 2015), and international level education at any cost. Thus, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) system was established to improve the quality at the institutional level and their academic programs to offer better results to the society UGC (2013). Overall, the continuous fostering of institutional autonomy, that ensures the development of the institution and its staffs academically, financially and morally; the focus on students through scientific,

² <http://tribhuvan-university.edu.np/faculties/>
<http://tribhuvan-university.edu.np/research-centers/>

technical and quality education via enhancement of the professionally oriented staffs is a necessity to the current higher education system of Nepal.

HE institutions are expanding in a greater number in totality on the increase of student enrolled every year. The goal of HE institutions should not be limited to increase access to higher education; it should also focus on more efficient, effective, and equitable education system in the country (UNESCO 2008). Even if TU is the largest and the oldest HEI in Nepal, it is failing to establish campuses in a poor part of the country where resources are scarce. On the other hand, the available resources are not utilized properly, whether it comes to academic human resources or the infrastructure.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Nepalese education sector is naïve in the context of institutional autonomy and professionalism comparing to the international education sector community and discussions in the education forum regarding the matter of institutional autonomy and professionalism have been rare. Vested political interests have put these issues aside from the educational sector and even far from the academicians. The academicians are also less involved in the academic sector i.e. writing journal articles and raise the issues in their area. Thus rare articles are found on the topic autonomy and professionalism in the magazines, books, and newspapers. For instance, the university does not organize seminars and conferences, conduct guest lectures to address such concepts like institutional autonomy and professionalism.

The political instability and power seeking tradition of the academicians and the administrators to get established in university whether it is a top ranking as a vice-chancellor or a professor or a lecturer have become a tradition which leads the university having unfocused mission and aims. Such environment just neglects academic activities because politics are at the center stage. Such activities led the university become centralized agency instead of exercising the provisions: decentralization, and fully autonomous, of Act (1992) challenges the reshaping of higher education in Nepal.

1.5 Research questions

The research question of the present study tries to explore the perceptions of university teachers on:

How does institutional autonomy affect professionalism of university teachers?

The research question is further divided to explore more into the topic:

- *What are the policies of appointing teachers?*
- *How is the curriculum designed?*
- *What are the perceptions of higher education in Nepal and how are academic careers structured?*
- *What are the practices of higher education in Nepal regarding academic freedom and professionalism?*
- *What barriers do the teachers come up with to protect institutional autonomy and professionalism in university teaching?*

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organized in four chapters. The first chapter has presented the introduction that aims to introduce background of the study, relevance of the study, higher education in Nepal, statement of the problem and research questions to give an overview what is to be analyzed. The second chapter presents the theoretical framework and the methodology. Chapter Three presents analysis and interpretation of the data collected from interviews. Finally, chapter four presents discussion of the findings and concludes the study.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Institutional autonomy

The section intends to identify the central concept of institutional autonomy and clarify its definition. Furthermore, this chapter presents the two major classification types and the four dimensions of institutional autonomy.

The Council of European Union (2007) mentions that universities frameworks should be characterized by improved accountability and autonomy to respond and react the needs of the society (EUA 2007). The growing complexity of managing and monitoring higher education exhibits the system as a complicated and specialized task. According to the Fielden (2008), the other models are gradually replacing the absolute control of Ministry of Education (MoE) over HEIs (Fielden 2008). That is the shifts in governance from “state control” to “self-regulation” (Askling, Bauer et al. 1999). Based on these trends Neave and Van Vaught (1994) developed ‘state control model’ as a rigid structure in which the universities are centralized and controlled by the government, on the other hand ‘state supervising model’ only regulates and monitors the universities. Thus to end such a transition there is a greater need of autonomy reforms from the state.

The government cannot always effectively manage the complex academic culture; such a realization has triggered the notion that solving the problems of academic complexity should be left to the institutions and they should 'be free to manage their own affairs' (Fielden 2008: 2). Granting autonomy simply refers that the state should recognize its needs and demands through the universities management but not through its direct involvement.

In order to understand the concept of institutional autonomy one needs to consider both global developments and ideas, as well as the national and local frameworks where institutional autonomy is designed and practiced (Estermann and Nokkala 2009). Thus, the countries around the globe may have different understanding and definitions of autonomy.

2.1.1 Definition, key terms and concepts of institutional autonomy

Institutional autonomy has significantly drawn the attention of the scholars and policy-makers around the world (Kurakbayev 2014). University as a complex unity can have autonomy on different levels. To understand this one can distinguish between the autonomy of individual academic freedom; the freedom of academic professions working in the same occupation; and the autonomy of the university as an institutional body (Musselin 2006). According to Clark (1983) institutional level of the university can be strengthened by the withdrawal of direct state influence and allowing the university to have strategic control over the human resource, further university organizations should act unified not fragmented regarding personnel policies (Olsen and Maassen 2007).

Institutional autonomy is the “degree of freedom of the university to steer itself” (Askling et al 1999: 177). Similarly “... a condition where academia determines how its work is carried out...” (Neave and van Vaught, 1994 cited in Bladh 2007: 20). Institutional autonomy refers the exit of the state from the daily management where the universities are free to determine their path (Raza 2009). Bleiklie asserts that institutional autonomy is: "the extent to which the institutions are free to make choices regarding their daily management of teaching and research as well as to formulate strategies for their future development" (Bleiklie 2007: 397). The definitions above focus on the freedom of the university to carry out long-term plans and policies, run the daily management and make choices of how to conduct teaching and research. It also denies any involvement of the state in academic matters.

Further Estermann and Nokkala (2009) adds that institutional autonomy is the ‘constantly changing relations between the state and higher education institutions and the degree of control exerted by the state, depending on the national context and circumstances’ (Estermann and Nokkala 2009: 6). According to Olsen (2009) autonomy is "a multi-faceted concept" there is no agreement and no conditions under which “autonomy is gained, maintained or lost” (Olsen 2009: 441). Askling et al (1999) points that ‘the capacity of a university to act within an available ‘space of action’ granted by the state’ are related and often used interchangeably to the institutional autonomy (Askling, Bauer, and Marton 1999: 176). Thus, the nature and the definition of autonomy keep changing and depend on the type of relationship the state and the HEIs build.

Olsen (2009) claims that the meaning of the term has been modified through historical developments while raising issues about autonomy as "for whom," "from whom," "in what respects," "how," and "why." For Olsen to mark autonomy, there are three key processes: Individuals have freedom and are capable of making responsible decisions; institutions have the right to function normative and organizational principles; and to make individuals, institutions and states accountable to the issue (Olsen 2009: 441).

To make some criteria on what the institutional autonomy bases Tight (1992) suggested that the university should have freedom to self-governance; exercise financial power; make staff appointment; design and implement curriculum, and evaluate the academic performance of the students (Ashby 1966). Similar to this view, to explore in detail Berdahl's (1990) explanation and the EUA's Lisbon declaration are discussed. Berdahl (1990) differentiates institutional autonomy as substantive and procedural. Substantive autonomy deals purely academic issues and helps the university to achieve its goals thus it should not be violated. On the other hand, procedural autonomy is related to the university authority, which includes the development of strategies and plans, staffs and the areas of resource allocation.

Bleiklie's definition and Berdahl's distinction between procedural and substantive autonomy 'can be applied as well to individual academics, academic professions and central governing bodies of HEIs' (Baschung et al. 2011:54). However in Asian countries substantive and procedural autonomy are limited (Raza 2009). Such a control in functioning of university weakens 'a chance of making decisions over teaching and research within the level of internal management' (Sagintayeva and Kurakbayev 2014: 200). To support this view Weidman and Bat-Erdene (2002) asserts that:

While there are many internal and external pressures on the government to 'democratize' higher education by extending greater autonomy to institutions, vestiges of political and social tension continue to hinder reform efforts, particularly in countries whose people are accustomed to strong government control of all major social sector institutions. (Weidman and Bat-Erdene 2002: 147)

Though the global impact of the Bologna Process geared the higher education to the market-oriented and accountability it is not that easy for the universities to function under the state control model becoming a decentralization of education system (Sagintayeva and Kurakbayev 2014). The literature on autonomy viewed that universities need to seek

alternative sources of funding to increase institutional autonomy by relying less on the state fund.

Autonomy simply in its complete sense means the ‘power to govern without outside controls’(Berdahl 1990). In the field of higher education autonomy can have different meanings, and the meanings may also change depending on the political setting (Henkel 2005). Higher education institutions in Britain distinguish autonomy as the right to self-government and to what extent the professors are autonomous by the establishment of their academic priorities without external interference(Tapper and Salter 1995; Baschung, Goastellec et al. 2011). Further the link between the autonomy of universities as institutions and the ability of the academicians to control their working conditions has been broken because of the establishment of new governmental parameters within which universities as institutions exercise their autonomy (Baschung, Goastellec et al. 2011).

EUA’s Lisbon Declaration (EUA 2007) sets four principles of institutional autonomy:

- Academic autonomy: is to assure quality education through curricula, programs, and research
- Financial autonomy: is associated with the lump sum budgeting such as allocating funding, ownership of the building and equipment, decide the tuition fees and salaries,
- Organizational autonomy: is closely related to the structure of the university, particularly the institutional governance, the university leadership, accountability and decision-making process
- Staffing autonomy: is the responsibility for recruitment, salaries, and promotion

Berdahl (1990) and EUA (2007) claim that the similarities of the classifications are parallels, where substantive autonomy is similar to academic autonomy. The other one; the procedural autonomy covers the areas of organizational, financial and staffing autonomy. The research further presents the broad classification of Lisbon Declaration of the institutional autonomy.

Academic autonomy

Literatures widely discuss the issues of academic autonomy, Tapper & Salter (1995) claim that the concept of academic autonomy often interpreted synonymously to the institutional

autonomy. Academic autonomy according to Estermann, Nokkala et al. (2010) is the universities capacity on defining the institutional strategy as well as to decide the admission processes of the students; terminate and design the content of programs; and conduct teaching and research to achieve the mission. Academic autonomy is more associated with the “what of academe” (Berdahl 1990:172).

Staffing autonomy

The ground reality of the institutions depends on the staff policy it adopts on the academic labor market (Baschung et al. 2011). Staffing autonomy authorizes the university to recruit both the staffs based on the academic and financial matters.

Organisational autonomy

Responsible leadership, effective administration, and resource allocation are supposed to have a prerequisite of organisational autonomy. As autonomy is country and region specific and shaped by the legislation; in some countries, the state strongly controls the Higher education management and leadership. According to Estermann & Nokkala (2009), Organizational autonomy emphasizes to the academic institutions' ability on university governance and chooses appropriate leadership.

According to Enders et al. (2013), organizational autonomy looks university as a corporate view, which includes the three components:

- a managerial component refers to the overall management of the university in general such as financing, staffing;
- policy component measures the ability of university's in taking the independent decisions and conducting strategic developments, and
- governance component refer to the universities internal academic process and the administrative structure it has.

Academic freedom

Academic freedom is always the center of the educational institutions. However, it is a very difficult to describe. Academic freedom is associated with the individual academics' professional ethics: such as freedom of lecturers to teach and freedom of students to learn

(Altbach 2001; Ashby 1966; Tight 1992). According to Altbach (2001) "...more attention needs to be given to the mission and values of the university, for without academic freedom, universities cannot achieve their potential nor fully contribute to the emerging knowledge-based society" (Altbach 2001:206). Therefore, academic freedom and institutional autonomy are related but are not equivalent (Bladh 2007). Thus for the purpose of the present research, academic freedom is the professional activity of the university lecturers freedom to research, teaching and publications without any external interference.

Most often autonomy of universities is debated in a general way. HEI governing bodies require more autonomy from their political authorities but lack clear indications that the type and recipients of the required autonomy (Baschung, Goastellec et al. 2011). Since the organizations need to sustain in the competitive environment institutions of public nature must have a provision of autonomy to work freely and sustain in the market. Fumasoli et al. (2014), categorized four steering models based on the role and the function the institution plays. They further claim that autonomy is the basic requirement for the institutions to 'position themselves in a competitive environment' (Fumasoli, Gornitzka, and Maassen 2014: 5). Such a position helps higher education institutions to work independently in the appointment of professionals, tenure research, decide salary scales, and all the academic decisions and activities to provide quality, scientific and technical education.

2.1.2 Literature review

Studies show that Scandinavian countries perceive HE as a public right; for 'quality reform' these countries have implemented increasing institutional autonomy (Schmidt and Langberg 2007). Though it seems that European systems are converging (ibid.); a number of studies reveal that these countries differ concerning financing, organization, and management in connection with institutional autonomy (OECD 2007). According to Berdahl (1990) normally, a college enjoying more autonomy can protect the academic freedom of its faculty than its counterpart. The European model of higher education experiences the strong role of the state in terms of funding and regulating the HEIs at the same time protects autonomy of the universities as a social institution (Enders et al 2013). In the context of Nepalese HE the state seems to be a dictator and the Universities as an actor or follower. The state has total control over funding, grant and policy level.

Literatures on university autonomy in the UK (United Kingdom) argue that UGC acted as a buffer zone to the university and the state through grants in the form of bloc to ensure the universities to make their long-term plans that they could not fulfill from their internal sources. This situation somehow could have protected the university system, on the other hand, curtailed the ability of individual institutions regarding political representation while acting as a two-way channel between the universities and the state (Tapper and Salter 1995). In the context of Nepal according to UGC regulations, it acts as the buffer zone to link the university, colleges to the government to work on policies and grants. This grant has direct and indirect influence over teaching and organizational activities of the receiving colleges and universities (UGC 2012).

University as an institution has a symbiotic relationship between research and teaching (Tapper and Salter 1995). Research and teaching purposes, the university needed fund; the fund required for the purpose is granted by the state; thus this funding mechanism, somehow acts as a control tool for the state to the university autonomy. Institutions that rely on other than the governmental source of income enjoy more autonomy than those depend on the state grants (Chiang 2004). To regulate and let the university enjoy autonomy UK, University Funding Council (UFC) replaced UGC; and later Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC) replaced Higher Education Commission (HEC). Thus, raised a question of the importance and need of the UGC in Nepal. Whatever other organizations play a role, institutional autonomy is conditional upon the political context where political interference is usually seen through the policies that the government enacts during the process.

Public universities are considered a national interest, so the government continues to steer the higher education institutions through policies to implement the government priorities (Olsen 2007). The universities and the staffs working in such environment affect the mission they carry: such as teaching and learning.

In the Nordic countries there is increased space for the universities to maneuver, and make independent decisions regarding finances, organization or academic offerings (Nokkala and Bladh 2013). Nokkala and Bladh (2013) further say that as per the changing needs of the society institutional autonomy and academic freedom have been rearticulated in the Nordic countries. Universities need to act unified and not fragmented as they need to acquire strategic control over human resources, thus raise of institutional autonomy and withdrawal of direct

state influence is the central idea of strengthening institutional level (Clark 1983, Olsen and Maassen 2007)

2.2 Professionalism

Professionalism, Professionalization

According to Hoyle (1975), Professionalism is of two types restricted and extended (cited in Evans 2007). Restricted professionalism is related to the day-to-day activities of the teachers (Evans 2007). It is rather narrow and guided by the classroom based thinking and experiences. On the other hand, extended professionalism covers a wider area, makes use of theories of pedagogy intellectual, and rationally based approach, which can be linked here with teaching experience (ibid.).

Professionalization and professionalism differ in a way that the former (Lilja 2009) 'is thought to refer to attempts at improving the status and standings of teachers' while the later refers 'to improvements of the practice of teaching' ((Lilja 2009: 112). Thus professionalism is result oriented through teaching activities rather than developing or providing career safety to the teachers. Professionalization is often linked to professionalism as if an occupational group improves practice they simultaneously improve their status through salary and conditions (Hargreaves 2006, Evans 2008). DiMaggio & W.Powell (1983) Asserts that professionalization is understood as the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the collections and methods of their work and to establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their professional identity. Professionalization refers to the process to achieve the status of profession 'regarding salary, status and power as well as the monopoly protection of the occupational jurisdiction' (Evetts 2013:5). These definitions view that professionalization as a process actively followed by a group of occupational as social actors where the status of the professional is maintained through salary and the power in the society.

2.2.1 Definition key terms and concept

Professionalism is the status of the teachers' that they get in their work or service agreement (Hoyle 1975 cited in Evans 2007: 3). Professionalism is defined as 'quality and character of people's actions within that group' (Goodson and Hargreaves 1996 cited in Hall 2003:269).

Therefore professionalism can have different meanings according to the context and interests of the people, organization, and the education policy (Helsby 1999). Professionalism is a shifting, rather than a particular phenomenon, since a profession at a point whatever people think can vary. According to Troman professionalism is 'a socially constructed, contextually variable and contested concept' (Troman 1996: 476). In line with Troman, Holroyd claims that 'professionalism is not some scientific absolute, but a point both historically changing and socially constructed concept in-use' (Holroyd 2000:39). Thus, professionalism is not absolute in nature its resemblance in society shapes the concept.

Englund gives clear indication that there is a lack of clarity in understanding and consensus on 'teaching as a profession' (Englund 1996: 75). Evans supports Englund as professionalism 'is not what it was' believed, rather 'taken a knock and emerged with scars to prove it' or 'had a style make-over and image-change' (Evans 2008: 20). Such view triggered the debates about teacher professionalism in the twenty-first century.

Recently professionalism incorporates recognition of the political arena of public sectors (Evans 2008). Thus, according to the literature professionalism is a quality of service offered in any field. For Jernigan (1976) a professional is characterized by technical or ethical standards of a profession. To support this view he further describes teacher professionalism as:

The professional teacher is concerned with the quality of stimulation offered. The professional teacher does not just walk into the classroom, present the material, and walk out of the classroom. Professionals evaluate their educational endeavors in terms of "Did I breach the range of individual differences in my class and communicate favorably with each student?" (Jernigan 1976: 213)

Based on the above definition, teaching becomes meaningful only when the teacher is not amateur rather dedicated, service oriented, possesses self-confidence, experienced and fully committed to providing quality to the student through well-organized lessons and fruitful friendly communication skills in the classroom. Although the teachers are free to do practices in the day-to-day classroom; they have little control over the broad organizational situation, educational policy, accountability, and the hierarchy of the institution where they work (Carr and Kemms 1986).

Teacher professionalism is a broad concept having several dimensions; however, there are similarities by which teacher professionalism is operationalized; they are academic qualification, Teaching experience, and Professional training. These are the criteria's the professional teacher fulfils and are highly considered during the appointment, on the other hand, a novice teacher fulfilling the academic qualification but lacking the latter two is less demanded in the university teaching and gets lower status among all others (Toh, Diong et al 1996).

Evetts (2008) points two types of professionalism: Occupational professionalism, and Organizational professionalism. Occupational professionalism is related to the professional group having knowledge, autonomy, and decision-making ability on the complex and varied situations. Thus teachers get favorable autonomy at work. Organizational Professionalism refers to the influence of the organizational and managerial settings. The professional is required accountability and efficiency in work thus enjoys less autonomy (Evetts 2008).

2.2.2 Teaching as a profession

Freidson argues profession 'as an empirical entity about which there is little ground for generalising' (Freidson 1983 cited in Whitty 2000: 282). Sociologist tried to establish the features of the profession as 'skills based on knowledge,' 'education and training as certified by examination,' and code of professional conduct towards 'public good' and a powerful professional organization (Whitty 2000: 282). According to this view teaching did not match such criteria, and was not regarded as professional but titled as quasi or semi-professions (Etzioni 1969).

Traditionally professionals were often self-employed; while in industrial societies professionals are employed or controlled by the state(Whitty 2000). According to Dale (1989), some professions are licensed form of autonomy, and the others are regulated autonomy (Dale 1989). The second view is more suitable in the case of teachers as Dale (1989) claims the teaching profession is not formally licensed profession. Therefore, the teaching profession has a limited professional autonomy, though everyday classroom activities are guided and decided by the teacher; the later has little control over the judgments as such activities are based on the education policy, curriculum and the institutions' interest (Carr and Kemms 1986).

The quality of education depends on the nature of the teaching profession, and there is a pressure for effective teaching in universities. University teaching is a scholarly activity which demands high levels of disciplinary and contextual expertise (Devlin and Samarawickrema 2010). Shared understanding and critical thinking ensure quality teaching; this applies to individual teachers to higher education sector at national and international level (ibid.). There is a growing and widely expressed concern to raise the status of teaching through better recognition and reward in universities (Chalmers 2011). Different theoretical perspectives, approaches and various disciplinary points of view have tried to define university teaching yet there is no single universally accepted definition of university teaching (Devlin and Samarawickrema 2010).

Teaching as a profession must focus on certain criteria to which it belongs to, that are 'normally employed in distinguishing professional from non-professional occupations' (Carr and Kemms 1986). Carr and Kemms (1986) characterize professionals as those who: Employ methods and procedures based on theoretical knowledge; commit to the well-being of the clients; Act in the interest of the clients and reserve to make independent judgment free from external non-professional controls.

Based on the above criteria, at this point of time teaching comes under a professional activity. However, theory and research play a much important part in other professions than in teaching. That is 'the teachers regard research as an esoteric activity having little to do with their everyday practical concerns' (ibid: 8). Carr & Kim further clarify that there is no straightforward relationship between the teacher and the students like in other professions such as a doctor to the patient. The teacher relation is not confined to their pupils but it has a broader area where the interest of the parents, community, and the state come but 'may not coincide with what teachers believe to be in the educational interest of their pupils' (ibid.).

According to Fumasoli, Goastellec, and Kehm (2015), there are two routes of the academic career; in which teaching as an academic career falls under the 'academic capital route' and viewed as 'the facilitation of learning' that makes use of different methods and techniques in different classroom settings (Fumasoli, Goastellec and Kehm 2015:118).

Every professional have their identity and vary with each other. Hence, professional identity of the teacher is very complex 'in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching, it is critical we know about the person the teacher is' (Goodson and Sikes 2001:57). DiMaggio

and W.Powell (1983) suggest teaching as a genuinely professional and the findings from the research should help the teacher to implement the knowledge and ideas in the real settings of the classroom and teaching profession as a whole. The researchers must help the teachers to organize the ideas and the beliefs of the teacher in a relative and collective way so that this could help to the other parties in different settings as well. Teaching profession must not confine with in the classroom setting and the judgments of the teacher what is to be done in the class rather it should reflect 'an equally diverse range of attitudes about the desirability of this kind of professional development' (DiMaggio and W.Powell 1983: 10).

2.2.3 Literature review

Professionalism in teaching is a prime concern in both the developing areas and developed parts of the world. However, it is taken as a basic way to lift the status and improve the quality of teaching along with the quality of education (Cheng 1996). Cheng (1996) further argues that teachers' professionalism is often believed to be a critical element contributing to teaching professionalization and quality of education service. The quality of education service is what the current Nepalese HE is struggling for.

Jernigan (1976) reviews that professional teacher most has sense of responsibilities which makes him to achieve the general interest of the society and motivate students in the class. The professional teacher should draw the motivation of the students by wiping out the passivity of the students through encouragement and purposeful learning. Purposeful learning is possible through fruitful teaching styles and the use of appropriate teaching and learning aids (Jernigan 1976).

Regarding the better university teaching a research led by Pratt, Kelly et al. (1999) claims that Chinese university teaching is based on the memorization and to follow the teacher to get the best performance in the exam. Kember and McNaught (2007) criticize the view as: understand well and good at exams are two distinct things because some students are excellent in exams at the lower level but average in faculty exams; and the clinical performance and communication can be rather poor. However, the beliefs and practices of university teachers regarding quality teaching are not culturally specific (Kember and McNaught 2007).

According to Prick (1989) studied developmental changes of the teachers and found that 'personal and organizational factors are responsible for mid-career changes in teacher professionalism' (cited in Toh et al 1996: 232). Lam (1993) argues that teaching experience and teacher professionalism is an important consideration; it is difficult to see that deterioration of professionalism meets the quality of teaching demanded by public or not (cited in Toh et al. 1996).

Kember and McNaught (2007) further claim that the good university teaching should focus on teaching and curriculum design, future needs of the students by ensuring a thorough understanding of the fundamental concepts, and establishing the relevance of teaching through real-life situations and so on. However, it does not mean that a teacher can teach anything under any course title description (De George 1997). A study led by Delaney, Johnson et al. (2010) found that students can play an active role in improving the quality of university teaching and their learning. Therefore, we can say that effective university teaching is at the hand of both the students and the teachers with the cooperation of management, institution and the state as a whole.

Numerous researches on teachers have been conducted in different times and produced various approaches. According to (Cocharan-Smith and Fries 2008) the four phases of research on teacher focus on different definitions of the teacher education problem. However, teacher education and qualification remained the center attraction and common thing on which these four approaches focused the researches. To improve the quality of teaching; the problem of training concentrated on the use of improved methodology in classroom teaching; the problem of learning concerned more on the teacher-student relationship and its effects on teaching learning activities; the problem of policy related more on the reformation of teacher education. For Cocharan-Smith and Fries (2008) issue of policy is the current phase in which most of the research are focusing upon.

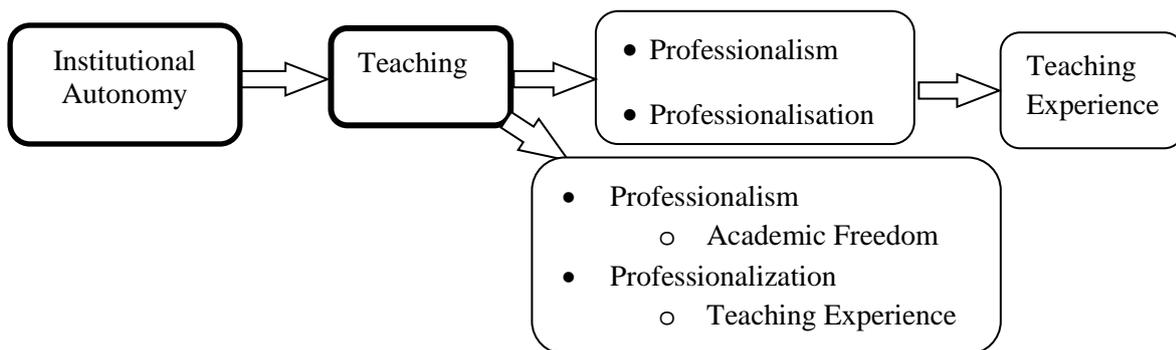
The teaching profession has got a growing concern even in knowledge society and in politics, as well as in international studies (Day and Sachs 2004). Professional autonomy requires a space in the teaching profession to maintain quality education (Wermke and Höstfält 2014). According to Hoyle (2008) teaching as a profession is associated both the institutional level concerning salary, rights of the teacher and at service level like classroom practices (teaching and learning activities) thus the teachers need to balance their pedagogical purposes according to the rules and regulations of the profession.

Wermke and Höstfält (2014) argue that teaching as a profession has extended and restricted institutional autonomy. Extended in the sense that the teacher is responsible in defining the form of curriculum and the process of evaluation, restricted within the meaning that the curriculum is evaluated what is appropriate or what is not by the other profession based on the achievement of the teacher (Wermke and Höstfält 2014).

2.3 Analytical model

The study focused professionalism as a teaching occupation at university faculty level; and supports to enhance academic career of the teachers in the knowledge society vis-à-vis teaching and research. Institutional autonomy examines an academic and organizational aspect of the university that has a direct concern to the academic activities of the teachers.

Figure 1: Factors affecting Professionalism in University Teaching, and the relationship and impact of institutional autonomy and teaching over professionalism and professionalization



Theoretical framework presented attempts to show how institutional autonomy influences teaching in relation to professionalism and professionalization and their impact on teaching experience, where professionalism is centered to the academic freedom and professionalization to teaching experience.

2.4 Methodology

The chapter presents the research process with methodological principles employed in the study. It unfolds the choice of research strategy, research design and research method regarding data collection and analysis. The section further continues with the discussion of validity and reliability followed by a brief presentation of the limitations of the study. The

above-described study bases on analysis of related documents that are available and information collected from the interview relevant to the study under consideration.

2.4.1 Qualitative research

As a case study, this research is qualitative in nature. The methods of study have special effects over research depending upon the purpose of the study, personal conditions of the researcher, and social reality of the fieldwork that should be taken into consideration. Anderson (1998) describes qualitative research as “a form of inquiry” (Anderson 1998:119) which tries to study the cases in their original setting and uses multi-methods to interpret, understand, and explain. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are distinguished based on the use of words or number on the way to the collection and analysis of data (Merriam 1988, Cohen, Manion et al. 2000, Patton 2002, Bryman 2008, Bryman 2012). One of the features of qualitative research is that it allows the researcher to make a correct choice of method and theory (Flick 2006). Further Patton (2002) asserts qualitative researchers:

generate rich verbal and textual data to present the social environment by using observations that yield detailed, thick description; inquiry in depth; interviews that capture direct quotations about people’s personal perspectives and experiences; case studies; careful document review (Patton 2002:40).

Qualitative research focuses on inductive approach and generation of theories and tends to be on individuals' interpretations of their environments and of their own and others' behavior rather than the norms of the natural scientific model (Bryman 2008). Therefore, the individual perception and the surrounding influence the nature of qualitative research. This research has followed understanding participants’ points of view as indicated by Bryman (2012). Cohen et al (2007) advocates that to make sense organizing, accounting for, and explaining the data is must. However, qualitative approaches to data analysis, Cohen claims that there is no any universally accepted way to describe it; it depends on how one proceeds based on the ‘fitness of purpose’ (Cohen et al 2007:461)

In this study, the researcher has used Qualitative research strategy to gain detailed information regarding the experiences of University teachers. Further, implied appropriate multiple methods of data collection; such as interview, field notes and document analysis for the factual findings from the data. The study selected a small number of as qualitative research

facilitates the issues in depth and detail, assists the production of rich data and detailed information even the smaller number of people and cases (Patton 2002).

2.4.2 Case study research design

The case study has adopted a qualitative case study as its research design. Following words of Yin (2014); “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (Yin 2014: 16). Thus, the case study does not confine within a collection of data as a mere tool rather suitable for both the qualitative and the quantitative research design as well.

Merriam (1998) suggests that if the researchers' interest is in monitoring or casual explanation, then it is suitable to choose the case study. A case study can be chosen on certain conditions (Yin 2014) as: the focus is to answer “how” and “why” questions; events are out of control of the investigator; contextual conditions are relevant to the study. Thus the study tries to explore “how” and “why” aspect of the research topic.

2.4.3 Methods of data collection

According to Bryman (2008) probably the qualitative analysis of the contents is the most common approach to the analysis of the documents to maintain objectivity and systematize the characteristics of the message; to keep transparency over the materials collected and minimize the personal bias of the analyst as little as possible (Bryman 2008).

Literatures on qualitative approach mention different methods for data collection. For this study interviews, field notes, and document analysis has been applied, which are the “key point of any research project” (Bryman 2012: 125). The study applied multiple methods of data collection: interview and document analysis to achieve the proper results to the findings.

During the case study, the researcher collected mainly qualitative information. Primary and secondary data were used both to fulfill the overall objective. Teachers from Tribhuvan University were the main source of the primary data, and secondary data were collected by reviewing published and online documents. The various tools of social research deployed to collect and generate data relevant to the study objectives are presented as follows.

Document analysis

The researcher conducted document analysis before moving to the field, as it is a valuable source to go in depth about the case. The researcher, as per the demand of the topic made the selection of the documents to be studied; the fact, the researcher was aware of the limited accessibility selective collection for this purpose may be biased (Yin 2009). Regarding the documents quality and assessment the criteria of Scott (1990): 'authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning' (Scott 1990:6) was followed while collecting and sourcing the data relevant to the study were taken carefully.

Regarding the use of documents as materials Bryman (2008) claims that documents can be read, but they have not been produced for the purpose of social research; rather they are relevant and available to the researcher for the purpose of analysis. Thus, these documents collected were only supportive of filling the gap from the interview. However, this study also recognizes documents as secondary sources of data.

The documents analyzed for the purpose of the study include TU Act and annual reports collected from the official website of various agencies such as TU, UGC, WB, ADB and MoE. Official links to these organizations provided a wide range of informative documents regarding the HE system in Nepal. The web pages of E-pustakalaya, Google books made a comprehensive collection of relevant documents. Mostly, the selection of the documents based on the relevancy to the research topics were assumed to have high public interest, credibility and authenticity as mentioned by Bryman (2012).

The documents that were analyzed for the purpose of the study presented in the table below.

S. N.	Documents	Publisher	Page No.	Language
1	Tribhuvan Bishwabidhyalaya Ain, 2049 (Tribhuvan University Act 1992)	Nepal Law Commission	18	Nepali
2	Proposed Higher Education Policy 2010/11, Uchh Sikshya Niti, 2072 (Higher Education Policy 2015)	UGC	166 15	Nepali English
3	Annual Reports of the UGC Annual Report 2012/13	UGC	263	English
4	Reports on HE Projects: Development of Norms and Standards for Higher Education Nepal- Higher Education Project	CERID WB	88 38	English English
5	Saishik Suchana 2072 (Educational Information 2015)	MoE	184	Nepali
6	Reports of National Education Commission Report of the National Education Commission, 1992 The National Education System : Plan for 1971-76 Education in Nepal : Report of the Nepal National Education Planning Commission	NEC MoE The Bureau of Publications College of Education	257 94 259	English

Table 1: Documents from the organizations that are analyzed

Interview

The target group in the case study is comprised of individuals who have some common characteristics that are of interest to the researcher (Best and Kagn 2006). Since the researcher is interested in studying ' how institutional autonomy affects professionalism of university teachers' as a case, consists of Tribhuvan University education faculty teachers, titled Professor; Reader; Faculty Head; Lecturers and Assistant Lecturers' as a source of primary information who share some common characteristics in the field of teaching.

To gather the relevant information essential to research questions and to fulfill the objective of this particular case study research, seven teachers of the education department of TU were selected based on purposeful sampling. Following Patton (1990), the researcher selected relatively small sample for this qualitative inquiry to dig deep on the issue under consideration (Patton 1990). In this procedure, the informants have been chosen from a large number of population, to fulfill the particular purpose. The number reached seven and the information from respondents had thematic resemblance that led to conclude the size was sufficient.

The choice of selecting the informants for the purpose of the interview was that the research question and the study area demands the teachers with the information regarding autonomy and professionalism in the university at the faculty of educational studies: who were teachers in common and held different positions such as assistant lecturer to the professor.

The interviewees involve in teaching at the department level under education faculty. Out of seven potential interview partners, four were contacted in person, and the rest were through phone calls at the university. The purposively sampled population agreed to be interviewed in the very first contact. Thus there was no need to contact more interviewees.

Lack of time and limited resources, all the interviews were taken around the area at the university. Almost all the interviews lasted a quarter to one hour as per agreed period. All the interviews were conducted in English. Greetings and warm wishes with an informal introduction as well as the familiarity of the topic to be discussed led the interview to the point and made easier to cope with the task aimed at. To systemize the interview process the researcher has prepared the interview guide and followed it properly during the interview. In some occasions, based on the information of the interviewee some additional questions were asked to get detailed information on what is said. The interviews mainly focused on how institutional autonomy affects professionalism of university teachers.

The composition of the sample interviewees is presented in the table below. Only the position of the interviewee is mentioned to maintain the anonymity and keep the data confidential.

Position	Level	Code
Head of the Faculty	Faculty	TU1
Professor	Department	TU2
Professor	Department	TU3
Reader	Department	TU4
Lecturer	Department	TU5
Lecturer	Department	TU6
Assistant Lecturer	Department	TU7

Table 1 Composition of interviewees

The interview was taken with notes accompanying recording upon permission. The recording was done keeping in mind to anonymize according to the oral and written consent to the interviewee. On the completion of the interview, the recording of empirical data was transcribed to get the overview of the necessary information and to make sure that the information obtained is safe. As per the explanatory nature of the thesis, interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions.

2.5 Validity and reliability

Validity

To ensure the quality of the study concept of validity and reliability requires. If an item measures or describes what it is supposed to measure exactly or describe refers to validity (Kvale 1996; Bryman 2012). This research ensures validity by providing clarity of reasoning and the interpretation of research findings realizing that the data is collected in a limited amount and not statistically representative. Patton (1990) States that researcher in qualitative research is the instrument and the validity of the research depends on the skill and competence of the researcher. Borrowing the words of Bryman (2012) multiple methods or sources of data collection and analysis are the indicators of triangulation of data in qualitative research. To maintain and increase the validity of the research findings, the researcher employed certain means of triangulation. Patton (1990) asserts that triangulation provides a strong way to solve the problem of relying heavily on single data source through comparing and cross checking the various sources of data. In the study, the triangulation of data involved documents analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Based on the articles of various scholars validity can be divided into internal and external validity. Both internal and external validity are meant to relate to the overall study. Internal validity is the strength of the validity as it tries to help the study to interpret the issues accurately (Bryman and Bell 2011). Thus, so far concerning to maintain internal validity each interview is unique and differ based on experiences and age; internal validity indicates ‘whether there is a good match between researches’ observations and the theoretical ideas they develop’ (Bryman 2012: 390). It proves that there needs to be a strong bond between these two to be internally valid.

On the other hand, external validity refers to ‘the degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings’(ibid.). Since external validity in qualitative research is concerned with generalization; this ‘Case Study’ as a study design tries to raise the question on how the findings can be generalized to other settings. However, external validity is rather difficult comparing to internal validity to achieve the qualitative research because of the nature and use of a small sample of case studies (ibid.).

Reliability

Reliability, Kvale (1996) pertains to the consistency of research findings and to minimize error and bias in the study (Yin 2011). Reliability is related to ‘issues of consistency of measurement,’ which refers to whether results of the study can be repeated in a single term with the same set of instruments (Bryman 2012: 168). Reliability shows that the measurements are stable over a period and the indicators are related to each other (Bryman 2008). However, qualitative research uses two primary criteria of reliability: ‘trustworthy’ and ‘authenticity’, which are quite different criteria than quantitative studies (Bryman 2012: 390). To maintain the consistency and the reliability the researcher interviewed the lecturers’ holding various posts at the faculty level and the department level; analyzed the related documents, and followed the guidelines of the supervisor.

Issues concerning validity and reliability were taken into consideration during the period of study from preparing interview questionnaires to conduct the interview, gathering information, transcribing data until analysis. The interviews were conducted in English language medium as the informants were well acquainted with the use of English. Moreover thing is that the researcher is well-known about the environment, culture and the field where the research was carried added to maintain validity and the reliability.

2.5.1 Ethical consideration

Bryman (2008) notes that, ethical issues cannot be ignored and are crucial elements in the field of research. On the other hand research itself is not that easy to conduct and arise on different stages of the research (Bryman 2012). Ethics in the research brings role of values and are revolved around issues:

- How should we treat the people on whom we conduct research?
- Are there activities in which we should or should not engage in our relations with them? (Bryman 2012: 130)

The participation in the interview was voluntary which is one of the ethical responsibilities towards the participants (De Vaus 2002). According to Bryman (2012) elements of ethical discussions have barely changed; rather become a central issue of discussion. Addressing the ethical issues in research Ritchie, et al. (2014), points out five points to be noted:

- That research should be worthwhile and should not make unreasonable demands on participants
- That participation in research should be based on informed consent
- That participation should be voluntary and free from coercion or pressure
- That adverse consequences of participation should be avoided, and risks of harm known
- That confidentiality and anonymity should be respected. (Ritchie et al. 2014: 78)

Keeping in mind, the above mentioned criteria while carrying out research interviews the researcher treated the sample population as anonymous bodies. They were solely taken for the purpose of research and the true knowledge to get in depth into the research. No personal relations taken into account while determining and selecting the sample size and without any bias the researcher contacted the population, conducted the interviews and guided the interviewees accordingly. The researcher tried best to make the participants feel comfortable without making any demands based on timing or their availability as well as the place for

interview and meeting. All the participants were informed about the research topic and the objective of the study and requested them to share their knowledge in the subject matter they are experiencing. Interviewees were pre informed about the voluntary participation and can leave the interview any time based on the then circumstances. They were also informed to speak the language to which they find comfortable, and the identity will be kept anonymous; where the names can be matched with responses but no one can access them(De Vaus 2002).

2.5.2 Limitations of the study

This case study covers Faculty of Education of the oldest and the largest government funded Tribhuvan University. Differences in nature and internal governance it may vary to generalize the findings to the similar departments of other private universities of the country as well as neighboring countries as a whole.

The samples are convenience based; the teachers at the different departments of education faculty, on the availability of the participants thus may not be representative as a whole. Limitation of the time and budget the study covers the limited number (seven) of participants from the faculty of education only. The findings of the study utilized the selected interviewee and the authentic policy documents related to HE in Nepal available on the hard and soft copy. However, the findings of the research relied upon the supportive documents and recently proposed HE policy documents; as there were no particular HE policy documents to the date.

However, it was not so easy to get in touch with the purposefully selected samples affected by the then condition, as irregularities in vehicles due to shortage of petroleum products, no one was able to present in time and seem to have some difficulties to come to the point and express their feelings openly. Participants were still in the terror of recent devastating earthquake and continuous after- shocks followed by unofficial blockade imposed by the southern neighboring country. They also have busy schedules of lectures at the faculty and part-time jobs to other universities and colleges; because of these circumstances, the study may not have obtained the comprehensive results for wider generalization yet the findings of this research will be very important to guide HE policy in Nepal in future.

3 ANALYSIS

This chapter presents and analyzes data collected through interviews and documents. The presentation of the data is based on interview questionnaire and research questions. It includes appointment; curriculum design; academic freedom; perception and practices of HE; policy provision and implementation: institutional autonomy and professionalism; and the final section concentrates on policy to safeguard institutional autonomy and professionalism.

3.1 Appointment

TU Act (1992) made a provision appointing teachers and employees at university and established a three-member commission called University Service Commission:

- Person appointed by the Chancellor - Chairperson
- Member, Public Service Commission - Member
- One from amongst Professors - Member (Act, 1992: 12)

University Service Commission, the autonomous authorized body is responsible for entry and promotion of teachers. Teachers mark their entry and get promotion based on the requirements and criteria developed by the Service Commission. This commission takes ‘academic competency and experience as the main grounds for making appointment and promotion of Teachers’ (Act 1992: 13). This commission announces vacancy for all faculties and departments. Internal competition: for temporary staffs working at university and open competition: for all eligible candidates who are graduated and meet minimum criteria. This commission is responsible to conduct examination (written and oral), and publish result independently on a merit basis.

There are certain criteria to be a teacher at university. One of the interviewee mentioned: *One must have masters’ degree as an academic qualification on a specialized subject or equivalent degrees from any university recognized by TU (TU1/interview)*. Age factor is most important, the other adds; *there are different age limits for both men and women and for different posts. Generally, male and female not exceeding 35 years and 40 years qualify for the entry (TU3/interview)*. Besides age factor, one should have published books and journal articles for the added advantage. Teachers appointed for permanent posts can remain in the post for 20 years, till the age of 60 or whichever is earlier.

The university has categorized posts for teachers as a contract teacher, a part-time teacher, and a permanent teacher as an ongoing process. One of the interviewee mentioned '*a part time teacher is selected by the department according to the need to serve immediate purpose*' (TU2/interview). Such a teacher works on a period basis, is paid accordingly, and cannot enjoy facilities as permanent teacher. Since part-time teacher works on a period basis no-work-no-pay rule is applied. Similarly, the university department on the approval of central office appoints a contract teacher. Contract teachers are entitled equal salary as permanent teacher but are not guaranteed job security and pension.

University Service Commission selects and appoints a permanent teacher, through announcement of internal and open competition. This selection process ensures job security and grade promotion Assistant lecture to the Lecturer, Lecturer to the Reader, and finally to the Professor. One of the lecturers expressed: *there is no doubt that written examinations are conducted and results publish fairly. However, I have a bitter experience of oral examination. Lacking to build a good relationship with a professor, I had to wait for next attempt* (TU4/interview). This shows that university Service Commission is missing to maintain privacy and address ethical issue an obligatory part of interview committee.

Candidates holding permanent positions are likely to be upgraded to the academic posts or administrative rankings: Dean, Rector, and Vice-Chancellor. The scenario on the appointment for these posts at university had become a 'negotiated autonomy' (Fumasoli, Gornitzka et al. 2014: 5) between management and the state. One of the respondents expressed:

These academic and administrative posts are merit-based (years of service in teaching, doctoral degrees, research and publications). Administrative appointment and awarding title is the responsibility of University. However, the ruling coalition is more concerned to these posts as politically and strategically very important, and indulges in a sort of spoil sharing arrangement. For example newspapers issues on 'to bag posts' in all the universities including TU. (TU6/interview)

In connection to the appointment³ media articles and reports depicted the poor state of universities as an institution failing to protect political interference is the major cause of their

³ <http://therisingnepal.org.np/news/5929>
<http://kathmandupost.ekantipur.com/news/2014-11-09/new-pu-vice-chancellor-accused-of-making-unilateral-appointments.html>
<http://edusanjal.com/blog/prof-dr-kulprasad-koriala-appointed-vc-nepal-sanskrit-university>

downfall and poor academic performance. The media also criticized attitude of candidates knocking the door of politicians as academic dishonesty and political flirtation to the parties to bag posts.

Personal and political activities influence appointment of part-time and contract teachers. The other lecturer expresses: *to get entry at departments of university as a lecturer; one need to have affiliation to the mainstream political parties (mainly ruling party) or a strong connection to the students union. Otherwise the chances are very rare (TU7/interview)*. They also argued that changes in government and its political nature influences structure and policy of TU which affects normal appointment of teaching and other staffs hired on need.

Dependency of TU on grants heavily pressurized to be guided or influenced by political structure of the government (Khaniya 2007). They even claimed that *TU seems to be a place to settle political cadres of ruling party (TU1/interview)*. These statements point that government grants triggers its channels to manage TU in micro level such as: appointing a lecturer to the Vice-Chancellor the highest ranking executive body at university governance.

Faculty or department can hire part time teachers. The general practice of appointment is class observation or nomination by the head of the department or students suggestions. There is no guarantee that the candidate is competent and qualified. Such decision of authorities to address the pressure of student enrollment without paying ‘much attention to their level of competence, commitment and motivation’ (CERID 1997: 1) has deteriorated the quality of higher education.

Most of the interviewee responded that success in internal competition marked their entry, later achieved posts like Department Head, Reader and a Professor. They went through a long way to reach to these posts as these posts account years of service, and doctoral degrees. Among these, one participant responded *‘I was appointed as a part-time teacher at the beginning. Then, I secured a permanent position through open competition’ (TU5/interview)*.

3.2 Curriculum design

Academic Council and Education Council are prevalent at TU. Academic Council is responsible for overall academic activities, which determines curriculum standards of the

subjects (study, research, and training purpose) conducted under the university; prescribes qualification and criteria required to get admission for study, research and teaching. This council is responsible for determining policies on research (Act, 1992: 10). Development of curriculum is the responsibility of subject committees under departments. Academic Council coordinates with the subject committees and the faculty board to design and maintain standard of the curricula. TU consist of Curriculum Development Center (CDC); its activities are limited to the compulsory subjects. A chairperson leads the subjects committee from the respective subjects⁴. This center conducts seminars, orientation programmes, workshops to implement true spirit of curricula. The centre also helps to encourage teachers to develop teaching learning materials such as textbooks. Provisions in the CDC pointed that except compulsory subjects taught in the university, designing of curriculum is the responsibility of the faculties and departments. One of the interviewee pointed that

Subject committees at faculty level revise, evaluate and prepare the curriculum. I have been in the subject committee since last fifteen years. Every fifth year we revise curriculum to introduce recent issues to keep teaching learning activities up-to-date. (TU1/interview)

The information from the interview confirmed that subject committees are responsible in curriculum designing. Revision and evaluation of curriculum is a very slow process. Five years without change is a big time. Many changes happen during this period as new research findings emerge daily. The other mentioned that:

Revision of the curriculum is a very slow process here in TU. Sometimes it takes years to get reviewed .I find lack of interest in classroom teaching. Truly speaking, some years ago I have prepared a lecture note to deliver my lectures. I still rely on that. I prefer timely revision and evaluation of curriculum to develop a habit of reading, and generate new ideas. (TU2/interview)

Based on the above view, curriculum designing had a direct impact on both the teachers and the students. Up-to-date revision and the evaluation were demanded by the lecturers. The other expressed that *'the university tries to consult the subject teachers while designing curriculum but once it is designed they are not allowed to choose new course contents to*

⁴ <http://tribhuvan-university.edu.np/curriculum-development-center/>

teach in the classroom. They have to follow curriculum strictly (TU3/interview).' The curriculum at TU is rigid in nature. This information pointed that teachers are not free to go beyond the curriculum and choose different contents in the classroom. The reason behind following curriculum in detail is the annual examination system, where a teacher teaches in the class, the other sets the question paper and the next teacher evaluates and marks the answer sheet. Introduction of new topics is possible through revision and on the approval of Academic Council. The other claimed that:

Curriculum must motivate and encourage teachers to use resource material; introduce new methods and techniques to enhance learners' knowledge, capacity, and skill to learn in-depth and in a different way. (TU2/interview)

The discussions in the interview explored that curriculum encourages learners to become critical, self-explanatory, as well as explore opportunities that come across. Course update (project-based, research driven) on the regular basis is the global market trend to develop and meet the necessities of the nation through economic needs. Such a curriculum motivates and instructs the learner to differentiate individual tasks through critical and challenging attitudes. The other added subject committees are not free to design and implement the curriculum. They had to be instructed and guided. On the approval of their recommendations curriculum comes into effect.

The decision making process is highly centralized. The subject committees, the research committees, boards, even the head of the central departments simply function as recommendatory bodies. They do not have any decision-making power. (TU3/interview)

The interview pointed that the layer of authorities created a growing complexity in decision making and implementation policy. TU Organizational and Administrative Rules 1994 recognized the posts of the department heads without any financial, administrative and academic authority. They were just the administrative coordinating authorities to the students and the teaching staffs. The other pointed that:

TU enacted semester system. It was expected that Introduction of semester system will bring changes in curriculum. But interest of different groups: professors, political interest of teacher associations and administration played a role to implement old curriculum in new system. It introduced dual academic system: a yearly and a semester

system in the master's degree programme. TU is implementing same curriculum in different academic settings. (TU4/interview)

The above discussion pointed that according to the TU Organization and Administration Rules, University Senate holds power for necessary changes in academic system. However, the conferred power had not been exercised under the pressure of the different groups; which had directly affected the whole academic activities of the institution. Though semester system was believed to bring changes; it proved a challenge for the university.

Based on the overall discussions TU had a provision of departments of subjects under the faculties. These departments are responsible to form subject committees. Their recommendation had to be approved before implementation. Participation of the teaching staffs in curriculum designing was limited to the recommendation; they had no any decision making power what exactly to be implemented. The decision-making authority also found not exercising the power: timely revision and maintaining the standard of the curriculum, according to the provision.

3.3 Academic freedom

The respondents were asked about academic freedom; raised issues during the interview were put in a discussion. They said that academic freedom protects right to freedom of speech and writing at the same time teaches people to respect what they are talking and about whom with in academic limitations. One of the respondents reported that: *university has yearly based academic syllabus. The Exams are held to fulfill pre-requisite of the syllabus. As a teacher I feel that we are in a boundary and restrictions of curriculum coverage (TU2/interview).*

Further the respondent claimed that base of the teaching must be the interest of the learner: *We want to widen the areas of knowledge, to do so university must provide freedom to teach based on the interests and need of the learners.* It is noted that teachers have limited academic freedom. They are bound to teach all the contents in curriculum to evaluate student achievement through annual examination.

However, teachers can freely express their ideas. There is no formal restriction. One of the candidates pointed that: *there is no formal restriction to express views on the syllabus in classroom. The fore most target; teaching in the classroom is to accomplish prescribed syllabus with in the pre-set time period. This is what the university system wants*

(TU1/interview). Lecture based teaching followed by annual exam has destined the teachers not to go beyond prescribed syllabus for courses.

The interviews confirmed that freedom to teach provides insights into a professional activity: teaching, research publications without any bias and prejudices. However, concerning to the lectures, in most courses, they are obliged not to go beyond approved syllabus or approved text books. One of the candidate argued that: *it is a freedom of speech and writing, honouring and respecting academic status and views, arguments, criticism of others avoiding possible bias and prejudices (TU4/interview).*

The department has no formal restrictions on practicing academic freedom and academic unity. It encourages teachers to deliver creative and critical lectures, generate new ideas, and publish research based journal article. In this connection the way the interviewee makes use of academic freedom, one of the respondents argued that *we have a system of academic freedom; a kind of academic integrity among co-staffs, senior lecturers and professors; and upright in ourselves. We also have a culture of respect others views and criticism' (TU6/interview).* This further makes clear that the lecturers at the department are aware about their academic freedom and use this opportunity to apply in their research, teaching and learning activities to achieve the objectives set by the curriculum.

One of the respondent indicated that *academic freedom provides students with open criticism, insights, and arguments about academic issues, such as classroom discussions. We inspire and appreciate the students' reflection and comments heartily (TU3/interview).* Academic freedom has triggered a friendly educational environment to narrow down the distance in teacher-student relations.

Funding, as in other activities, plays a vital role in academic activities. Teaching, research, and the publications need fund. TU receives the government funding through UGC and partly relies on its internal resources like tuition fee, rent of leased land and supermarket buildings.

The annual report pointed that UGC contributed to promote the culture of research of the individuals and the institutions through grants and expert services (UGC, 2013). UGC's effort on arrangement of academic seminars, orientations and workshops for teachers is an added advantage. Tribhuvan University has established research institutes to encourage lecturers to carry research. The role of research Centre is mostly criticized:

I am one of the fellow conducting researches almost every year under the CERID and UGC. I like to do independent research on the topic of interest in the recent burning issues but I cannot select my own research topics. The centers provide it.
(TU7/interview)

The respondent raised issues on the restriction of research topics; they wanted freedom to choose topics of wider coverage and recent burning issues. The researchers do not want any internal or external interference:

Interested researcher cannot choose the topic of interest as interest of the donor matters. Further there are very few opportunities and lack enough funding. Culture of research is not much developed and academic freedom is restricted due to busy schedule of teaching. (TU5/interview)

Busy teaching schedule, limited fund and restrictions on selection of independent research topics constrained academic freedom. Teachers' participation represents symbolic to promote the culture of research.

Doctoral degrees and promotion of Assistant Lecture to upper grades does not fulfill academic necessities *the lacking I see is the availability of adequate fund for the teachers to carry out research in their interested field* (TU3/interview). Such a panic to collect fund discourages the researchers. The candidate further claims *whatever the research studies the professors and students have carried out have not been properly utilized for higher education development* (TU3/interview). Thus, implementation of genuine research findings is a necessity to solve academic issues.

TU accepts and allows teachers' affiliation to the associations recognized by the university. The interviewee asserted that:

TU lecturers are united in different associations such as Tribhuvan University Teachers' Association (TUTA), Democrat Professors' Association (DEPAN) and unions of other major political parties. (TU6/interview)

In their views, such associations work in collective bargaining to increase wage, enhance teaching, learning and research facilities, share knowledge and experiences. However, such

associations are not free from criticism. One of the respondents claimed that political activities have severely affected and spoiled collective power of associations:

*For gaining power and personal benefits, these associations are guided more by politics than by professional standards and ethics. These associations are more involved in politics instead of collective bargaining and protecting their academic rights.
(TU7/interview)*

The lecturers at TU mentioned that they are free to form and join any associations of political or professional nature. However, their bitter experiences are the associations' political affiliation rather than academic activities. In principal, these associations claim that they are established to promote excellence and academic environment, protect and safeguard the professional rights and interests of TU teachers⁵. However, the associations are often blamed of their political nature and restricted professional activity. The reality as pointed by the respondent:

Keep yourself away from this vicious circle of associations (who claim themselves as professional and political) as they do more politics to get power and pelf, disturb the academic environment in the campus. They are established for one purpose but do something else. (TU5/interview)

Thus, it is must to protect and safeguard the professional identity and rights of the university teachers'.

Based on overall discussion, it is found that the university lacks a clear policy on academic freedom at institutional level confining the lecturers' activities at limited freedom to teach, conduct research and participate in decision-making level. The UGC's and the Research Council's documents revealed that the culture of research development was not satisfactory.

From the interview, it was found that very few teachers involved in the research as the research area was restricted and the topics were decided by the funding agency. The teachers were free to express their views and beliefs and discuss it in the classroom. The associations should have worked for the welfare of the teachers, but are found under heavy influence of politics rather than academic activities.

⁵ <http://pncampus.edu.np/tuta.php>

3.4 Perception and practices of HE

CERID (1997) perceives higher education as ‘an important vehicle for accelerating the pace of national development’ and ‘a capital investment for developing skilled human resources’ (CERID, 1997: 1). One of the interviewee noted that:

HE has transformed from power gaining tool to economic and social development. Educational planners and the reports are pointing that our universities are desired to maintain quality in education but these higher education institutions are failing to do so. It is a public outcry as well. TU needs to maintain quality in education in order to regain lost belief. (TU2/interview)

The interview and the various reports critically pointed HE is no longer a power gaining tool. They defined HE a backbone for the national, social, and economic development. Its primary goal is to emphasize on quality in education to produce skilled human resources. As a teaching institution TU is under pressure to address quality issue in education. This public university is a hope for the general public who cannot afford private education. Thus people try to keep this university alert for its quality management in teaching and learning activities.

HE in Nepal experiences numerous problems. One of the interviewee pointed that:

Centralization of administrative bodies, procedural delays, lack of clarity in task structures and role definitions, bureaucratization, influence of politics in the leadership have attracted the growing concerns of the public towards the university management system. (TU6/interview)

The interview confirmed that Tribhuvan University as the largest in all aspects had a lot of problems in managerial function; whether it was decision making or planning, clarifying the roles and the duties of staffs; influence of politics and procedural delays were the most problematic while implementing decisions as they had to pass through chains of levels. Political and bureaucratic influence was perceived as a hindrance of educational development in the field of university education.

Relevancy, accountability; the management organization system of higher education has attracted attention in recent years. They include planning, decision making, communication and evaluation of higher education and its institutions. (TU1/interview)

TU as the largest institution in terms of student and staffs supposed to have solved organizational problems through relevant planning and effective decision making process rather than the procedural delays. The interview pointed that this university needs to be accountable to the public in order to fulfill current market trends through government cooperation. The other mentioned that:

Series of reformation has brought TU to the present form. However, for the quality and standard education TU still needs to go through the improvements of library facilities, instruction materials and medium of instruction; student welfare services; entry criteria, appointment, evaluation, research and service conditions, and other policy measures for university teachers; and establishment of modern laboratory equipped with computer and internet facility. (TU7/interview)

The interview confirmed that as a public entity TU had to pay attention in quality education through improvement of teaching and instruction materials. Development of infrastructure such as modern classroom equipped with computer and projector is the immediate need. In the interview, it was pointed that size of the class should be reduced to enhance current teaching learning activities. They also pointed that there exist no computer-assisted laboratory. Establishment of such laboratory would be a milestone both in research and in teaching activity. There existed no any student welfare service. The student unions should be made responsible for student welfare services.

The interviewee also asserted that establishment of MOOCS and multi-university could be the best policy to maintain competitive and qualitative educational environment *Multi-University and the online programmes such as MOOCS can be the best way to create a competitive environment in the field of higher education (TU3/interview)*. The other respondent pointed that due to insufficient infrastructure there was no possibility for online courses as it needs high speed internet and regular supply of electricity. There were many universities established in the regional level however student pressure at TU was very high. The other claimed that:

Multi-university concept came into practice on the establishment of Kathmandu University as a private higher education institution. There are many more other universities on their ways. Such expansion is not sufficient. The question here is that how far the higher education system and structure succeeded to serve the community as a whole. The defects in the curriculum and its delivery system are the current

challenges of the universities; which is producing the highest unemployment rates of the graduates. (TU4/interview)

The interview confirmed that multi-university concept had downsized TU, on the other hand quality in education remained unchecked. Curricula and the medium of instruction were not designed to meet the demands of the present day standard of higher education. The interviews also pointed that emphasis on rote-learning, lack of critical thinking and research oriented activities were not conceptualized during the development of syllabus of higher education studies. It was also pointed that curriculum focused on imparting knowledge and the classroom lectures were delivered without any professional and practical concerns created boredom among the students. . In the same line the annual report of UGC, report of National Education Commission, Proposed Higher Education Policy justify that higher education curriculum system is bookish and theoretical in nature is the most serious threats in standardisation of the exam and quality management of HE. These documents further indicated that practices of higher education are mechanical that function on imported and readymade ideas donor agencies is the other serious threat in the practice and perception of Nepalese higher education system. The various education commission report suggested to make the curriculum creative and practical based. However the anomaly in the curriculum still persists in the field of higher education

3.5 Policy provision and implementation

3.5.1 Institutional autonomy

Institutional autonomy refers to the status where the institution independently makes a decision for overall development. The first university act in the history of Nepalese higher education Tribhuvan University Act (1992), recognizes the TU as independent educational body authorizing the power to run and manage the faculties operating teaching, running research and training programs to support higher education development. (TU2/interview)

Institutional autonomy as pointed in the interview was independent decision-making power of the university in academic, financing and other activities that affect directly or indirectly to the developmental aspect of the institution. The interview also confirmed that the Tribhuvan

University Act, 1992, had recognized TU as an autonomous institution, which exercises the institutional power to govern managerial functions such as appointing staffs, allocating fund, designing curriculum, and academic functions such as teaching, research, examinations, and publications. The other claimed that:

University Assembly, a governance body, guides and sets policy to give direction to the university. This commission instructs and gives direction to all the staffs working under the institution. (TU5/interview)

The respondent pointed that University Assembly as a supreme body exercises power to govern university and formulates policy to arrange necessary provisions. This independent commission tries to ensure true spirit of institutional autonomy through policy and guidelines for the staffs to conduct their duties. The other answered that:

TU has independent three-member committee: TU Service Commission, for the purpose of appointing teaching staffs. Teachers appointed by this independent commission are solely responsible for teaching and enjoy academic freedom. The university gives an opportunity to its staffs to gain skill and create innovative ideas through various research institutions. (TU3/interview)

Based on the above information, TU as an autonomous higher education institution hires teaching staffs through an independent commission called Service Commission. University Act ensured broader coverage of academic and managerial functions of the organization. The interview pointed that TU established research institutions for the promotion of teaching and research activities. The respondents further pointed that these institutes were responsible for research, training programs, conduct research on educational policy concern issues on socioeconomic and administrative development of the country.

In the process of institutionalization, TU went through several changes to maintain its presence as an autonomous higher education institution; however the results of centralization and the political shifts in the country always affected the processes. The interview asserted that appointment of the Vice-Chancellor on the political quota sharing had spoiled the university governance and badly deteriorated the academic activities. One of the interviews pointed that:

Institutional autonomy and academic freedom are well-defined in the policies, but in practice, political interference spoiled decision-making process or appointing staffs. All the universities established are independent institutions. However, the main executive body, the Vice-Chancellor', designated under the political quotas. (TU4/interview)

Based on the above interview, various other documents, media, and sources confirmed that political affiliation of staffs to gain post and power affected quality research and teaching at TU. The interview pointed that political interference violated the basic spirit of institutional autonomy on the appointment of the university chief executive. External interferences on the designation of the Vice-Chancellor pointed that university was not independent on exercising power conferred by the Act. However, TU was found still struggling to exercise full autonomy.

Besides political shadow in higher education, strengthening the quality, the government focused on the quantitative increase of higher education. *The government has established a total number of nine regional and central universities and some others are on process. For the purpose of quality teaching and research culture; restriction on the politics and need based education is the must (TU6/interview).* Expansion of new higher education institutions should address current regional needs and potentials of educational opportunities to the disadvantaged and so-called restricted group and communities.

To ensure institutional autonomy policy implementation play a vital role in promoting HE goals and satisfying market needs and demands. The respondents pointed that HE policies should address market trend; otherwise, such policies spoil the skilled workforce.

The most striking point is that policies are never properly implemented. The reason behind is the top-down approach of the university in developing countries. Policies formed without taking the local stakeholder's idea, and inputs do not achieve the goal. It is evident that center formed policy always develops a mind of local implementers as a passive consumer, not an active participator and implementer. (TU1/interview)

In the context of Nepalese, HE sector the interviewee pointed that abandoned stakeholders were one of the reasons for poor policy formulation and implementation. The interview also confirmed that the government had formed various commissions to study and suggest the status of higher education and universities. However, university governance had been under the clear-cut system of command and control from the state. Due to the state influence in the

university governance system, the university management had not implemented the reports on higher education of the various education commissions to the fullest. The characteristics of the top-down approach, a layered hierarchy of authority; the policy aligned with rules established at the top, heavily influenced the whole university system.

The formulated policies have to go through a lengthy procedure to get implemented. Such a system and the multi-layered and 'top-down' management create processes of formalities to make decisions and implementation. (TU7/interview)

The dark part of the top-down approach in a democracy is that the non-elected officials who are supposed accountable to the public are made answerable to the elected officials. The interview also confirmed that the centrally formed policies assumed the local stakeholders as passive consumers. Thus the ideas and the inputs are entirely neglected while forming the policies. Furthermore, the formed policies, in reality, were not implemented as suggested. Proper implementation of the policies depends on the decision makers how clear conceptual clarity they have on institutional autonomy as a whole.

Organizations such as Asian Development Bank, World Bank helped TU to regulate affiliated campuses and control exceeded the number of student enrollment. TU introduced merit-based entrance examinations for the university-level programs. The interview questioned the legitimacy of the entrance examination:

TU introduced merit-based student entrance system to maintain quality control and to meet the standard of the program they enroll. Entrance examination system remained a formality; as political activities of the student unions pressurized administration to enrol students any time during the academic year. Such activities hindered classroom environment and affected academic achievement as well. (TU5/interview)

The interview noted that whatever system implemented, the university needs a political consensus to run accordingly. Politicization had directly affected the institutional and academic activity of the independent institution. The other interview asserted that there was a very low chance of having full autonomy; however, it does not mean the financial support marks the absence of self-government. The interview also confirmed that Nepalese HE retains the control by the state through accountability and grants. Such a dualistic focus of the government in education sector causes little autonomy in management and administration of educational institutions.

The universities according to the interviews are found open and flexible and have a significant amount of institutional autonomy to recruit a huge number of students. Furthermore, market demands and competitive environment, being a complex issue, to provide quality education through highly qualified staffs challenged the Nepalese higher education management and governance. On the other hand, there is a growing complexity of policy formulation and decision-making processes at the university level. The interviews further mentioned that regulated monopoly and political threat of the government in implementing programs and strengthening HEIs development as academic place brought the institutional autonomy of Tribhuvan University at crossroads.

3.5.2 Professionalism

The interviewees pointed that professional activities were teaching, research, publishing of journal articles, and books. Professional here they mean experienced and competent in academic activities. A respondent claimed that:

Professionalism refers to the expertise of the university teachers in the field of teaching. The professionalism of teachers reflects sincerity in academic writing, independent thinking, and reflection in academic issues, as well as other activities like research and publications, punctuality and honesty in everyday teaching-learning activities. (TU3/interview)

The interview mentioned that a teacher is considered a professional based on the experience and the expertise he had in the academic field. The professional teacher had carried academic writings and independent research publications. The professional teacher possessed the culture of honesty and punctuality in the classroom and up-to-date knowledge on the subject matter is required. The interviewee took work experiences as *professionalism I have done twelve pieces of research in Nepal in different issues and have published several articles related and tried to link research with my teaching and learning activities (TU4/interview).*

However, challenges are always there being a professional: *sufficient funding for further studies, political influences in selecting the academic proposals and less encouraged to link research with teaching by the faculty (TU5/interview).* The interview pointed that lack of funding, less importance to the culture of research, faculty activities and the political influence had discouraged the pure academic research and teaching. The interview further

mentioned that political power dominated the professionalism of the teachers, instead of teaching and doing research, they sought affiliation to the political leaders. Such personal and teacher union's political affiliation resulted in hindrance in professional development at university teachers. The other asserted that:

On the establishment of research institutions, some teachers involved in research and publishing journals. However, the research culture as a profession was not fully developed. After teaching, research is a leisure activity. Teaching is equated to Lecturing. University lecturers are struggling to balance the academic strength and professional competence. (TU6/interview)

The interview confirmed that teachers lack professional accountability as inadequate provision of teacher development incentives whether it was a fund for research, seminars or teacher training. In line with the interview, various reports of National Education Commission pointed that teaching profession in higher education was less attractive regarding salary and benefits. Teaching was low prioritized comparing to any other profession. Economically teachers were more attracted to the projects that have nothing to do with the university. The report further claimed that the flawed recruitment process and the appointment of the teachers being a formality, having degrees without any teaching capacity and knowledge of the subject matter heavily burdened the University. Such a condition brought the professionalism of teachers in crisis. one of the respondents pointed that developing professionalism had been the prime purpose of TU:

TU remained a teaching institution for a long time after its establishment. Execution of NESP, 1971 TU extended some research cum teaching institutes and introduced some scholarship quota for Ph.D. As reported research and education, institutes were separated and the teachers titled Professor, Reader/Associate Professor, Lecturer, and Assistant Lecturer based on the experience and qualification. There was an increment in the salary than previous. (TU1/interview)

The interview noted that as a teaching institution, TU increased teachers' salary scale to make the teaching profession more attractive. The qualified and bona fide candidate was offered a doctoral degree on scholarship. Teacher's service hierarchy ranked vertically. The interview further pointed that establishment of separate research and teaching institutions gave freedom to choose teaching or research.

Teacher professionalism depends on the policy adopted by the institution. Thus, concerning the development of professionalism, a clear vision for a comprehensive and well described long-term higher education policy is a necessity. (TU2/interview)

Though, the University had been addressing the issues on professionalism through acts and amendments. The interviewee pointed clear policy on higher education is needed to address the overall academic aspect of the teachers at the university.

On the overall discussion, the interviewee noted that teachers' personal factor and the expectation from the organization they work for had influenced their profession. They expected to achieve reputation through quality research and teaching. The interview also pointed that TU as the renowned HE institution had to maintain academic standard through quality education, though teaching was time bound with the annual examinations. Furthermore, the teachers demanded timely seminars, workshops, teacher training, and political free academic environment at department, faculty and institutional level as a whole.

3.6 Policy to safeguard institutional autonomy and professionalism

Tribhuvan University Act (1992) established empowered TU with freedom to exercise and safeguard institutional autonomy. The report NNEPC (1956) pointed that the university as an institution should be free from political influence and gain academic freedom in full sense which should be established as per the charter and code to guarantee its sovereignty and maintain its essence (NNEPC 1956). However, according to the interviewee that never happened at policy implementation level. *The only way to safeguard institutional autonomy is to implement the rules and regulations strictly without any pressure from political parties or any other stakeholders (TU2/ interview).* The interview pointed that university must not seek any political affiliation to exercise its powers and duties. Political changes take often place in Nepal: the policies were often changed and implemented for political gains that affected the long-term policies and plans. Further, teaching, research, and administrative activities at university must be free from political interferences

Participants of the interview suggested protecting institutional autonomy and professionalism:

Posts in the management should not be created or appointed politically. Decentralization of power from central authority to the faculties, departments and affiliated campuses must progress as soon as possible. The individual researcher must have freedom to select the research area and the topic without any influence of the research institute. (TU6/interview)

The interview pointed that political appointment of the staff in management affected the autonomy and functioning of the university. The staffs were suggested to follow institutional norms rather than a political spirit. The interview also pointed that TU as a heavily centralized agency needed to decentralize its power to the affiliated and constituted campuses to enhance institutional capacity and implement decisions effectively. Furthermore, the interview pointed that the research institutions restricted independent research. The interview claimed their right to freedom to research and safeguarded professional activities.

In line with the participants, views report of NEC (1992) focused that educational policies, rules, and programs must suit the social context. Academic standard of the institution depends on the quality of the students enrolled. To enhance quality and maintain a professional level of the teacher: departments, faculties, institutes, and campuses should be allowed to set their rules regarding enrolment of the students(NEC 1992). The other viewed that: *Advanced and well-organized research and teaching is the base of any institution to protect and exercise professionalism of teachers. Further, Coordination among the departments and the institution regarding research and teaching should be compulsory. (TU5/interview)*

TU focused the general teaching than research. The interview pointed that teaching and research needed to go together to solve the problems in teaching to maintain quality in education. Furthermore, they pointed that the relevancy of advanced research and well-organized teaching along with the *wider participation of the students and the members of the departments in policy-making process is must (TU4/interview).*

The respondents viewed that they no longer want any interference on freedom while exercising to maintain professional standards at the university. It was felt necessary to define the pre-requisites of each post and publish the academic calendar in advance at the University to function properly and exercise the power of autonomy and maintain teaching standards. University needed to push the academic staffs to produce conventional academic materials for higher education; the academic activities required to follow academic calendar strictly. There

is always a danger ‘... while input control is granted to the public organization, output control is strictly in the hands of government or some other evaluation agencies’ (Fumasoli, Gornitzka et al. 2014: 5). Thus, university should play the influential role in shaping, defining and exercising institutional autonomy and professionalism (academic freedom and teaching) to make control over all the aspect of the institution.

The reports on the policy of higher education in Nepal, pointed that recruitment of academic professionals should be an academic exercise not the administrative decision. Thus, recruitment of the teaching staffs should be the responsibility of the faculty to suit their goals and the missions. The reports further mentioned that political parties and their affairs has weakened the autonomy and the internal governance of the universities through the nomination of top ranks, the politicization of unions of the faculty members, students, and the employees. Hence, politicization in the different levels of the university should be stopped to safeguard institutional autonomy and the professionalism of the higher education institutions in Nepal.

Many government and non-government organizations including UGC had been playing a vital role to uplift the current condition of teachers to make them more professional in their academic field. UGC has started awarding the best campus award regarding result, academic activities, and other set norms (UGC 2013). Such activity has led a fresh start and responsibility to the teachers to their job.

4 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

TU has established research institutions (NEC 1992) to unlock the door of higher education and follow global models of research universities. These research institutes are responsible for research, training programs on the educational policy concern issues.

The proposed higher education system of Nepal (2013) has a provision of decentralization of management and institutional autonomy to enhance the professional expertise of the staffs and members under the universities and campuses. It would help to keep the morale high of the teams and try their best in the field they are involved.

The government regulated the University Senate on appointment of human resource needs. Such forced action on the faculties causes a problem in staff management, and degrades quality teaching and learning activities. Due to the weak decentralization the departments, affiliated and constituent colleges enjoy less freedom. The report of the National Commission (1992), also saw the need of decentralization granting 'full autonomy' (NEC 1992: 24) to the faculties, departments, research centers, and institutes, to lay down their professional standards.

Moreover research innovation and the pursuit of excellence was not emphasized as integral parts of the teaching-learning process for the faculty development (WB 2015). The report of the Commission (NEC 1992) pointed that the university should have competency in decision-making on internal and external aspects. This could be related for instance to the administration: appointment of the official staffs (Vice-chancellor to the rector) and the teaching staffs, enrolment and tuition fees of students; full control over finance and mobilization of financial resources. Freedom on these aspects enhances the professional dimension of the teachers.

Centralization is still a debated issue at TU. National Education System Plan (NESP) 1971, tried to bring about organizational educational and systemic changes. However, the provisions aimed at organizational changes were not fully operationalized. NEC (1992) pointed that the comeback of NESP (1971) with amendments paid little attention to reform the structure of TU and created a growing complexity in decision making and policy implementation.

Teacher associations established at TU are political in nature rather than professional. These associations act indeed against their claims and have become a barrier to safeguard the professional identity and rights of the university teachers'. The TU Organizational and Administrative Rules 1994 recognized the posts of the department heads without any financial, administrative and academic authority. They were just the administrative coordinating authorities of the students and the teaching staffs. Thus the teaching and administrative level immediately needed the precise definition of the role and function they should play.

Furthermore, as a public entity, TU should pay attention in academic productivity: research publications, participation in international seminars, workshops, organization of conferences. However, such activities are most neglected in recruitment and promotion practices at TU.

4.1 What are the policies of appointing teachers?

The primary requirement for the post of lecturers at TU is masters' degree is the minimum second division in a specialized subject. Such recruitment provisions are the regulations and guidelines developed by the University Service Commission, as there are no any standard criteria at the national level. Thus, the affiliated campuses within TU follow their regulations on recruiting the faculty members: the basic requirement they also demand is the minimum standard of the university academic qualification. Eligible candidates at TU can participate in internal and external competition vis-à-vis criteria fulfilled: age, educational qualification, and research publication (not compulsory).

The information from the interviews showed the difficulty in finding the dedicated and qualified person, and pointed to the complicated and lengthy process of recruiting in a permanent position. For these reasons, the university often appoints a part-time, or a contract teacher. Terms and conditions regarding salary and benefits differ according to the posts. The discussion also pointed that the recruitment processes vary; a permanent teacher is recruited through the formal examinations and interview. A committee nominated by the university service commission is responsible for interview. On the other hand, lecturers who work on contract basis are hired on the recommendation of the department or faculty on the approval of the executive body. The department is responsible for hiring a part-time lecturer to fulfill the immediate need. There are no formal requirements for training and experiences for the

teaching posts. However, experienced candidates with higher qualifications than master's degree such as PhD are more desirable for the promotion.

Regardless of policy provision, influence of the politics tries to micro-manage the governance, finance, and academic activities of the university through recruitment at various posts. The authorities at the university are forced by protesting to hire part-time and contract faculty teaching staff, which are later given a permanent post. This represents a clear drawback in ensuring competence, commitment and motivation required to the post; on the other hand there is no clear definition of roles and functions staffs should play (NEC 1992). This shows that legal right of university is violated both in administrative and academic level due to political pressures. Since university is not free to decide recruitment of teaching staffs; academic achievement and professionalism of teachers is in critical condition and questionable. Furthermore teaching and learning does not meet quality and standard, the reason is university education is prioritized at the bottom, efficient and qualified candidates are engaged in other activities than teaching; recruited teachers lack capacity and command in their field.

4.2 How is the curriculum designed?

Subjects formed under department of the education faculty led by a chairperson from the respective subjects are responsible for developing, revising and implementing curricula. For approval, the subjects committees forward the designed curriculum to the faculty board. Then it forwards to the Academic Council, the supreme body for the final approval. CDC helps to implement the true spirit of curricula conducting seminars, orientation programs, and workshops on developing teaching-learning materials such as textbooks.

The interviews highlighted that university senate holds power to do necessary changes in its academic system. However, the Service Commission had not exercised conferred power under pressure from different groups; which had directly affected all academic activities of the institution. The semester system introduced to replace yearly academic system believed to bring changes in the age-old educational system; however, the duality of semester and yearly academic system in the same curricula proved a challenge for the university. Changes and adjustment in the curriculum relevant to the university system are the immediate need of the recently introduced semester system. This NEC (1992) showed that most of the topics taught

in the university have nothing to do with the local labor market; such programs have no any competence and lack productive activities to suit the demand of the market. Thus, it needs to address the issues on 'how to devise a curriculum for higher education which will cater for this kind of market' (NEC 1992: 51). In such a situation the concerning bodies such as CDC, subject committees, educational council, as well as faculty boards must play their role from institutional level to keep the Rector, the chief officer concerning educational matters, awake about his/her duties and responsibilities. The NEC (1992) pointed that declining standards of the higher education is a serious consideration and recommended removal of the unrelated subjects that affect quality.

The data revealed that how curriculum is designed affects the academic activities of the teachers and students'. The interviewers mentioned the rigid nature of the curriculum, the faculty sought teachers' participation while designing, but they were not allowed to do any changes or teach other than the prescribed course.

Thus, curriculum that encourages learners to become more critical, self-explanatory, explore opportunities in the global labor market and the curriculum that motivates the learner to differentiate the individual tasks through critical and creative thinking is the immediate need of TU.

4.3 What are the perceptions of higher education in Nepal and how are academic career structured?

Data analysis suggests that perceptions of higher education have changed from power gaining tool to socio-economic development. Such a change has contributed to increasing the literacy rate of the nation, though, HE's contribution to social and economic development is negligible because higher education in Nepal lacks quality and technical education. The interviews pointed that HE as a driver of the socio-economic development of the nation and the producer of skilled human, need to be consistent with policies and implementation level.

Most of the interviews indicated restricted managerial function stroked Tribhuvan University's decision making and policy planning aspects. The staffs carried their job without any clear assignment of the roles and the duties. On the other hand, procedural delays on passing the decision to the implementation level are most problematic. Political and bureaucratic influence in the universities internal and external affair has caused a hindrance in

academic development and created a rule of anarchy in the educational world. Competence in teaching and administration has declined, influenced by the unchecked politicization. Political ideologies have become the functioning instruments of higher education.

The multi-university concept has reduced the student pressure of the TU, on the other hand, quality remained unchecked. Curricula and the medium of instruction were not designed to meet the demands presents quality standards of higher education. The interviews also pointed that emphasis on rote-learning, higher education studies failed to conceptualize critical thinking and research oriented activities. Furthermore, curriculum focused on imparting knowledge and the classroom lectures delivered without any professional and practical concerns created boredom among the students.

In same line with the interview, NES (1971) criticized the higher education curriculum system as bookish and theoretical. Creative and practical based higher education curriculum to ensure quality education at university level is the current need. Frequent changes in the government policies on education and the anomaly in designing the curriculum persist in the field of higher education.

Salary benefits and the vertically ranked service hierarchy in four grades: Assistant Lecturer, Lecturer, Reader, and Professor, supported the development of the teaching profession at the Education Faculty. Staff enrolled for a permanent lecturer post ranked according to the expertise in the relevant field and years of service at the faculty. Regarding work and responsibilities, teachers of all grades carry out activities without any differences. Thus, teaching is the primary task of Assistant Lecturer to the Professor

Though, there are bundles of problems on higher education in Nepal. NPC (2010) provides a vision to gear up higher education towards the creation of so called 'knowledge society' and produce conscious, competent, productive, and competitive citizens through quality as well as employment-oriented education attempting to make use of the available opportunities.

Frequent changes of the government and the formation of political coalition put pressure on HE institutions: to work in their faith through segmented unions of institutions' teachers, students, and staffs. Therefore, HE institutions are compelled to protect themselves.

Somehow, the institutions work protecting themselves by producing programs and plans for their faculties without any coordination with the similar institution of their kind and the MoE.

Such a trend had led the country to higher education without having developed HE policy to date.

The Higher Education Act supposed to be an “umbrella act” to govern the development and the growth of HE in Nepal replacing the so far produced and amended ten Acts promulgated to establish and govern new universities. However, this law has been ‘pending-due to failure to reach political consensus on issues of new universities, and lack of parallel higher education policy to accompany the legislation’ (EIU. June 2013: 22)

UGC was found to have taken concrete and sustainable steps to address the quality management at institutional and academic levels through QAA. UGC launched QAA regulatory framework and guidelines to improve quality of education and comprehensive reforms in the field of higher education; and determine the rank of the institutions based on their level of excellence.

4.4 What are the practices of higher education in Nepal regarding academic freedom and professionalism?

The meaning of academic freedom in the view of university lecturers is the right to freedom of speech, right to teach and research, and publish research writing without any interferences at the same time to respect others academic status. Respondents view freedom to teach and publications of scientific articles as key indicators of professionalism.

The interviews stated that teachers enjoy academic unity in lectures, research and preparing the journal article. The trend showed that lecturers at the department were aware of their academic freedom to apply in their research, teaching and learning activities as a profession. In contradiction, they also viewed that the role of the teachers was confined within the boundary of the curriculum in classroom teaching to produce best results in the annual exam, though there were no formal restrictions upon to express their ideas.

Traditional distance between teacher-student relations was found to have narrowed by the practice of academic freedom which encouraged the learner to be a critique and more interactive. Academic freedom was equally important to awaken teachers and researchers and update their knowledge in solving academic problems.

University lacks a clear policy on academic freedom at institutional level confining lecturers' activities at limited freedom to teach, conduct research and participate in decision-making level. The documents about UGC and the Research Council pointed their need to work on to provide academic freedom and promote a culture of research.

In connection to this, the report of the National Commission (1992) recommended that the research should be advanced, organized, interdisciplinary as well as interesting at the university level. Furthermore, the UGC was suggested to prepare a proper policy on research for higher education. To some extent, the UGC's role was appreciable but more confined to the funding dimension. However, the government never took the recommendations of the various education commissions seriously to the implementation level. Thus, Nepalese HE failed to address the immediate and long-lasting demands of the labor markets and society at large.

Very few teachers are involved in the research, as the research area was restricted and the funding agency decided the topics. The teachers developed a belief that the funding agency used them as research puppets guided from preliminary stage to the final stage of research. Thus, the researcher's participation was limited to promote the culture of research, but not its content. Therefore, the charm at the faculty in teaching rather than research was to achieve the titles such as a reader, professor. The other purpose was that the university offers in-service international scholarship quotas on Doctoral and Post-Doctoral programs.

The teachers were allowed to create and participate in associations according to the likings and interest. The interview highlighted that the right place to raise the issues of academic freedom and professional matters of TU lecturers could be the Academic Council. The Act, 1992, ensured participation of the senior most faculty teacher in the University governing bodies. However, the provision of Assembly clearly separated the executive and academic functions that discourage the decision-making process of academics based on the non-academic or executive concerns.

4.5 What barriers do the teachers come up with to protect institutional autonomy and professionalism in university teaching?

The Three Year Plan Approach Paper (August 2010) stated that the problems in higher education are inability to develop infrastructure to the defined standard, to regulate the learning achievements to manage teachers efficiently, and to link education with production, employment and practice. The plan further reported that politicization and weak management of higher education not only resulted in poor quality of instruction but also weakened institutional autonomy of the universities and academic freedom of the teachers.

The analyzed reports and research publications and the interviews disclosed a significant challenge of vicious 'politicization' in higher education as a hindrance of all round sector development. Even the Three Year Plan Approach mentioned a provision in its practical strategy 'to reduce the increasing politicization of education sector; a system will be developed to deliver all services only on the basis of defined criteria and norms' (NPC 2010: 125). However, the thirteenth three-year plan approach 2013/14-2015/16 has been in action, but the strategies mentioned remained unchecked without any remedies against of politicization in higher education sector.

The other barrier to the development of higher education and functioning of universities was the failure to enact Higher Education Act to regulate the universities; failure in modification and updating to improve curriculum, teaching and learning materials. On the other hand, there were no measures to reward and punish the teachers based on their performance. Thus the professionalism in university teaching was less attractive and mostly neglected. However, the Three Year Plan Approach Paper made a strong promise to solve problems of HE by enacting a long-awaited higher education policy but it never came forth.

The report also proposed a policy to update and bring appropriate changes to the curriculum and methods of teaching to address the actual needs of the society and to maintain quality in higher education. Equally, the academic council and the subject committees in the faculty were responsible for keeping the standard of the curriculum and adopt timely changes. TU made the comprehensive reforms in the curriculum in 1998 and the revisions in curricula followed in 2010 with the support of Higher-Education Project I & II. The main aim was matching the standard of Nepalese higher education to other South Asian Countries, but the

reform was limited in its content and the curriculum implementation remained conventional with the traditional form of teaching; even the standard of faculty remained unchanged (ADB 2015). Furthermore, education faculty initiated new programs but ‘curriculum reform was still disconnected from national development priorities and opportunities’ (ibid: 36) weakened the strategies to become a teacher and training in teaching.

The dualistic nature of ADB as a donor and program partner of the government in higher education restricted institutional autonomy and professional aspect of educational institutions. University as fund receiver plays a passive role; the donor retains the full control over supervision and monitoring of the project. The challenge is that strengthening national development as academic places become a marketplace and monopoly in implementing programs threatens the role of government in the education sector. Such practices of seeking funds from external sources spotted a barrier in institutional autonomy and a hindrance in the academic achievement.

Writing and publications of teaching and learning materials are purely academic activities. However, universities lack the provisions on regulating unauthorized materials. Faculties and Departments need to regulate the production of such materials.

NEC (1992) underlined that to exercise autonomy the university should be able to address internal and external aspects: administration, finance, appointment of staffs, student enrollment and matters of national interest. However, the state has controlled the substantive and the procedural areas of the higher education governance through approval of the degree programs, and appointment of the highest-ranking executive officers based on the political affiliation. Nepal lacks the strong policies on higher education, thus issues such as autonomy, accountability are relatively less debated in the knowledge society.

The report of the National Education Commission (1992) pointed that the teachers who enjoy teaching always complain about the lack of incentives and other benefits. On the other hand, some teachers never entered the classroom:

There are persons who, university teachers though they are, have not set foot within the university precincts for tens of years, and have been enjoying the usual facilities all the same. They do not perform their jobs, even when they put in their appearance (NEC 1992: 59)

Such cases are perceived as a real threat to the teaching profession at the University.

Finally, the teachers working at TU complained regarding the pay and other benefits they received. Teaching and learning were unproductive; students attended the classes just to pass the exam and get the certificate. Although teachers worked hard to maintain professionalism in teaching, they were compelled to do some additional job for a living. This additional job-seeking trend of teachers has led the teaching to lecture rather than resource and result oriented. Not only teaching and learning but also curricular activities lacked practicality. The examination system is summative: it cannot assess aptitude, discipline, and dedication of the learners, and there exist a gap in the curricula to link the levels which deteriorates the quality of education (UNESCO 2008).

Bounded to the annual examination of the course, students' and teachers have no other choices except depending on the lists of syllabuses of the subjects taught in the university. Thus professionalism of teachers, institutional autonomy, and the quality of higher education enmeshed within the problems of TU. NEC (1992) report also claimed that private campuses were unable to accommodate the intake the growing number of students each year as TU examinations and the results were delayed months and sometimes a year. Thus TU rumbled in such problems and had no spare time to introduce timely changes in the curricula.

There was a huge list of syllabuses, which required extra time for lecture and note making. Due to scarce of learning resource materials at the faculty and the library students depended on the classroom notes and memorizing the answers to the questions likely to be asked in the examinations.

Since the university has not been free to decide recruitment of teaching staffs; academic achievement and professionalism of teachers fell in critical condition, and university education was prioritized at the bottom, experienced and qualified candidates engaged in other activities than teaching; recruited teachers lack capacity and command in their field.

4.6 Conclusion

Teaching and research as the central activities of the university require little space of control from the organization and the state. Institutional autonomy and academic freedom are interlinked to the role played by the university and the state. The studies and the reports point to safeguard institutional autonomy and professionalism to maintain academic standards at the university.

Research and teaching at the university should be advanced and organized as well as integral part of all the departments' inter-disciplinary academic exercise. Coordination of the research and teaching with the departments or institution is necessary to enhance academic achievement and promote the academic culture of the staffs. The current requirement of the University is to ensure wider participation of stakeholders and appropriate changes in the curriculum. The curriculum that encourages learners to become more critical, self-explanatory, to explore opportunities in the global market and the curriculum that motivates the learner to differentiate the individual tasks through critical and challenging attitudes is the immediate need of TU.

Thus, it is the need of the stakeholders such as students and faculty members to seek the widest participation: to address the recent development and issues of higher education in the country and to legitimize curriculum through addressing the needs of the market, in the policy-making process of future HE policy. Furthermore, higher education bodies should be allowed to set educational policies, rules regarding enrolment of the students, and programs suited to the changed political and social context for the purpose of quality control.

University should strictly follow the academic calendar for scheduling the exams or publishing the result. University should utilize internal financial and academic resources to develop standard research-based academic works on higher education. The raising and unsolved issues on policies, socio-economic and cultural factors have created a space on HE as a playground for the politics. Thus, there is the need of further study on the political role in higher education in Nepal.

The market demand and competitive environment to provide quality education through highly qualified staffs have made the Nepalese higher education management and governance a complex issue. On the other hand, there is a growing complexity of policy formulation and

decision-making processes at the university. In the context of Nepal teaching is generally not regarded as professional, though it is still respected by most of the people. Thus it needs to be clarified what the teachers, who served years of service at University, think about the profession.

The National Commission of Education enacted the TU Act (1992) to guide the national education; still, the condition of TU is as the centralized agency. Institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and professionalism have remained in the vault without any clear cut policy. Therefore, respondents point to the need for Tribhuvan University to function as a responsible, autonomous, and decentralized institution with a clear-cut policy and walk in the proper direction. From a more practical perspective, university teachers feel the need to formulate a higher education policy in order to safeguard institutional autonomy and professionalism.

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Appendix

Interview guide for teachers of the Faculty of Education

Name of the Interview:

Institution:

Current Position:

Telephone:

E-mail

Experience:

1. How the teacher selection takes place in TU?
 2. What measures are taken into consideration while appointing teachers?
 3. How were you appointed?
 4. Does your department have different processes on appointment?
 5. How do you perceive academic freedom as?
 6. By act TU is autonomous; do you feel that you enjoy academic freedom?
 7. What role academic freedom plays on teaching and learning achievement?
 8. What are your views on institutional autonomy?
 9. TU is the largest government funded higher education institution; do you think that you are academically successful to achieve the HEI goals?
 10. If no; what are the barriers that come across?
 11. What are the differences between policies and reality when it is being implemented?
 12. Are you aware of teacher professionalism? How?
 13. Do you think you are professional and enjoy academic freedom when it is linked to teaching?
 14. What are the obstacles that come with to be a professional teacher?
 15. Does your department make teachers aware about academic freedom and professionalism?
- Is there anything you want to add....?