

# Medium of Instruction in Nepal

Exploring Necessity of Promoting Nepali as  
Medium of Instruction in the Context of Nepalese  
School Education

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Medium of Instruction in Nepal: Exploring Necessity of Promoting Nepali as MoI in the  
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# Abstract

The language as medium is taken as the important concern of education in Nepal presently. There is a growing craze of English medium instruction in every schools from rural to urban regions in Nepal. Such schools with EMI are increasing rapidly both in private and public schools. The government policies emphasize on promoting Mother Tongue Based Education (MTBE) in early education, but it has several challenges in practice as lack of resources, multi linguistic classes, lack of teacher' proficiency, lack of awareness and lack of acceptability and so on. Moreover, even Nepali language which is one of the highly used national and official languages of the nation, has also on the verge of being displaced by English in school education. Thus, medium of instruction in Nepalese school education was identified as central issue or concern of the study and then several bounded individual cases were identified to collect the required data for the study. The multiple case study design was used to collect and analyze the specific data. Two public and two private schools were selected based on the criteria and then reached to six different groups of individuals including students, teachers, parents, managers, officials and language experts. The Quality Framework of Barret, et.al was used to identify the five key dimensions of quality education. The study has explored the evidences that are helpful to discuss the relation of languages as medium with the quality of school education. The findings point out the important role of language as medium in developing the quality of school education in Nepalese context. The data reflect that Nepali as MoI possess the potential of being inclusive and mainstream language in Nepal. The study concludes with the useful suggestions to policy makers and researchers for planning and implementing the effective MoI in school education in Nepal.

*Keywords: Principles of quality education, the role of language as MoI, MoI in Nepalese school education, linguistic diversity in Nepal.*

# Dedication

To my loving son and wife.

# Acknowledgement

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents who have faced several challenges but never put me down. They have always encouraged and supported me in every walks of my life.

I also want to thank my lovely wife, other family members, friends, teachers for both encouraging and supporting me for achieving the opportunity to study in international university in Oslo, Norway. I would like to also thank all of my new friends, colleagues, teachers whom I met in Oslo and they have helped in various ways to continue with my study and stay in Norway for two years.

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Finally, I would like to express my deepest love and regards to my three years old son, Nishant, who has always made me feel happy and loving and compromise with me for not spending enough time with him. Love you dear.

Dharma Raj Joshi

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# Abbreviation

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| CBC   | Central Bureau Statistics                              |
| DoE   | Department of Education                                |
| ECED  | Early Childhood Education Development                  |
| EGR   | Early Grade Reading                                    |
| EMI   | English Medium Instruction                             |
| ERO   | Education Review Office                                |
| HLNEC | High Level National Education Commission               |
| INGOs | International Government Organizations                 |
| MOEST | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology          |
| MoI   | Medium of Instruction                                  |
| MT    | Mother Tongue  |
| MTBME | Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education             |
| MTBMP | Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Program               |
| NASA  | National Assessment of Student Achievement             |
| NGOs  | National Government Organizations                      |
| NLSS  | Nepal Living Standard Survey                           |
| OECD  | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PISA  | Program for International Student Assessment           |
| PPE   | Pre Primary Education                                  |
| PSC   | Public Service Commission                              |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| SSDP   | School Sector Development Program                         |
| TEVT   | Technical Education and Vocational Training               |
| TSC    | Teachers Service Commission                               |
| UGC    | University Grant Commission                               |
| UNESCO | United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organization |

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# 1 Introduction

This chapter starts with presenting the self-motivational drive to conduct this research as a researcher through the section of echoes from self. Furthermore, the chapter includes the preliminary description of study background, purpose, research questions, limitation and rationale for conducting this research. The chapter finally gives the overview of the chapters included in this study.

## 1.1 Echoes from self

The echoes have their deep roots from my childhood. I was born in Nepal, the country of multi-diversity. It was not in my experience when I was spending my childhood in the village of Nepal that lies in the small district named Baitadi in Far western region of the country. I was brought up in local language up to five years but before I started the formal school from class one, I was taken to Mumbai, a city in India where my father used to work in a hospital. There I got chance to see different languages because the society we lived in had many workers from different languages, religions and cultures. I was admitted to Hindi medium school. In school, I started learning Hindi language and in my friend circle in my locality, I was exposed to Marathi and English language. Marathi was very dominant because my most relatives there also spoke Marathi and most neighbors also used Marathi. So, throughout my school time I learnt Hindi, Marathi and little English. I sometimes used to listen my father using Nepali, but I could not understand much. During all this period, I also could revive my native dialect of Nepal because I used to spend some time in Nepal during my school vacation. During the school time in India, I was much influenced to learn English to see the use of English by rich and educated people.

After I finished my school education up to class 10, my father retired, and we all came back to Nepal. Since the quality of life and education was not good in the village, we decided to live in urban city known as Dhangadhi in Kailali district. Here, I had to learn Nepali language because local dialect was not the formal language of communication. Although I exposed to many different dialects while living in Dhangadhi, I primarily more attracted to Nepali and English language. I completed my high school and further higher education in Nepal in English medium besides having some Nepali language as subject. Due to the wide exposure to Nepali language around me all throughout this period, I easily learnt it. Due to study

obligation and of course because of my interest, I achieved some competence in English language as well. Till at this point, I had become the multi-language speaker who knows to communicate in Hindi, Marathi, English, Nepali and few more dialects including my own native dialect.

Pursuing the higher study, I achieved my master's degree in English language teaching and started teaching English in school in various parts of the country. The exposure went on in English through my career since I taught only in English medium schools. Then one day, I also got admission in University of Oslo in Norway. I moved to Norway and very soon realized Norwegian being the influential national language in Norway. I did not have to study in Norwegian, but it was essential to learn it to socialize and grab good part time jobs. I tried to learn it, but I could not continue from heart. Therefore, I gave up completing the courses and focused in my study. However, I have learnt the basic Norwegian alphabets, few numbers, words and some social functions.

On reflecting my educational journey, I saw I was not fully mastered in any one language. I know many languages and they have their advantages, but I always remained away from making native like mastery on any one of the languages I have learnt so far in my life. English has been always the foreign language even though I tried my best all through my life. I scored good marks in English subjects in schools and colleges but could not ever express myself confidently from within in English. I always had this problem when I was young in school or colleges but somehow, I managed it by the best way, I could do that time. I had closely felt this problem with many students I taught in junior classes. The young minds in the private English schools were found in great mental pressure to cover their learning in English. Even in higher class, most of the students were found very poor in simple academic communication in English. Students are students, even the teacher colleagues are also found struggling all throughout their life to teach in English confidently. Although there may be different factors behind this problem, I have experienced the major role of language use in it. Further talking about the other languages, I have learnt in my life, I found them also partly mastered. I can handle the communication fluently in Nepali, but I have always problem in making the written and formal academic communication. Obviously, it is so because I could not get enough academic exposure in Nepali. It has never been the part of my academic and professional life except very few compulsory subjects I had passed in my higher education in Nepal. Although I feel very comfortable to speak and talk in Nepali language, I always prefer



using English whenever I want to be formal or academic. Marathi and Hindi languages also remained in my mind for some duration after I left school in India, but they are also now the languages of very informal communication. Therefore, sometimes I find myself so helpless and I regret that I can't use any single language with full mastery. It was the main reason why I have decided not to learn Norwegian because that would also certainly not become my stronger medium compared to English or Nepali.

It was not in my mind to study about the language issue for my master's research when I came to Norway. I came here to gain more practical knowledge to enhance my teaching profession. But during the study progression in the University, I got chance to study various national and international literatures and policies that reinforced my reflection towards the use of language for the development of the people and the nation. Moreover, practically I was much influenced by the development of Norwegian as a language and its widespread use in Norway. I have observed how the people of Norway enjoying their language in almost every sector with full ease and prestige. Government, private sectors, school authorities, health sectors, sports education, technical sectors and other private business institutions use Norwegian language for their administration and communication. English has been limited to an alternative or a supportive language to increase the scope of services. Although I did not study the whole environment with evidence and facts, I felt it in my day to day experience through talking with people, working in different institutions and observing the life of people and so on. Both public and private Norwegian language institutes in Oslo have large number of students mainly foreigners to study the language so that they can be the part of Norwegian life and its strong economy. Oslo, the capital city of Norway has all different kind of population. Mainly immigrants and foreigners that speak different languages but the craze to learn Norwegian is very high because it has been systematically institutionalized in Norway. The great attention has been given in Norwegian Kindergarten to promote the linguistic (Norwegian) competence of children before they reach to Norwegian schools. A child in Norway has a perfect choice to learn everything in Norwegian language from school education to higher study even the technical stream with high quality. In this regard I remembered one of my friends living in Norway told me once *"I would be a doctor if I got chance to study it in Nepali in Nepal"*. By having this kind of experience in Norway, I developed great interest to study how the language can play its role to contribute to the national development.

The interest made me read several related national and international articles. I started giving more focus on the relationship of language and the development of nation. I studied the language policies of the developed countries including Norway. I came across to the problems, the African and Asian countries have been facing due to weak language policies through various literatures available online. I looked for the broader picture of the quality of education that is needed for the development and how the language can play its role for increasing such quality of education. I primarily studied about the linguistic context of Nepal and tried to study the complexities comparing them through international perspectives. The literature published on linguistic opinion of late Mahatma Gandhi also influenced me a lot and hence I compared and consulted different literatures on Indian contexts as well. In this way, I got encouraged to study, compare and relate the context of Nepal for exploring the solution to the existing language dilemma. Hence, I chose this area for my final research study in this program.

## **1.2 Background**

Language planning has become one of the important concerns for many countries in today's time of rapid globalization. The most challenging task is to adopt such a language policy, which can ensure the national development through quality education. Several multilingual post-colonial states in Africa and many other Asian countries in the world are struggling with the selection and promoting the most suitable medium of instruction for enhancing the quality of education. Many academics, scholars and researchers have also written and published their literatures on language planning and its importance for national development. Many of them have even spoken in the favor of greater role of national languages against the use of English or other colonial languages for promoting the development of indigenous languages, improving the educational performance, and decreasing the inequalities in the country (Ferguson, 2006 & Brock, 1995).

Nepal as one of the developing countries having multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual identity in the world has also a major challenge to increase the quality of education through the effective medium of instruction. In Nepal, Nepali and English both serve as medium of instruction in education since 1971AD. Nepali as a national language, has a long history of being a medium of instruction in most of the public schools up to secondary schools and in

selected courses in higher education (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000). The private schools and higher education colleges have been offering education in English medium for long time.

However, in last few years, there is a huge demand of expanding English as a medium of instruction in the country replacing Nepali language. Moreover, due to the high instrumental effects of English as a powerful international language, there is a great hope among the people for the individual economic growth and development of their country through English medium education. Most surprisingly, even public schools run by the government are shifting gradually towards English medium instructions to attract and increase the students in the school. As Khati (2015) wrote, “EMI is unquestionably a growing phenomenon in public education in Nepal. It is assumed to be a passport to a global world” (p.7). In this regard, referring to the entire Asian context, Philipson (1992) states, “English has retained its privileged position in the education process in Asia and Nepal is warmly welcoming this trend” (p.28). Because of this hegemonic influence of English as an international language and due to the weak national language policy implementation, there is a great decline in the use of Nepali language as medium of instruction in both basic and higher education in the country. Furthermore, with the decline of Nepali, there is a great possibility of further declining of other indigenous languages, which are not even in use and developed as Nepali language. Referring to the globalized trend, Watson (2007) has also indicated the danger by saying “The forces of globalization are leading towards the uniformity in the languages used, in culture and even in education. We are witnessing a sharp decline in the number of languages spoken. Only those languages which are numerically, economically and politically strong are likely to survive. As a result, many linguistic and ethnic groups are in danger of being further marginalized” (p.252). These all-different issues implicitly or explicitly affect the quality of education. Like many other states of the world, Nepal is also in great dilemma weather to promote mother tongues or international language in education, but it has been a great challenge to either promote mother tongues or any other international language like English due to its multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual identity and above all its poor economic development.

In this scenario, the language like Nepali which has been in use as educational, cultural, social, political, constitutional and most importantly as the mother tongue and the first language of large population, can have a great potential to be an effective medium of instruction for the development of quality education in Nepal. Therefore, it is necessary to

study, compare, and discuss the necessity of promoting Nepali as medium of instruction for developing the quality of education in Nepal.

### **1.3 Research problem and statement of purpose**

Nepali is one of the prominent mother tongues that is comparatively more developed and highly spoken among the people of Nepal of different regions. It has a long historical background as a national lingua franca and continues to be the official language in Nepal for more than 150 years. It not only serves as mother tongue for more than 50 percent of Nepalese population but also function as first language for rest 20 to 30 percent of population in Nepal (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000, MOE, 2016, National Census, 2011 and Yadav, 1992). Several recent studies and reports on language policy and planning indicate the development of mother tongue education in the multilingual contexts of Nepal (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, Gyawali & Khdaka, 2016, Shrestha, 2017 and Yadav, 2007). Here, it is necessary to consider the existence of many other linguistic communities and their different mother tongue identities. In this situation, on one hand, many of the language researchers view that adopting Nepali as a sole MoI can harm the development of minority languages; on the other hand, they have a doubt in handling the education in mother tongue with lack of resources and utility in Nepal (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000 and Gyawali & Khdka, 2016).

In this regard, skim through the available literatures fails to identify recent prior research directly focusing on exploring the need of promoting Nepali language in school education for being a language having both the quality of highly spoken mother tongue as well as more resourceful than any other national mother tongues in Nepal. Many literatures, news, reports, informal talks, historical educational policies, etc. highlight the importance and the relevance of Nepali as MoI in school education of Nepal (Awasthi, 2015, Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000, Mathema, 2018, Weinberg, 2013). However, there are very few empirical researches done before to find the necessity of promoting Nepali as MoI. Recent SSDP (2016-2023) of Nepal has proposed the primary education in mother tongue-based education and it has estimated that 90 percent of schools serving to the speech communities throughout Nepal that can use Nepali language as medium of instruction in Early Childhood Education Development (ECED)/Pre Primary Education (PPE) and grades 1-3. Therefore, the policy says,

“In these schools, Nepali language as MoI will be used and other community languages will be taught as subjects optionally or compulsorily. In rest of the schools, Nepali language will be taught as a subject and later introduced as medium of instruction” (MOE,2016).

However, the demand of EMI is so high that more and more private schools including some of the public schools are increasing with EMI starting even from pre- school level. Even though several studies, literatures, news, and reports put their view against EMI in the context of Nepal, English medium schools are surprisingly increasing in number. So, it is significant to see how the language as MoI affect the quality in education. it also needs to further explore the necessity of promoting Nepali as MoI in the context of school education in Nepal.

## **1.4 Research questions and objectives of the study**

To carry out this study, I have proposed two study questions as follows:

- 1) How can a language as MoI play its role to improve the quality of school education?
- 2) Can Nepali as MoI be the better choice for enhancing the quality of school education in Nepal?

The first research question contains two important key terms: medium of instruction and quality of education. This question will try to define and establish a role of language as MoI in education by studying different existing literatures and analyzing the data collected through this research. It will primarily see how the language as MoI affect the quality in education. The term ‘Quality’ is quite vague and has its multi dimensions in different context. The meaning of the quality in education invites a lot of different factors to be considered according to place, people and its purpose. However, for this research the role of language as MoI will be studied against the five key dimensions of quality in education as proposed by Barrett, A, et.al (2006). It is needed to take the key ideas on quality given by theses scholars because they have proposed their framework by studying and comparing the relevant international literatures and the organizational reports that were based on many developing countries like Nepal. In nutshell, the first research question will find the information for discussing how the language as MoI affect the quality through five aspects of quality in education.

After exploring the role of a language as MoI in quality of education, the second research question of this study will aim to study the contextual educational environment of school education in Nepal. It will explore, relate, compare and study the languages being used as MoI in school education in Nepal. By making the comparative analysis of MoI's in schools of Nepal, it will primarily explore and study how the use of Nepali as MoI can affect the quality of school education in Nepal. Thus, analytically the question will try to answer the necessity of promoting Nepali as MoI for developing quality of school education in Nepal. The study will take the information through interviews from students, teachers, parents, administrators, language experts and officials for making a relevant discussion. The main objective behind this question is to find out the evidences for discussing the necessity of promoting Nepali as MoI by relating it to the key aspects of quality in education.

## **1.5 Limitation and delimitation of the study**

The study has aimed to find the role of language as MoI in developing the quality in education. It seems quite challenging to define and establish the concept of quality in education because of its individualistic interpretation and variability. The quality framework used in this study clearly outlines the five basic key dimensions of quality, but they are quite broad areas which requires furthermore clarification that brings difficulty in establishing the specific and measurable units. Moreover, the framework does not explicitly show any relationship between the key aspects of quality and the language use which further requires to study and explore more data to discuss the association of language use as MoI and its impacts on quality of education. Besides this, it is also a great challenge to collect uniform data and condense the findings because of highly multi contextual situations in Nepal.

To make the study researchable, I have decided to discuss the topic through multiple case study research design with embedded approach. That means the few representative cases of schools in a district have become research sites and stakeholders of these schools represent primary research respondents. The study has also included few language experts and officials to gain in-depth information. I have also elaborated and specified the five key dimensions into more measurable and less broad parameters based on given information in the same framework and available relevant literatures. The number of respondents in each category has also been few only by seeing the time limit, research design and purpose of the thesis.

## 1.6 Rationale of the study

It has become very crucial for any nation these days to follow effective language policy that can promote quality of education for developing the country. Being aspiring for rapid development and change, it becomes quite important for the country like Nepal to identify such a language policy which can contribute to develop the quality in education and helps in ensuring the national development despite the multi diversity and adversity in Nepal.

Many international policies and studies have indicated to identify and implement the mother tongue instruction at least in primary education. Nepal as the follower of such policy insights, has also piloted mother tongue based primary education in various districts and still in the favor of making such policies, designing the resources and implementing such plans till date. The study and survey done by government officials on mother tongue instruction are not satisfying. Mother tongue based education has faced several challenges as lack of resources, multi linguistic classes, lack of teacher' proficiency, lack of awareness and lack of acceptability and so on. Moreover, researchers in Nepal has only recommended few languages out of many languages and dialects to be used as educational purposes.

On the other hand, there is a growing craze of English medium instruction in every schools from rural to urban regions in Nepal. Such schools with English Medium Instruction (EMI) are increasing rapidly both in private and public schools. It appears quite conflicting and challenging to use several mother tongues as MoI against the powerful imperial effects of EMI. Moreover, due to the increasing trend of EMI, Nepali as a national and most popular language in public school education and other domains in Nepal is also facing challenges to retain as MoI in school education. Currently, EMI has been criticized by many national and international scholars as the barrier to the development of quality in school education in Nepalese context. To address these issues, Nepal government has brought multilingual approach in some of his policies that has aimed to keep Nepali as mainstream language of instruction, mother tongues instruction in primary classes (as per the situation demands) and English as the subject to be taught from early years of school (MoE, 2016). However, the recent School Sector Development Plan (SSDP:2016-2023) has not mentioned any impulsion on private schools that are increasing with EMI. Moreover, many of the newly formed provincial and local governments also look to be in favor of implementing EMI in both private and public schools in their regions.

In this inter-conflicting situation, at first, it is required to study and understand how a language as MoI plays its role in developing the quality of education. Then the study needs to identify and explore the most suitable language policy that can contribute in developing the nation through promoting quality of education in the given context. Therefore, this study has comparatively analyzed and discussed the possibility of using mother tongues, English and Nepali as MoI in school education through five dimensions of quality education.

## **1.7 Understanding the key terms**

### **Mother tongues / Local languages**

The study has considered all the local languages as Mother tongues. Most of them have been identified as national languages by the Central Bureau Statistics (CBS) in Nepal. However, Mother tongues have less scope, low community speakers and little resources among other identified national languages. Rest of the unidentified spoken and informal forms of languages can be understood as dialects.

### **Medium of Instruction (MoI) / Language of education**

These both terms convey the same meanings in this study. MoI refers to any language that serves as the medium to run entire educational activities. The word 'instruction' may indicate to teaching or learning activity only, but here, it refers to the whole school education including from policy making to its implementation. Through the language which this whole educational activity is conducted, is taken as MoI in this study.

### **Quality of education / Quality education/ quality in education**

These terms may infer different meanings. However, they have been used frequently in this research conveying the same concept of quality education. Although they are phrased differently, they mean the same in this study.



## 1.8 Structure of thesis

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. The first chapter includes the background information, research problem and statement of the purpose of the study, research questions and objectives of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, rationale of the study and structure of the thesis respectively.

The Second chapter presents the overview of the multi diversity in the Nepalese context in terms of socio-economic, cultural and linguistic aspects. It also provides brief outline of current political context and school education in Nepal. Furthermore, it discusses more in depth about the development of languages as MoI and present challenges to implement the MoI effectively in the context of Nepalese school education. The main purpose of this chapter is to lay the foundation for the research by giving background overview of how the languages and school education are constructed in Nepalese context.

The Third chapter reveals the review of literatures. It is one of the important chapters that provides different perspectives on language use in education. It also puts detailed information on recent government proposed policy on language of school education in Nepal. It also discusses the situation of Mother tongue education and growing influence of EMI in schools of Nepal. It also reviews the literatures to understand the quality of education.

The fourth Chapter presents the analytical discussion giving more information on the role of language as MoI in developing the quality of education. The chapter describes and discusses the quality framework, its principles and analyses different literatures to finally propose and use the conceptual framework for exploring the role of language as MoI in quality education.

The fifth chapter describes the research design and methodology applied for the study. This chapter primarily deals the justification of rationale of data collection, data collection procedure and analysis process. Similarly, it provides information about research site, sample and sampling technique used for the study. Moreover, it explains highlighting the data processing, data quality strategy and ethical consideration.

The sixth chapter depicts the main findings of the study based on the collected data from the fieldwork and analysis of official documents. It presents the findings in different headings as themes.

The seventh chapter discusses the findings analytically taking the reference of the research questions and analytical framework used for the study.

The eighth chapter includes the concluding remarks and the ninth chapter presents the recommendation for the further research.

## **2 The Nepalese context**

Nepal is known for its multi diversity in the world. It shows diversity in language, socio-economic culture, ethnicity, religion, geography, and so many other aspects. Out of many aspects of diversity in Nepal, it is relevant to discuss the socio-economic, cultural, and linguistic diversity in a greater extent for creating the background for further analysis and discussion on the topic. The chapter also includes the sub chapters that provide brief overviews on the recent constitutional context, school education, school types, development and challenges of MoI in Nepal.

### **2.1 Socio- economic and cultural diversity**

Nepal exhibits vast cultural and socio-economic diversity. Culturally, Nepal is a famous country with more than a dozen sites listed as the world cultural heritage. Moreover, in its long history, cultural tolerance has been one of its foremost features and it continues to celebrate and sustain the cultural diversity that combines spiritual values, mythologies, and wonders of nature through numerous festivals. Among the population of Nepal about 75 percent people belong to agricultural households. Mostly, they raise livestock, poultry, and produce crops as the main source of income. The other sources income in Nepal include wage income, non-farm enterprises, non-agricultural rental income, remittance received, and owner-occupied housing consumption and so on. An average total per capita income in Nepal is around 398.633USD recent years. Even this low per capita income varies geographically as it is greater in urban areas than in rural areas (NLSS, 2010/11). Overall, the report shows that Nepal ranks as one of the poorest, least developed and least industrialized nations in the world with 20.16 percent of the total population living below poverty line (CBC, 2011). Denoting the relevance of the role of language for national development of Nepal, Baldauf and Kaplan (2000) commented as; “This poverty and lack of development is a critical aspect of language planning and policy in Nepal” (p.6).

## 2.2 Linguistic diversity

Along with multiethnic, multireligious, and multicultural identity, Nepal exhibits diversity in the use of languages. Last National Census (2011) shows that there are altogether 123 different languages are used in Nepal as mother tongues. Historically, languages spoken in Nepal have four families or origins as Dravidian, Austroasiatic, Sino-Tibetan and Indo-Aryan. Out of these four groups Sino- Tibetan (36) and more, extensively Indo-Aryan (14) languages are largely in use in Nepal. Among the mostly spoken mother tongue languages: Nepali (44.6%), Maithali (11.7%), Bhojpuri (5.98%), and Tharu (5.77%) belong to Indo-Aryan family (National Population and Housing Census, 2011 & Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000). Nepali has been used as as lingua franca for the last 150 years and serve as official language of the country serving as the language of government, the law courts, trade, military and the police. It serves a local language that is most spoken, written, and used by the people. Above all nearly, 50 percent of the population is using it as their first language and another 20 to 30 percent of the people are said to be bilingual in Nepali (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, p.21).

## 2.3 Current constitutional development

Nepal was declared as an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive, democratic, socialism oriented, federal democratic republican state by the constitution of Nepal. (The constitution, 2016). The constitution has also recognized the multiethnic, multilingual, multireligious, multicultural identities of the Nepalese people and expressed the national interest to safeguard their freedom, sovereignty, nationality, independence and dignity of Nepal. The Nepali language in *Devnagari* script, has been accepted as the official language of Nepal in the Constitution but all the languages spoken as mother tongue in Nepal are said to be treated as languages of the nation. Moreover, it has also been given right to federal state to decide one or more than one languages of nation as its official language(s), in addition to Nepali language.

The Constitution (2016) has formed three levels as federal, state and local levels to deliver the law, order and administration in the country. 77 districts of the country have been grouped into seven states each having village bodies, municipalities and district assemblies under the local level. All three levels of government body seem to have kept education in their priority.

As among the policies relating to basic needs of citizens (The constitution, p.36-37), four main policies on education have been stated with priority. They are as follows:

- to prepare human resources that are competent, competitive, ethical, and devoted to national interests, while making education scientific, technical, vocational, empirical, employment and people-oriented,
- to make private sector investment made in education service-oriented by regulating and managing such investment, while enhancing the State's investment in the education sector,
- to make higher education easy, qualitative and accessible, and free gradually.

In federal level, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has full duty and responsibility to decide, plan, implement, supervise and evaluate the national education programs and policies. It consists of several main branch and sub-branch offices to execute the functions of the Ministry of Education on federal or national level. In state level, Education Development Directorate has been formed in each state under the provincial ministry of social development to further design, implement and monitor the national education programs set by the Ministry of Education and its bodies. Each Education Directorate functions through their sub offices to fulfil the needs of education in their states. For local level, Government of Nepal has formed 753 local bodies in 77 districts throughout the country. In each district, Education Development and Co-ordination Unit is responsible for implementing the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) and coordinating with municipalities to find the solution of contemporary problems in education. Each local body has got their clear rights and responsibility to manage basic and secondary education. Furthermore, even Wards under local bodies have also their rights to run ECED, informal education, Community Learning Centers (CLC) and local public libraries (MoE, 2017).

## **2.4 School education and its objectives**

Aligning the international practice and current national educational policy, the school education has been structured into two levels. They are basic and secondary level. Every citizen can access to basic education as their right. Basic level starts from ECED classes and finishes at grade eight. Secondary level extends from grade nine to twelve. Technical Education and Vocational Training (TEVT) stream also starts from grade nine.

Basic level of school education has been taken as the foundation of the school education in the educational policy in Nepal. It aims to be child friendly and help to develop inherent capacities of children through education. The basic education should promote and preserve the nationality and produce socially and environmentally responsible citizen. It mainly focuses on how children can effectively exchange their ideas and opinions logically and practically in different course of their individual and social life. It aims to aware the children about their society and surrounding and enable them to identify, analyze and solve the problems of their daily life.

Secondary level of school education looks more responsible and preparatory for producing skilled manpower needed for the development of the country. It has emphasized on recognizing the national traditions, culture, social resources and democratic values for contributing the entire development of the nation. It has mainly aimed to develop the skills of language for their active participation in daily and social life. It has also shown its importance on developing the effective communication and social contact through the confident use of language skills in daily lives. The secondary education also aims to enable students to identify the relationship between science and technology and encourage them to use the knowledge for developing the technologies for the benefits of human beings.

## **2.5 Types of school**

According to the Flash report II published by Department of Education (DoE, 2016), the types of schools are as follow:

“Generally, schools are categorized into two types – community (public) schools and institutional (private) schools. Community schools have three categories such as community aided (schools, which are fully supported by the government for teachers’ salary and other expenses), community-managed (schools, which are fully supported by the government for teachers’ salary and other funds but their management responsibility lies with the community), and community-unaided (schools, which are either getting partial support or no support from the government). Institutional schools are supported by parents and trustees. In addition to the above categories, there are some schools running as religious schools such as Madarasa, Gumba/Vihar and Ashram/Gurukul, which have received support from the government when they have been mainstreamed into the formal education system by registering with the Department of Education (DOE) and following the Education Act and Regulation.” (p.11)

According to the report of Parajuli (2019) published in Martin Chautari, the total existing both community and institutional schools are 35,601 in number throughout the country. Majority of the schools are community school. They are 29,032 which is 82 percent of total schools in Nepal. The report further says 82 percent that is 6.1 million students out of total 7.4 million study in community schools in the country. This data shows that greater number of students are studying in community schools.

Most institutional or private schools in Nepal offer school education in English medium. Even in pre-school level, private schools entirely use English medium. On the other hand, most of the community schools have Nepali medium education. But recently, community schools shifting their medium into English are increasing in the country. Some of the community schools have completely shifted into English medium from their primary classes. Some community schools are running both English and Nepali medium simultaneously (Ojha, 2018). Currently, due to the government policy of adopting Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Program (MTBMP), all the schools have also the right of introducing and practicing local languages as mediums of instruction up to class three but there are very few community schools and hardly any private school exist in the country which are following this policy in practice due to different factors (Awasthi, 2015, Phyak, 2013).

## **2.6 Development of languages as MoI**

There was a history of Hindu Vedic education in Nepal when education used to be offered in Gurukul, Motherasa, Gumbas, temples. Buddhist and Hindu manuscripts written in Sanskrit language were in use education and taught in Sanskrit language as medium (Educational Information, 2017). Gradually, it is believed that other Indo-Aryan languages developed as ‘children language’ from Sanskrit including Nepali spread in Nepal in different parts of the country starting from the western hills across the valleys of Nepal (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, Prasai, 2011). In 1854, English medium instruction was started in Nepal with the establishment of Durbar High school by the Rana prime minister “to privilege the elites and reinforce the despotic rule of Rana government” (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, p.16). This act tipped the balance in favor of English education and established its supremacy over the traditional type of Sanskrit-based education and later this school became the first English medium school in Nepal named as Durbar (palace) English school. In 1885AD, it was shifted to present Durbar High school in Kathmandu, but the education was only in the access of

elites. Students used to go to India for their higher education in English medium. In 1918AD, English medium and western curriculum college, Tri Chandra college, was founded to provide the higher education mainly to the graduates of Durbar High school. Later, Hindi and Nepali medium schools were established in order to train 'high ranking males' in 'clerical skills' to meet the needs of Rana government (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000, pp.15-17).

After the decline of Rana regime and following the reforms of 1950AD, there were some changes seen in the education system that increased English schools and colleges. In 1956, Tribhuvan University (the oldest and the biggest university of Nepal at present) was established in the advice of United States adviser, which offered higher education only in English language. After a decade, in the year 1969AD, the Nepal government came with language planning policy, which made Nepali language as a main language of instruction from elementary to higher level but, still the subjects like Maths, Science and Technology in the higher level were taught in English only (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000, p.20). By 1985, there were many schools and colleges opened and started providing education both in Nepali and English medium but after following the economic liberation policies since 1990, private boarding schools with EMI have increased surprisingly throughout Nepal in the hopeful consideration of quality education even in the lack of any prerequisite background for English medium instruction (, Phyak, 2013, Sah and Li, 2018, p.110).

Moreover, in recent few years, the need of using the mother tongue-based education at primary education is increasing in Nepal. Giving the consent to different International Human Rights declaration and Global Educational Policies, Nepal has also provisioned the right of Mother Tongue Education in recent national educational policies, but the studies show that there are many challenges in implementing such policies throughout Nepal at present (Awasthi, 2015, Phyak, 2013).

## **2.7 Challenges in implementing MoI**

According to the recent Educational Information of Nepal (2017), 123 different national languages are spoken among 125 different ethnic groups throughout Nepal. There are around 10 different religions followed by the Nepalese people in Nepal. This diversity is even more in practical ground. The high migration of people towards cities has increased the population in the cities of Nepal as currently, 42 percent of the total population lives in urban areas. The



population in the major city like Kathmandu is rapidly growing at the rate of 4.785 percent every year. This increased migration within the country has given rise to the formation of multilingual classrooms in most of the schools in Nepal. Besides few of the remotest parts of the country, most of the schools both private and public schools have classrooms with linguistically and culturally diverse learners and teachers. This situation is even present at less urban district schools due to mixed social habitation. This trend of multilingual and multicultural orientation almost exists in every sector of Nepal. In this context of multi-diverse educational setup throughout the country, it is challenging to formulate and implement a suitable language policy.

At present, English and Nepali are the two significant mediums of instruction in Nepal. In some of the districts, primary education program in mother tongue is also implemented but the program is not so popular and widespread in Nepal although the Local Self Government Act 1998, Education Act 2002, Education Regulations 2002 and Curriculum of Primary Education 2007 have made the legal provision of imparting primary education in mother tongues. The government had also targeted to meet the national EFA goals by running Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Program (MTBMP) in 7500 schools by 2015 but the progress is not satisfactory (The Rising Nepal, 2018).

Moreover, English as an international language has become a dominant language in all private boarding schools and colleges. Nepali is the medium of instruction in public schools as a national official language but due to the high dominance and influence of English medium instruction, the government schools are also adopting English medium instruction policy from basic level (Gyawali and Khadka, 2016, MoE, 2018, Ojha, 2018,). Moreover, English has already maintained its dominance in higher education in Nepal. In this regard, there is a great dilemma and confusion among policy makers to implement the suitable policy on medium of instruction for the development of education in Nepal.

However, Ministry of Education (2016) has published School Sector development plan (SSDP: 2016-2023) recently and adopted the multilingual educational approach in school education to address the diversities and present need of promoting mother tongue languages. The plan has insisted the provincial governments of Nepal to form a Language Commission in every province within a year of commencement of The Constitution to ensure the representation of the provinces in using the mother tongue based multi education. The plan says, “The sequence of the languages as medium of instruction and /or mother tongues will

depend on the part of communities served by individual schools” (MOE, 2016). After estimating the language communities in Nepal, the SSDP (MOE, 2016, p.27) identified three types of schools and gave the direction to adapt the use of the languages accordingly:

“Type 1 schools are made up mainly of learners who are homogenously Nepali speaking on entry to ECED or PPE (Pre-Primary Education) or grade 1 (estimated as accounting for 60-70% schools). In these schools, no interventions other than Early Grade Reading (EGR) and effective English language teaching are needed.”

“Type 2 schools are made up mainly of learners that homogenously speak a language other than Nepali as their mother tongue on entry to ECED or PPE or grade 1 (estimated as 10-15% of schools). For these schools, the mother tongue will play a prominent role in children’s learning in ECED/ PPE through grade 3. Progressively, their mother tongue will be supported and developed as well as used to assist children to transition to Nepali as medium of instruction.”

“Type 3 schools are made up mainly of learners with diverse language backgrounds with no common mother tongue on entry to ECED or PPE or grade1(estimated as 15-20% of schools). For these schools, all the languages will be valued, but Nepali language will be used as medium of instruction throughout the basic and secondary school. Children who do not speak Nepali on entry will be given additional support to learn it as second language and develop their skills in Nepali as medium of instruction. Special attention will go to comprehension as a part of EGR program and English will be taught as subject from grade 1.”

## **2.8 Summary**

The chapter has presented the brief overview of socio economic, cultural and linguistic diversity of Nepalese context. The country has long way to go to reach the developed stage since the majority of population still depend on agriculture. The industrial progress is not even satisfactory to increase the per capita income. However, it is rich in its cultural and linguistic diversity. About 123 different languages have been identified in the national census report and many more dialects are used in different places. Due to its low economic development, education is often criticized and the issues of medium of instruction especially in school education is raised lately. This chapter has also briefly informed the present constitutional development and presented the challenges in implementing MoI in school education in Nepal.

### **3 Literature review**

At first, the chapter analyses the international perspectives on language of education to explore various dimensions related to language and its role in education. In second section, it explores and discusses the role of significant languages as MoI in the context of Nepal. Final section brings different national and international dimensions of quality education to understand and discuss the quality in general. The chapter aims to explore and present the literatures that helps to understand the quality of education and also explore the significance of languages as MoI in the context of Nepal.

#### **3.1 International perspectives on language of education**

Every nation in global society has faced the rapid changes either implicitly or explicitly through globalization. All these nations in the world have been comparing and competing in different perspectives with one another to attain the greater level of development possible. When it comes to globalization, the western developed countries seem to be taking the main role for creating the global policies by designing the multilateral international organizations throughout the world. The governments of poor or less developed countries generally adopt those policies for ensuring the global development in their countries. Many international agencies are mainly working in the field of education and development. UN system organizations such as UNICEF, World Bank, UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, etc are some of the leading global organizations, which play the important role to develop and disseminate the global educational policies throughout the world. Child rights, Women' rights, Rights for the people with disability, education rights for all are few examples of human rights, which govern most of the international policies. The Human Rights Declaration (1948, Article 26) has clearly stated:

“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all based on merit.”

Jomtien Declaration (1990) on Education for All (EFA) was the detailed educational program to ensure the human rights mentioned in the article. EFA framework has included many goals and strategies, which reflect the humanitarian approach. Free primary education, equality and equity, inclusive education, indigenous culture and mother tongue use are few of them. Such

international human rights related declarations have specifically raised awareness and put impact on low income countries like Nepal to develop their language policies (The Dakar Framework, 2000, Education for All GMR, 2015, Watson, 2007). Especially the minority community languages have started to come in the attention of the government and got rooms in different national policy documents (The Constitution of Nepal and MoE, 2016).

Majority of the documents and researches happened in the field of education advocate for the use of mother tongues in the primary stage of educational development. There are two main reasons mainly reflected among the many of the documents for this (Awasthi, 2004, 2015, EFA, 2015, Khubchandani, 2007, Phyak, 2013, Pinnock, 2009, Watson, 2007,).

- Mother tongues are the most familiar language for the children to learn and hence through such medium they can perform well in education.
- Using Mother tongues as medium in education helps to preserve and promote the indigenous languages and culture.

Language has been taken as one of the fundamental factors that can affect the quality of education in many ways (UNESCO, 2015). Therefore, effective language planning is one of the necessary concerns for most of the nations at present. Mostly, it has become the area of great research and development in the multilingual settings of poor and undeveloped countries because language is seen to be associated with national development (Pinnock, 2009, UNESCO, 2015). It is advisable in multilingual settings to choose and implement the language in education policies by taking the account of “inter-related domains of the school, home/community and wider education system” (Leon, 2016, p.422). To address the complexities of the multilingual situations, most of such states are following multilingual education programs. Generally, it is mostly practiced as three language policies as multilingual policy. Local languages or mother tongues are kept in the primary classes for literacy development and increasing the access of students in school; State languages or national languages plays the role of main medium of instruction in upper school level and mostly English as international language is kept as medium for higher general and technical education. private institutions or schools solely free to adopt any medium from the beginning of school and almost all such private schools prefer running schools in English medium. (Annamalai, 2006, Bhaskaran, 2017, MOE of Nepal, 2016,). Currently in multilingual contexts, the educational policies have given more emphasis on incorporating the tribal or

minority languages as Mother Tongue (MT) to decrease the drop-out rates of the children at the early stage of their schooling.

However, due to the globalized market influence, English has become the most prominent language and parents always dream to send their children in English medium as soon as they can economically afford it. The trend is quite common and likely to increase in the future as well. In this situation, Bhaskaran (2017, p.212) further suggests not to debate between MT and English medium instruction instead put efforts on maintaining the multilingual characteristics of society in general and in classrooms through integrated linguistic endeavors.

“Education/ language policies can only provide a larger framework, but the teachers and teacher trainers including the higher education in India should work in an integrated manner to address the issue of language proficiency of MT, and the international connection language primarily and provide avenues for those who interest in national language. If the unhealthy debate between MT and English as medium of instruction continues, children especially the majority who depend on the government institutions will suffer in the process”.

## **3.2 Scopes of languages as MoI**

This section begins with elaboration on the scope and development of Nepali as MoI in Nepalese school education. It also explains what the situation and possibility of developing Mother tongue-based education is in Nepal in recent few years. It also briefly discusses the development of English as MoI in the Nepalese context.

### **3.2.1 Nepali as MoI**

Nepali as a language has a long historical origin in Nepal. Before it got recognition as a language for education in 1969, it was used as a language of communication and other formal and informal domains of national affairs before and after the unification of Nepal as a single kingdom led by late Gorkha king, Prithvi Narayan Shah from 1768 to 1857 AD. As written by Baldauf and Kaplan (2000), “the language of the Gorkha kings was the Indo- Aryan language, Gorkhali, now called Nepali” (p.15). Even before Nepali, Sanskrit as a mother language of most of the Indo- Aryan languages including Nepali, was in use for about 2500 years ago for learning the Buddhism during and after the lifetime of Gautam Budhha in Nepal (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, p.13). With the passes of time, government policies and educational reforms

developed Nepali language as an official national language and language of education. National Education System from 1971 to 1976 was implemented in Nepal, and Nepali was decided to be “the sole preferred medium of instruction in all of the national schools” (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, p.20).

Aligned with the long historical importance of Nepali, the last National census of Nepal (2011) has identified it as a highly spoken mother tongue; nearly 50 percent of the population in Nepal use it as their first language and other 20 to 30 percent of the population are found be bilingual speakers of Nepali (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, MoE, 2016).

Nepali as a highly spoken mother tongue, has comparatively more resources than many other mother tongues spoken in Nepal (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000). The long use of Nepali as an official language by the government of Nepal and its high access in national education, constitution, media, politics, entertainment, and so many other domains has increased the resourcefulness and usage of Nepali language more than any other mother tongue languages identified in Nepal by National Census 2011. Moreover, Maithili (11.7%), Bhojpuri (5.98%) and Tharu (5.77%) being some of the widely spoken mother tongues after Nepali requires even more efforts and time than Nepali for using them as first language in education due to the scarcity of large number of speakers, other external domains and most importantly literary resources (Yadav, 1992). Baldauf and Kaplan (2000, p.29) citing Yadav (1992), puts Nepali language in his priority for the possibility of using it as first language education by analyzing the following criteria:

- “The linguistic demography or the number and percentages of speakers of the language;
- The literary status of the language in terms of as writing system and the availability of printed texts, grammars, dictionaries, folk and other literatures”.

Nepali, as one of the influential national language of Nepal, has been functioning as a national lingua franca for inter communication between the people of different places, languages, and ethnicity throughout Nepal for more than 150 years. The Constitution of Nepal in 1959 and 1962 after the Second World War provided the national language status to Nepali language and expressed that it was necessary for uniting the country; being Nepali as a common national language (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, p.19). In this regard, Baldauf and Kaplan (2000) further mentioned the rationale of central government as, ‘the government policy stressed the importance of adopting a native Nepalese language (as opposed to Indian Hindi

or English) to unify the nation and to establish strong national identity. It is the most logical, practical, and financially feasible language to be used as the language of wider communication within multilingual Nepal” (p.21). Here, it is necessary to consider the existence of many other linguistic communities and their different mother tongue identities in Nepal. In this situation, on one hand, many of the language researchers view that adopting Nepali as a sole MoI can harm the development of minority languages; on the other hand, they have a doubt in handling the education in mother tongue with lack of resources and utility in Nepal (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000 and Gyawali & Khadka, 2016).

In this regard, the famous nationalist of India, late Mahatma Gandhi put his remarks on the importance of developing several mother tongues maintaining the solidarity with the National language that was Hindi in the context of India. Even though, it was the part of Indian movement of *Rashtra Bhasa* (National language), it seems more relevant in Nepal at present context. Famous essayist and book author Brock (1995, p.22) included Gandhi’s saying in one of his essays as,

“The movement should in no way be confused with the spread of Hindi or Hindustani as the lingua franca. Hindi or Hindustani is not designed to replace the provincial languages, but is intended to supplement them, and to be used for interprovincial contact but one script is undoubtedly designed to displace all the different scripts to render it easy for people belonging to different provinces to learn provincial languages. Love of Hindi as *Rashtrabhasa* must go hand in hand with love of provincial languages”.

The Constitution of Nepal (2016) has also declared Nepali as an official language throughout the country. Recognizing all the mother tongues as national languages, the Constitution has given full authority to every state to choose any one or more than one national language spoken by most people of that state and use it or them as their official language(s) in addition to the Nepali language. The government of Nepal has already proposed to use Nepali language as mainstream language of school education due to its familiarity and high usage in Nepal (MoE, 2016). This information shows that Nepali as a mother tongue holds the greater importance in Nepalese context.

### **3.2.2 English as MoI**

English as an international lingua franca, is rapidly growing its high demands almost everywhere in the world. It is playing the leading role in international trades, communication, politics, economy, education, entertainment, culture and so on due to the growing trend of globalization throughout the world. The widest coverage, ongoing development, and global promotion of English language have influenced and affected many countries in the world in different ways (Fernandez, 2005). In Nepal, as one of the South Asian undeveloped country, the influence of English language has been growing rapidly throughout the country in many sectors including education for the last two decades.

English language was brought in Nepal as the medium of western education and limited to the most elite people in power for many years but gradually, it became available for the less elite people through private English medium schools and colleges between 1950AD to 1970AD (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000). In the beginning, there were many missionary and protestant schools offering English education and promoting Christianity in Nepal but after 1970, they were given over to government and as a nationalization process all the classes are converted into Nepali except English, Mathematics, and Science (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000). After 1970s, the official policy of Nepal, declared English as the international language and the language of science and technology. Gradually, at present English has reached to the dominant position in the Nepalese society and it is found “essential to the modernization, development and internationalization of Nepal, and continues to play an important role in higher education” (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000, p.35).

Despite having the language policies which emphasized the role of national languages in educational practice of Nepal (MOE, 2016), English language has been widely used as medium of instruction and it is increasing in almost every sector and field in Nepal. More and more private boarding schools are increasing claiming to give quality education by using English instruction (Shah and Li, 2018). Every boarding school claim to have their own modern pedagogy often related with English medium instruction. There is a high competition between the private English schools in terms of infrastructure, teaching methods, language environment, school fee, advertisement and so on especially in cities. Despite of several practical challenges, most of the people want to enroll their children in English medium school. People choose and decide the private boarding schools according to their capacity.



Those who are geographically and economically underprivileged only send their children in Nepali medium public school in Nepal.

The long political instability and conflicts in last few decades have made the people more pessimistic and opportunistic. Moreover, due to the increased influence of global economy and development at present, English has become even more influential and popular language than the past. Many people think that using English will lead them towards the western development and prosperity in their country or abroad (Shah and Li, 2018). As a result, many private English medium schools/colleges, language institutes & consultancies for foreign education, NGOs/INGOs, international business companies, English channels and newspapers, English trainers, foreign languages/cultures, western teaching learning pedagogies, foreign technology, etc. have got very high demand and these entities are increasing more rapidly in the cities of Nepal. Villagers are migrating towards towns to grab the opportunities in any possible way in these areas. There has developed a great desire to learn English to be able to utilize the modern luxuries of life. The national news and study reports show that the number of youngsters going to English speaking countries for higher education and job opportunities is increasing every year (Mathema, The Rising Nepal, 2018). In this regard, Gurung (2015, p.528) explained some figures in the article as, “Going abroad to study used to be the nearly exclusive privilege of Kathmandu’s well to-do, today it’s turned into just another conduit for out-migration. As per estimates, more than 200,000 Nepalese aged 18-24 have left the country in the past 10 years. So far this year the Ministry of Education has received 29,000 applications for ‘no objection’ letters required for a student visa – double the number for the same period last year. And that does not include students going to India.”

### **3.2.3 Mother tongue-based education**

As stated before, Nepal is known for its linguistic diversity in the world. Besides few languages, most of the languages are minority mother tongues that have very limited speakers, resources and very few domains of use (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000, Yogendra, 2017). The government of Nepal had understood the situation and made several attempts in the past to develop the use of these mother tongues through different agendas (Dhakal, 2015,

UNESCO Report, 2015, The Interim Constitution, 2007). The mother tongues were given more importance and the government made plans to use them in early education after the universal declarations of the human rights and the EFA movement in 1990AD. According to the recently formed High Level National Education Commission (HLNEC, 2018), the Nepal Government initiated the mother tongue education policy in 1992AD and started working on it since 1997AD. The commission report also informs that textbooks from class one to five have been prepared in 25 minority languages so far. The newly made constitution of Nepal (2016) has already declared all the spoken languages in Nepal as the national languages and given the rights to the people to preserve, promote and develop their local languages. Ministry of Education (2016) has identified three different types of schools based on the language use throughout the country in the current SSDP (2016-2023). The federal government has encouraged the local government to identify the language need of the community and introduce the mother tongue medium primary education. The present government policy looks to be in the favor of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTBME) in schools of Nepal (Awasthi, 2015, MoE, 2016).

Understanding the importance of mother tongue, many recent international and national educational policies have demanded for the identification and gradual development of the national mother tongues. Several recent studies and reports on language policy and planning indicate the development of mother tongue education in the multilingual contexts of Nepal (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, Gyawali & Khdaka, 2016, Shrestha, 2017 and Yogendra, 2017). Many of the policies and documents even reflect the role of mother tongue use in education as medium of instruction for ensuring the quality (Awasthi, 2004, 2015, EFA Report, 2015, Ojha, 2018, Phyak, 2013, MoE, 2016). Relating the importance of using mother tongues in education, the UNESCO Expert Report (1953:11) as cited by Khubchandani (2003, pp.239-254) says,

“Psychologically, it (mother tongue) is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium”.

However, many challenges and multiple issues exist in the ground reality to transform the MTBME in the present school context of Nepal (Awasthi, 2004, 2015, EFA Report, 2015,

MoE, 2016, Ojha, 2018, Phyak, 2013,). Dhakal (2015, p.91) points out the gap between the policy documents and the reality of the school context as:

“Even after the legal provisions are made in national documents, the MLE programs are surrounded by a number of challenges. The heterogeneous nature of classroom situation and the beliefs and attitudes of the parents towards MLE are two main challenges for its effective implementation”.

Phyak (2013, p.14) explained in his study how the indigenous languages have started facing more challenges after the change in Nepali only language policy as:

“when resistance against the Nepali-only MOI policy, in the changed political context, has begun to evolve, the dominant elites moved to promote the English-only MOI policy, both in private and public schools, reproducing the middle-class-literate habitus and marginalizing the dominated groups’ cultural and linguistic capital”.

MoE (2018) in HLNEC has enlisted various challenges in the present context to deliver MTBME as lack of teaching learning materials, lack of human resources, attraction of parents towards English medium schools and above all the lack of dictionary, scripts, grammar of many minority mother tongues. It has even found such schools where more than 12 mother tongues having children study in one school. In most of other schools 2 to 5 mother tongues need to be addressed in primary education (p.222-224). Nevertheless, the Commission has proposed to encourage the mother tongues in local level, teach English as subject only and follow the single policy for medium of instruction in both institutional and community schools.

### **3.3 National interpretation and expectation of quality education**

Generally, the word ‘quality’ refers to the state of being good. The quality is found to be applicable in various fields and it has its own characteristics according to the subjects of concern. In education also, it has relation with different factors and can be defined through different dimensions and perspectives. Moreover, the education of any nation has very important role to develop the country and its people and it is believed that quality in education contributes to fulfil the national aspirations of development. Therefore, quality in education is one of the key concerns of any nation in the world. The commission report of MoE (2018, p.193) in Nepal mentions that the perspectives of individual, family, society and nation differ

when it comes to quality in education. For a nation, the education that can achieve average national learning outcomes, develop globally competent citizens, contribute and promote the national development is said to have quality; for a society, education that can promote culture, social norms, co-operation and integrity among people is said to have quality; for family the quality in education should empower the people, makes career for earning, preserve traditions and for an individual, the quality in education should increase the employment and helps to have an independent life.

Every nation has their national goals of education. Nepal has also set altogether 12 national goals of education (MoE,2017). Some of the primary goals include “encourage the people for preserving the national culture, integrity, identity; develop the individual’s hidden abilities, utilize local and national resources for various jobs and profession, conserve the environment and promote national unity through socialization”. The national goals reflect the need of nation in the present context. National educational programs and structures are made to achieve such goals of the nation. The quality in education is also guided by such national and level wise educational goals. The education that can achieve the defined national and level wise goals is said to have quality according to national report (MoE, 2018). In the contemporary context, the quality education should contribute in development, help to utilize resources, address the current economic and social context, meet the objectives of curriculum, apply the gained knowledge, explore the hidden abilities of learners and fulfil the need of individual (MoE, 2018). The current School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) of Nepal has included quality as its core area to work upon. According to SSDP the quality is “to increase students’ learning through enhancing the relevance and quality of the learning environment, the curriculum, teaching and learning materials (including textbooks), teaching methods, assessment and examination” (MoE, 2016, p. 15).

University Grant Commission (UGC) and Education Review Office (ERO) are two main central institutional bodies under Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) to assess the various aspects related to quality of higher education and school education respectively. These governmental bodies have an important role to provide research-based evidences and feedbacks to the Ministry for planning and implementing the educational policies and programs. Education Review Office (ERO) founded in 2010, has been conducting different research-based assessment studies for the development of school

education in Nepal. The main objectives of ERO mentioned in the ERO Brochure 2017 are as follows:

- To provide feedback to the Ministry of Education and related agencies for educational policy and program design with the aim of improving quality of and enhancing equity in education through assessing the level of students learning achievement periodically.
- To carry out the performance audit of schools and other educational agencies/institutions regularly for providing evidence-based feedback to improve the quality of education through improved service delivery.
- To facilitate schools and other educational institutions for self-assessment of the performance.
- To assess the performance of programs and projects implemented in education.
- To generate evidence-based information to improve the quality of and equity in education by conducting researches and studies on contemporary issues in education.

Since the establishment, ERO has been conducting National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) test for various grades of school education periodically. Besides this ERO also conducts different research and study on various other indicators that affect the educational outcomes of the school education. It has identified altogether 26 indicators that affect the quality of school education. Some of the prominent indicators include; school infrastructure, teachers' professional competence, community participation, classroom teaching, student's evaluation, reading and teaching materials, curriculum, extracurricular activities, educational outcome, parents and teachers' satisfaction, etc. (MoE,2018).

Government of Nepal (GoN) has also worked in the line of ensuring the quality of education as a goal of EFA to meet the commitment made in 2000 at World Education Forum. The key strategies that GoN has worked for developing the quality of education for EFA are as below (UNESCO, 2015):

- Improvement of overall school infrastructure and environment
- Improved, life-relevant and practical curriculum
- A more encouraging assessment system, based on a liberal promotion policy for early grades

- Introduction of teacher certification and provision of pre- and in-service training

MoE (2018, p.194) in HLNEC reports that curriculum contains contents with objectives to fulfil the educational aspirations of individual, society and nation. Quality of education can be measured through analyzing the fulfilment of such aspirations. But the present Nepalese education system has been blamed for not creating the opportunity for employment, not encouraging to adopt the ancestral profession, not producing the civilized and ethical citizens. It is also blamed that the education has only become ‘the factory’ for sending the youth out of the country. Education could not contribute the all-round development of children through early childhood and primary education programs. There is a general worry about not producing human manpower that can utilize the national needs and opportunities. Moreover, due to the universal spread of English and trend of giving importance to the high score for getting jobs and higher education, using English medium in school education and getting higher score have been perceived as the crucial aspects of quality in the present context of Nepal. This kind of perception and the practice are the hinderances to the fulfilment of national education goals (MoE, 2018, p.195).

### **3.4 International dimensions of quality education**

Quality in education has been a very important topic of discussion and study nationally as well as internationally. Mostly the quality is made associated with many different aspects that contribute to achieve the anticipated outcomes of the education. Quality is all about finding the excellence in all different aspects which helps to achieve the “recognized and measurable learning outcomes” (UNESCO, GMR 2015, p.189). Before 1990, getting access to education was seen as an important aspect of development in education but the World Declaration for Education for All (EFA) in 1990 identified that only expanding access to education is not sufficient for enhancing the quality of education and therefore a decade later in 2000, Dakar Framework for Action made the declaration to keep quality in the center and it identified other crucial characteristics of quality in education.

“the Dakar Framework for Action declared that access to an education of good quality was the right of every child. It affirmed that quality was the heart of education, a fundamental determinant of enrolment, retention and achievement. It expanded the definition of quality to address desirable characteristics of learners, processes, facilities, learning materials, content, governance and management, and learning outcomes” (UNESCO, GMR 2015, p. 189).

Many international organizations like USAID, Save the Children, World Education and UNICEF have been working in the field of education worldwide based on “humanistic and indigenous approach” of Education that keeps quality education as the basic human right. The activities of such organizations give emphasis on identifying and promoting the learner’s characteristics, local resources and child friendly teaching learning activities as a part of quality in education. UNESCO (2005) discussed different traditions and approaches that affect the understanding of the quality in education. “Humanist and Indigenous approach” are few of these examples that have their own interpretation of quality in education. The ‘indigenous approach’ of quality in education is seemed to be applied with more importance in international educational declarations such as EFA and SDG as their goals to achieve quality in education especially for poor economic countries. UNESCO (2005, p.34) has mentioned the following characteristics of indigenous approach in education.

- indigenous approaches reassert the importance of education’s relevance to the socio-cultural circumstances of the nation and learner.
- Mainstream approaches imported from Europe are not necessarily relevant in very different social and economic circumstances.
- Assuring relevance implies local design of curriculum content, pedagogies and assessment.
- All learners have rich sources of prior knowledge, accumulated through a variety of experiences, which educators should draw out and nourish.
- Learners should play a role in defining their own curriculum.
- Learning should move beyond the boundaries of the classroom/school through non-formal and lifelong learning activities.

UNESCO (2005) has also identified various important aspects of quality in a detailed conceptual framework for understanding, monitoring and improving quality in education.

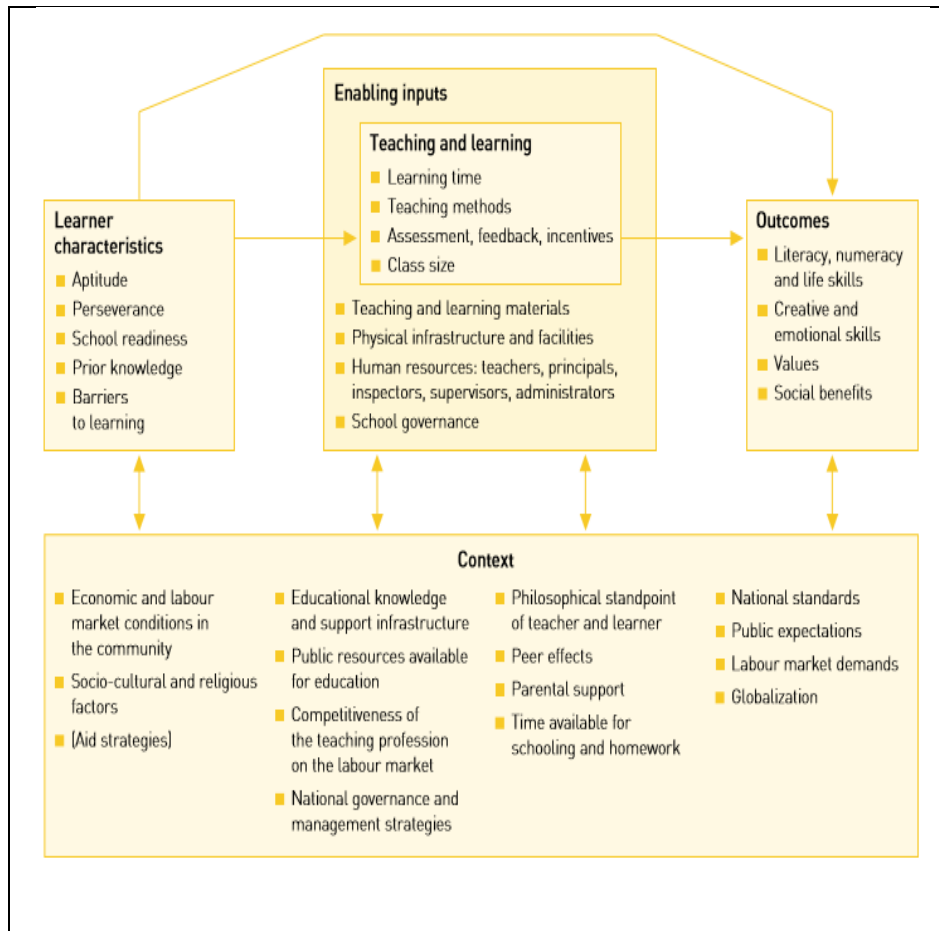


Figure 1 A framework for understanding education quality (UNESCO,2005, p36)

Among many international organizations working in the field of education in the world, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has been playing important role to define the quality of education through policy development and international assessment programs including the popular test named Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

“In relation to the assessment and measurement of quality education, the OECD has positioned itself as the leading educational assessment organization in the world. For example, to provide more accurate measures of quality education, the organization has developed and employed several outcome-based assessments, to include PISA for 15-year-olds (now the largest educational assessment in the world), Assessment for Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) for college age students, and the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIACC) for adults. In each of these instances the organization can assess ‘quality’ through measurable outcomes that can be used to rank educational systems” (Engel and Rutkowski, 2014, p.774).

OECD takes educational institutions or schools as primary agents to influence the educational outcomes. Schools through their input efforts strive to attain the desired outcomes of the



education. Both inputs and outcomes can be measured through the representative indicators. The outcome indicators achieved decides the success of the institutions and relationships between the indicators reveal several definitions of quality education (OECD, 2005.pp 12-13). PISA is one of the popular tests of OECD that is the aggregate result of such indicators variables and thus qualify the international ranking of participant countries' education. Within the assessment and other educational programs, OECD posits six key perspectives to define and assess the quality of education (Engel and Rutkowski, 2014). These perspectives or views are given in the table below.

Table 1 The OECD's defined perspectives and views of quality education (OECD, 2005, p. 15).

|  |
|--|
| <p><b>The productivity</b><br/>The success of the education system depends on the attainment of the desired outputs and outcomes. Output, outcome and impact indicators are the predominant type or even the only type of quality indicators that need to be monitored.</p> <p><b>The instrumental effectiveness</b><br/>The success of the education system is contingent upon the instrumental potential of certain levels and forms of inputs and processes ... Context, input and process indicators within the education system are selected for their expected educational outcomes.</p> <p><b>The adaptation perspective</b><br/>The success of the education system relies on the critical analysis of educational goals. According to this view, conditions that allow for change in education would receive emphasis as means, while labor market outcomes or cultural capital could be considered as ends.</p> <p><b>The equity perspective</b><br/>The success of the education system depends upon an equal or fair distribution of inputs, processes and outcomes among participants in education with different characteristics.</p> <p><b>The efficiency perspective</b><br/>The success of the education system depends upon achieving the highest possible outcomes at the lowest possible cost. This perspective is an elaboration of the productivity and instrumental effectiveness views.</p> <p><b>The disjointed view</b><br/>The success of the education system is judged upon whether specified elements of the education system are performing in an acceptable way or at an acceptable level. This is an alternative view to all other views that consider the combination of or the relationship between the various elements.</p> |
|--|

Barrett and Tikly (2013) argue that quality of education can be defined or evaluated in reference to the contexts or environments. Quality of education in any nation depends on the interactive interactions between three main environment levels. They are ‘policy environment’, ‘school environment’ and ‘home or community environment’. Development of quality in education is the result of successful intercommunication and collaboration between these environments.

“the quality of education can only be evaluated with reference to specific contexts. In general, it is possible to identify three levels of environments that together determine the quality of education - although these differ in their implications for education quality between and within countries as we explain. The policy environment tends to act most powerfully at the national level and, in the case of large nations, the provincial or state level, to set official curriculum, train teachers and regulate and monitor quality. The institutional environment of the school mediates and elaborates educational policy through processes of implementation. The home and community environment are possibly the most important in determining children's learning opportunities” (Barrett and Tikly, 2013, p. 15).

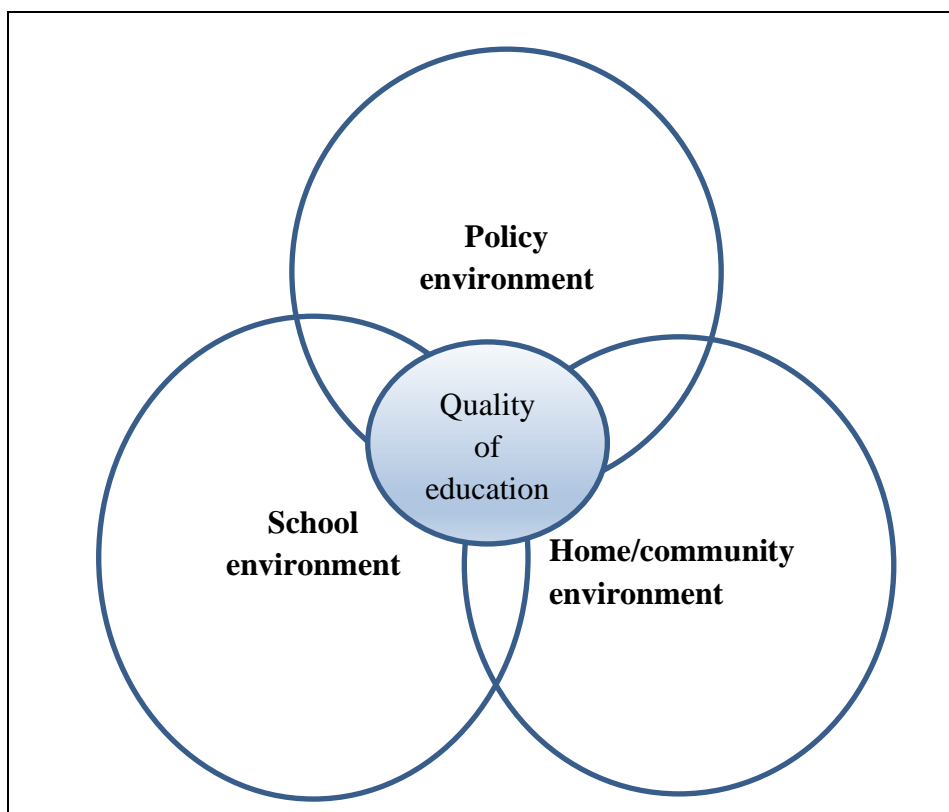


Figure 2 Interacting environments for education quality (Barrett and Tikly, 2013, p. 15)

### **3.5 Summary**

The chapter has explored the significant roles of languages in education through different national and international perspectives. The significant languages as MoI in Nepal have various issues in relation to address the multiple diversity and the present demands of people in Nepal. Mother tongues have been recently focused in national educational policies and dialogues to remove the quality related issues of education. English as international language continue to be favored language as MoI among people besides its criticism to affect the quality of education. Meanwhile, Nepalis as MoI has had a challenge in its effective implementation due to unstable language policy development in Nepal. The chapter has also explored various global perspectives related to different dimensions of quality education. Overall, the discussion in this chapter has provided the foundation to navigate the relationship of language as MoI and its effects in quality of education in Nepal.

## 4 Analytical Framework

This chapter has aimed to provide the understanding of the analytical framework to be used for finding the answers of research questions of this study. Therefore, the chapter introduces and discusses the quality framework used for this study in detail to explore and study the role of language as MoI in quality of education. To do this, all the five key dimensions of the Quality Framework (Barret, A. et al, 2006) have been discussed and related literatures on quality education have also been used to understand and explain the scopes of the key dimensions of the quality framework. Finally, the conceptual framework has been proposed to study the role of languages as MoI in developing the key dimensions of quality education in Nepal.

### 4.1 The Quality dimensions

Barret, A. et al (2006) had studied the key academic texts and documents of international agencies such as World Bank, UNESCO and EFA focused on the understanding the quality of education in low-income countries. Barrett and his co- researchers divided the references into two main approaches in their study to understand the quality. They are the humanist approach and the economist approach. The former approach concerns with the human rights, development and social change; the later approach is largely concerned with efficiency, effectiveness, and achievement of learning outcomes at reasonable cost. The review to these literatures shows the recurrent reference of five main components for the quality education. Therefore, as a conclusion final analytical framework presenting five key components has been designed to understand the concept of quality in education (Barret, A. et al, 2006).

According to this framework of quality, the five components or key dimensions of quality are Effectiveness, Efficiency, Equality, Relevance, and Sustainability. Although, it is very difficult to gain all these qualities together since they may interfere each other and vary according to the context, yet they are considered the crucial components of the quality education.

Effectiveness measures the outputs of the educational program. It indicates to what extent the objectives of education are achieved at the end in the form of outputs. Outputs of education can be related with internal and external effectiveness. These terms are generally used in

management and do not have much difference on surface, but they are discussed with different meanings in the context of quality education proposed by Barret, A. et al, 2006. According to them effectiveness largely points towards ends or successes or outputs in education. The output of education can be understood in the form of internal and external effectiveness. The internal effectiveness deals with the functioning of institution whereas the external effectiveness denotes individual and social development (Barret, A. et al, 2006). This dimension of quality includes the function of institutions, the policy, individual competence, identifying the local needs, mobilizing the local resources, higher education, national and international career opportunities, economic and social development issues ( Barret, A. et al, 2006, Barrett and Tikly,2013, MoE,2006, 2016, 2018, OECD, 2005, Tikly, 2011, UNESCO, 2005, 2015).These factors help to conceptualize and understand the effectiveness of the education as end and thus it has been kept as one of the crucial aspects of quality education.

Education is always seen as the main infrastructure to be developed to drive the nation through individual and national development in Nepal. National goals and priorities in education policy have emphasized several areas which can be included in external effectiveness. Some of the primary goals include encourage the people for preserving the national culture, integrity, identity; develop the individual's hidden abilities, utilize local and national resources for various jobs and profession, conserve the environment and promote national unity through socialization, etc. (MoE, 2017).

Efficiency deals with the inputs required to achieve the outputs. Mainly, efficiency is either monetary or non-monetary or both. Monetary efficiency concern with the financial investment whereas non- monetary (technical) efficiency ensures number of teachers, classroom facilities, textbooks and other resources, etc. Without efficient inputs, effective outputs cannot be expected as a rule. It applies in education too. It generally includes the inputs in education that are related with understanding, involvement, affordability, interaction, communication, access, and policy.

Equality arises from the concept of human rights principle that takes quality education as human right. Equality in education promote the identification of the disadvantaged groups varying with the contexts and categories such as disability, gender, poverty, ethnicity, social class, marginalized language, geographical distance etc. The concept of Equality is based on human development, social cohesion, and peace. It is also taken as the key dimension of quality education (Barret, A. et al, 2006). The issues of inclusiveness, accessibility, social

harmony, mutual co-operation and unity in diversity have been raised in national and international educational goals and strategies as the concerns of quality education in Nepal (MoE, 2016, 2018 and UNESCO, 2005, 2015).

Relevance is one of the integral components of quality that determines the previous parameters for the given context. It means education needs to be based on learners' characteristics, context and scopes of education. (Barrett, A. et al, 2006, p.10) Relevance of education provides freedom to stockholders to plan and implement their own policies for achieving context-based goals for their all-round development.

According to Barrett, A. et al (2006), sustainability has not been precisely explained and its role in education is yet not developed, even then it has been raised as key agendas in several global educational policies and literatures. Sustainability in education continuously ensures the development of four previous elements in education at present as well as in future. It is a "condition where each individual irrespective of gender, ethnicity, race, regional location achieve valued outcomes" (Barret, A. et al, 2006, p.15). It infers "ongoing adaptation and development of an individual in given context giving promotion to lifelong learning and capacity building" (Barret, A. et al, 2006). The focus is variously discussed in different national and international literatures based on quality education that reflect the sustainability. Most of them find individual's contextual development, adaptation and their abilities to mobilize the resources are some of the key aspects. Barrett and Tikly (2013) mention three environments as home, institution and policy that should be interlinked for achieving the quality. They also stated, "the home and community environment are possibly the most important in determining children's learning opportunities" (p. 15). UNESCO (2005) has recommended to use 'the indigenous approach' that is applied with more importance in international educational declarations such as EFA and SDG as their goals to achieve quality in education especially for poor economic countries (p.34). Therefore, sustainability of education appears to be the continuous and autonomous process of developing the community through individual development that require the combination of all other elements of quality we discussed so far.

These five components of the Quality framework have been mentioned and explained variously in the literatures I presented in the previous sections. Therefore, after overviewing those literatures on quality education, the five key dimensions have been further categorized

into smaller units for finding and discussing the role of language as MoI in developing the quality of education.

Table 2 Description of the key dimensions of the quality of education. (Source: Barret, A. et al, 2006, Barrett and Tikly, 2013, OECD, 2005, Tikly, 2011, UNESCO, 2005, Note: Developed by the author)

| <b>Quality Components</b> | <b>Units for Analysis</b>   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Effectiveness (Output)    | Resource Development (Individual & National)  |
| Efficiency (Input)        | Student / Parents factors (understanding, involvement, affordability, learning resources) |
|                           | Teacher / Institution factors (competence, access, economic resources, communication)     |
| Equality                  | Multiple diversity (socio-cultural, geographical, linguistic, disability)                 |
|                           | Access, mutual development, social cohesion and national unity                            |
| Relevance                 | Socio- cultural exposure, human and economic resources, resource development              |
|                           | National priority (access & livelihoods)  |
| Sustainability            | Inter-personal communication and collaboration  |
|                           | Resource development and mobilization   |

## 4.2 The conceptual design

The selection of suitable medium of instruction policy and its promotion play very important role in educational development of a country. Educational development signifies the development of the quality of education. However, the recent studies and global reports suggest no progress in quality of education especially in low incoming countries of Africa and South Asia (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2015, p.189). There are many factors considered to achieve the quality in education but here I would like to study how the suitable medium of instruction can increase the quality by taking the reference of the Quality Framework proposed by Barrett, A. et al (2006). The framework is based on analytical review of famous international literatures on educational quality. Here, I will relate and discuss the five key dimensions of quality against the language use as medium instruction in the context of Nepal. Therefore, I have proposed the following conceptual design to study the dimensions of quality framework against the use of languages as MoI in Nepalese school education.

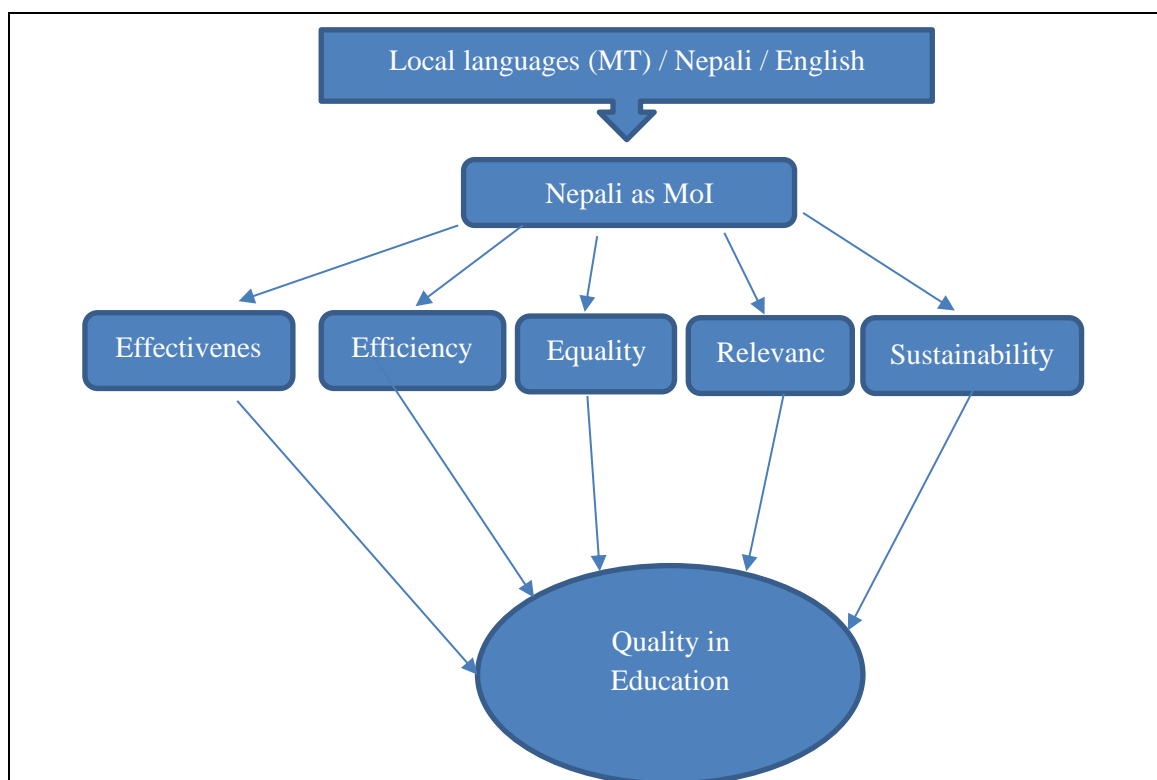


Figure 3 Conceptual design of Role of language as MOI in Quality Education (Source: Barret, A. et al, 2006, Barrett and Tikly ,2013, OECD, 2005, Tikly,2011, UNESCO,2 005, Note: Developed by the author)



### **4.3 Summary**

The chapter has presented some international perspectives in beginning that showed how the language as one of the crucial factors that affect the quality of education. Lately the local languages have been given more importance in education to improve the learning and also support the preservation of indigenous languages and culture. The international and national expectations of quality education reflect the needs of improving five key principles of the Quality Framework (Barrett, A. et al (2006) directly and indirectly through various terms and descriptions. Finally, the proposed conceptual framework has been designed to apply it to understand and explore the role of language as MoI on developing the quality of education in Nepalese school education. The major languages issues have been aimed to looked at to comparatively assess the need of promoting Nepali as MoI in school education in Nepal.

# 5 Methodology

This chapter describes the research design and methodology applied for the study. This chapter primarily deals the justification of rationale of data collection, data collection procedure and analysis process. Similarly, it provides information about research site, sample and sampling technique used for the study. Moreover, it explains highlighting the data processing, data quality strategy and ethical consideration.

## 5.1 Approach

This study involves the subjective interpretation for carrying out social science research. The subjective mode of inquiry largely relies upon the individual perceptions and experiences of the social world. It follows the anti- positivist ideology to ask and answer the questions of the social world. It is more context specific and gives more emphasis on subjective reality of the cases included in the study. As Burrell and Morgan (1979) mentions “for the anti-positivist, the social world is essentially relativistic and can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied” (p.5). The present study also aimed to study the concern of medium of instruction and its use in particular context through collecting the first-hand information from the research participants. Hence the research inquiry has been made qualitative in nature and qualitative research approach has been adopted to deal with subjective data required for the study.

Qualitative research approach is significantly used in the social science research. It is more inductive in nature. It is designed to observe the social behaviors and context in their natural settings before reaching to any theory or principle. Conclusions made after this kind of study are based on real life data gathered with the help of qualitative tools such as interviewing, observation or documents analysis (Fraenkel and Wallen ,2006). As it refers by its name, it gives focus on quality not quantity. The qualitative approach has come in the existence after the failure of quantitative approach that objectively tried to understand the complex social phenomenon by the means of deductive approach. Bryman (2012) says that the qualitative research approach is the most suitable method of interpretivist to understand the social world through an examination of the interpretations of the world by its participants. I have included

a lot of background details to deeply understand the issue I have presented in this research since the qualitative research also involves detailed description of the context of the study. The researcher in this kind of study puts emphasis on describing the settings, event or people's attitudes and values to understand the social behavior. Bryman,2012. p.401) says,

“One of the main reasons why qualitative researchers are keen to provide considerable descriptive detail is that they typically emphasize the importance of the contextual understanding of social behavior. This means that behavior, values, or whatever must be understood in context”.

Bryman has further mentioned the general steps to be followed for conducting the qualitative research as below:

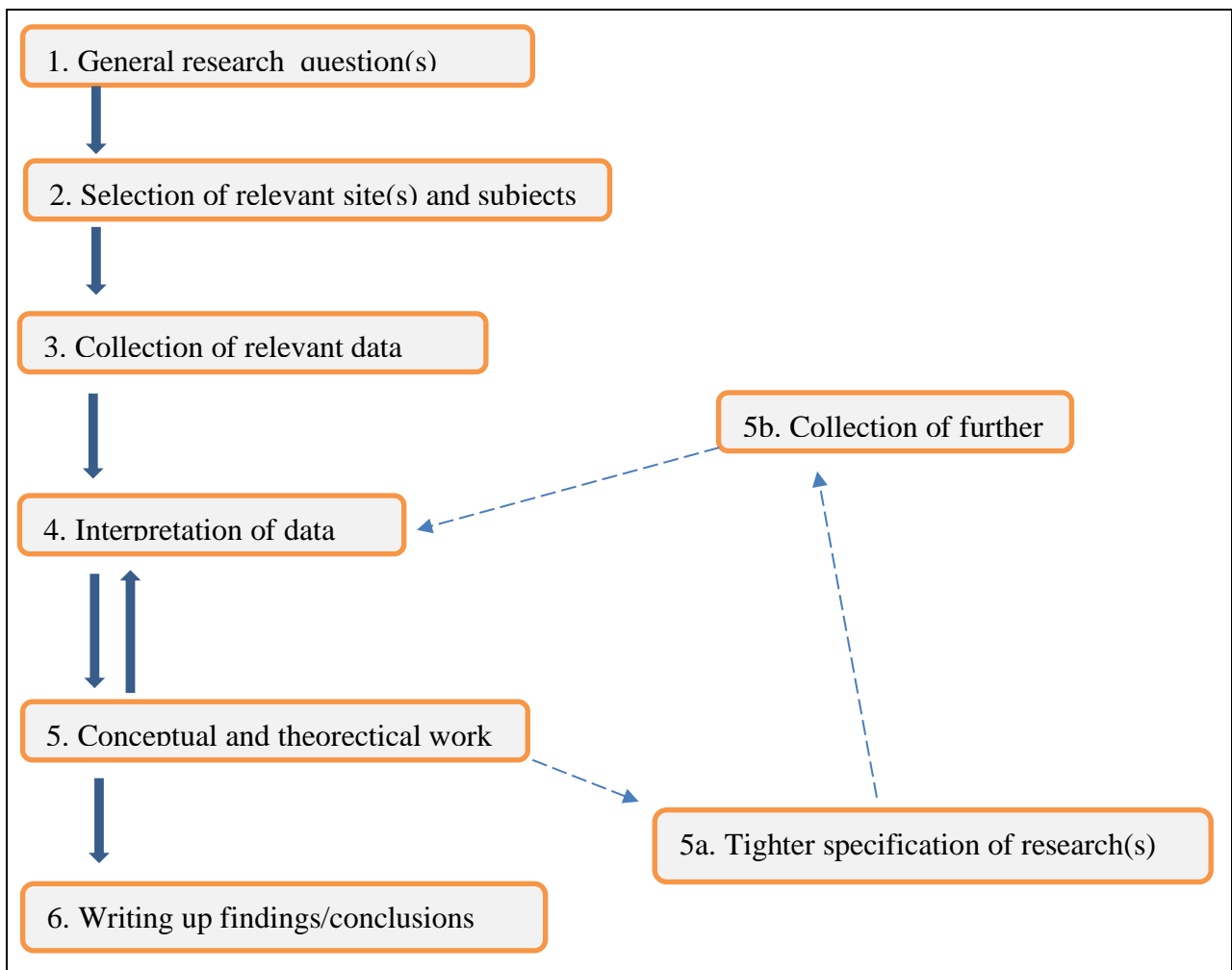


Figure 4 An outline of the main steps of qualitative research (Bryman, 2012. p.384)

## 5.2 Design

Walter (2013) has mentioned three core levels of social research as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research. Each of them has different characteristics but, no social research falls into only in one category in the real world of practice. The exploratory research can also be used to describe the social phenomenon under investigation and finally even includes the explanation of the result found. This research project also the combination of these three levels of research. Primarily, it is exploratory in nature that tends to find out the necessity of promoting the suitable medium of instruction in school education of Nepal. It also aims to explore the relationship of medium of instruction with the core aspects of quality education in the context of Nepal. At the same time, it also includes description of how and what roles can medium of instruction play in quality of education and overall, it also helps to explain why the proper planning of medium of instruction in education required for the educational development of the nation. In order to meet these expectations of the study and answer the research questions of this research, I chose multiple case study design with embedded approach.

Research design provides meaningful framework for data collection and its analysis (Bryman,2012). Therefore, I have given the detailed information here about the research design for my project. Among different research designs used for quantitative, qualitative or mixed approach, I chose a case study design to fulfil my research objectives. It is one of the popular research designs used in some of the best-known social research projects and studies (Bryman,2012). The ‘case’ in case study denotes to any individual, situation, institution, context, event, program or any activity or ongoing process that can be studied within the given boundary. The researchers treat those cases as their research objects and focus their research on the study of such cases. Generally, as Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) mentioned in their book, case study has three main types. They are intrinsic case study, instrumental case study and multiple or collective case study design. In intrinsic case study, the researcher studies a specific individual or situation in details to understand the behavior or concern. In instrumental case study, the researcher gathers specific information required to understand the more common or global issue from the cases under investigation. In this design, the researcher is less focused on specific individual, program, event or school being studied. In third case study that is multiple or collective design, the researcher identifies with the issue or

concern applied in specific boundary and studies the cases as parts of one overall study (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006, pp.438-439).

The multiple case study design was used in this study. Medium of instruction in Nepalese school education was identified as central issue or concern of the study and then several bounded individual cases were identified to collect the required data for the study. Since it is multiple case study studying the specific concern of the research, embedded case study approach was used to collect and analyze the specific data instead of studying the cases holistically as in holistic case study approach (Yin, 2009). Since I used multiple case study with embedded approach, I did not have to collect huge amount of information about each single case. It made me collect only specific and research oriented required data. In order to make analysis of the data, within case analysis and cross case analysis was adopted as strategy. So, at first, within case analysis was done to create themes from data in each case and then common themes between all the cases were identified through cross case analysis. The following figure shows the illustration of the cases chosen for the study of my research.

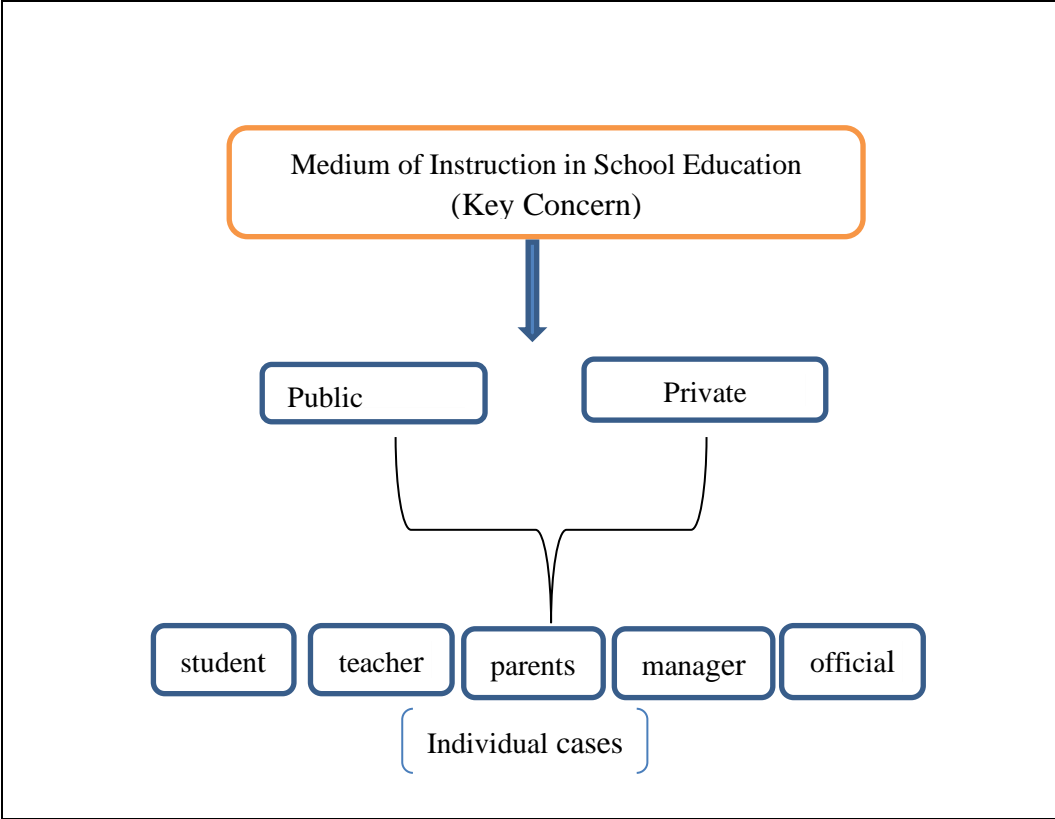


Figure 5 Illustration of cases used in multiple case study design

The present research also contributes to the comparative and international dimension. The study involves comparative analysis of three modes of medium of instructions used in the context of Nepalese school education. They are mainly Nepali Medium Instruction (NMI), English Medium Instruction (EMI) and Mother Tongue Based Instruction (MTBI). The study made its discussion through careful comparison and analysis of these different languages and their use as medium of instructions for contributing the quality of school education in Nepal. During the research various national and international documents were taken as reference and most importantly internationally acclaimed quality framework was used to make analysis of the study. Moreover, the data on English as international language and its use in Nepal as MoI itself bring a lot of international dimensions to the study.

### **5.3 Research site**

Selecting research site is one of the important aspects of qualitative research. The qualitative researcher always aims to study and collect the information from the given context or site to find the relevance of research findings. The context of the research in social science is very helpful to understand the particular social behaviors (Bryman, 2012). It is also important to find such a research site that can increase the affordability and can make it easier to get access to the respondents and interact with them with less barriers.

I chose Dhangadhi Sub Metropolitan city situated in the heart of Kailali district in Nepal. Kailali district is situated in Far Western Province of Nepal which is made up of nine districts. Far western province has habitation of people of all different kinds. Some of the districts lie in plain belt, some in mountains and some in high Himalayas. Kailali district is in plain belt of Nepal which has Indian border in various places. Dhangadhi in Kailali is the only Sub Metropolitan city in the whole province. It is also one of the most populated and industrialized city in the whole Far Western Province. The habitation in Dhangadhi is mixed in nature because mostly people from mountainous regions migrate there for better life and living opportunities. It is also so much popular for educational institution in the province having many private and public schools and colleges. The city of Dhangadhi is far from the capital of the country, Kathmandu and less modernized than other central cities in Nepal but

for few years, it is developing rapidly like other cities of the country. Moreover, due to the borders with India, all different types of people live and run their businesses in Dhangadhi.

Culturally and linguistically, diverse population live in Dhangadhi. All different kinds of schools and colleges are found in the city. The city represents the environment of Kailali district and serve as the adobe of most people from other districts of the far western province. Above all, I have lived here since my childhood and worked as teacher in different schools. I have also got my own experiences with the school life here. Therefore, I found this place suitable as my research site and believed that I would not have to give extra effort to study the contextual environment of the place. It also helped me to reach to the right respondents needed for my research in given time.

## **5.4 Sampling procedure**

One of the most important steps in the research process is deciding the sample of individuals who take part as participants of the research. The researcher aims to find the information from these sample of individuals that represent the larger group to which the result of the study is hoped to apply. So, the smaller group that participate as the research informants is known as sample and the larger group that have an impact of the result is considered as the population of the research and the process of determining the target sample and population is known as sampling (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006).

There are different types of sampling techniques that can be adopted to fulfil the objectives of the research study. For my research, I decided to use purposive sampling at first and then took help from convenience sampling method to obtain the rich data required for the research. In this two-stage sampling process, through purposive sampling, I selected the research site having the greater influence required for my study. I also used purposive sampling method using my knowledge and previous experience to identify two different types of schools in the city that can represent the other schools in the given area. As Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) discussed that in purposive sampling, the researchers do not simply study whoever is available but rather use their judgement to select a sample that they believe, based on prior information, will provide the data they need (p.101).

I used convenience sampling method realizing the time constraints and other contextual realities to reach to the respondents or the participants for the research. Therefore, final samples of individuals were selected after applying both purposive and convenience sampling methods. Although these types of sampling methods have their own limitations, but I realized that I got benefited through these techniques for deciding the required sample for my study. Moreover, the possibility of the data gathered from these samples to represent the larger group became higher because I had a long experience and knowledge about the context being studied under the investigation. The convenience sampling is criticized for its failure to select the appropriate sample that can represent the target population and it is also advised to avoid it if possible (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). However, using convenience sampling after screening through purposive sampling minimized this problem in my research.

As it is advised to include the information on demographic and other characteristics of the sample studied when we are applying the convenience or purposive sampling methods. It is advised to do so 'to make the research study easy to replicate in the future avoiding the result to be one-time occurrence' (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006, p.100). Following this advice, I have also included some characteristic information on the samples that I chose for my study. It can be studied in the table below.



Table 3 Characteristics of the Sample used for the study

| Category of Sample              |                 | Characteristics  | Total Number |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--|--------------|
| Schools / Institutions          | Public Schools  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-owned by the government</li> <li>-use primarily Nepali as medium of school education</li> <li>-have at least secondary level education</li> <li>- have run more than 10 years</li> </ul>   | 2            |
|                                 | Private Schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- run through private individual or institutional investment</li> <li>- use primarily English as medium of school education</li> <li>- have at least secondary level education</li> <li>- have run more than 10 years</li> </ul>  | 2            |
| Individuals/ Human participants | Students        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- represent both private and public schools</li> <li>- both male and female students participate</li> <li>- study in lower secondary level (9-10)</li> </ul>  | 4            |
|                                 | Teachers        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- represent both private and public schools</li> <li>- both male and female teachers participate</li> <li>- teach in secondary level</li> <li>- at least have 10 years of teaching experience</li> <li>- belong to faculty of Science or Maths or Social studies</li> <li>- teach in any one of the selected schools</li> </ul> | 4            |
|                                 | Parents         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- both male and female parents participate</li> <li>- have at least one child in secondary schools selected for the research</li> </ul>   | 2            |
|                                 | Managers        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hold the position of vice principal or principal of the secondary school</li> <li>- have at least 10 years of experience</li> <li>- represent both public and private schools</li> <li>- male or female</li> </ul>  | 2            |
|                                 | Officials       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hold the official position in government education office</li> <li>- involve in academic supervision of secondary schools</li> <li>- have at least 10 years of work experience</li> <li>-male or female</li> </ul>  | 1            |
|                                 | Experts         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- experienced Nepali language teachers/ trainers/ educators</li> <li>- represent both public and private schools</li> <li>-male or female</li> </ul>  | 3            |
| Research site/ location         |                 | Dhangadhi Sub Metropolitan, Kailali District, Far Western Province (7), Nepal  |              |

## **5.5 Data collection methods**

Data collection methods vary according to the purpose of the study. I have followed the qualitative research approach for my study. Therefore, I chose semi-structured interview and documents review as the two main data collection techniques in this study.

### **5.5.1 Semi- structured interview**

Interviews are one of the most popular data collection methods while doing qualitative research. “The interview is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research” (Bryman, 2012, p.469). Interviews are useful for finding out the opinions, perspectives and even perceptions of the people being interviewed for a given topic. It is also used to find the information which we cannot observe through direct observation (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). There are many things to be careful about if we are adopting interview as our research tool. It is very essential to design interview guide to execute any interview effectively especially more required in case of structured and semi- structured interviews. Researchers prepare their questions according to the research area or theories they are using in their study and adjust the questions, their clues and necessary details for time and sequence to successfully conduct an interview. An interview guides not only contain different types of questions but also, they have necessary clues for directing the interview to find the most information within the time limit. Bryman (2012, p.473) mentioned the following basic criteria to consider while developing the interview guide.

- create a certain amount of order on the topic areas, so that your questions about them flow reasonably well, but be prepared to alter the order of questions during the actual interview;
- formulate interview questions or topics in a way that will help you to answer your research questions (but try not to make them too specific);
- try to use a language that is comprehensible and relevant to the people you are interviewing;
- just as in interviewing in quantitative research, do not ask leading questions;
- remember to ensure that you ask or record ‘face sheet’ information of a general kind (name, age, gender, etc.) and a specific kind (position in company, number of years employed, number of years involved in a group, etc.), because such information is useful for contextualizing people’s answers.

Interview questions are the important part of whole research process. Therefore, the interview guide is developed through various interconnecting steps for designing the most appropriate questions for the research. I followed the following model proposed by Bryman (2012) to prepare the interview guide for the research.

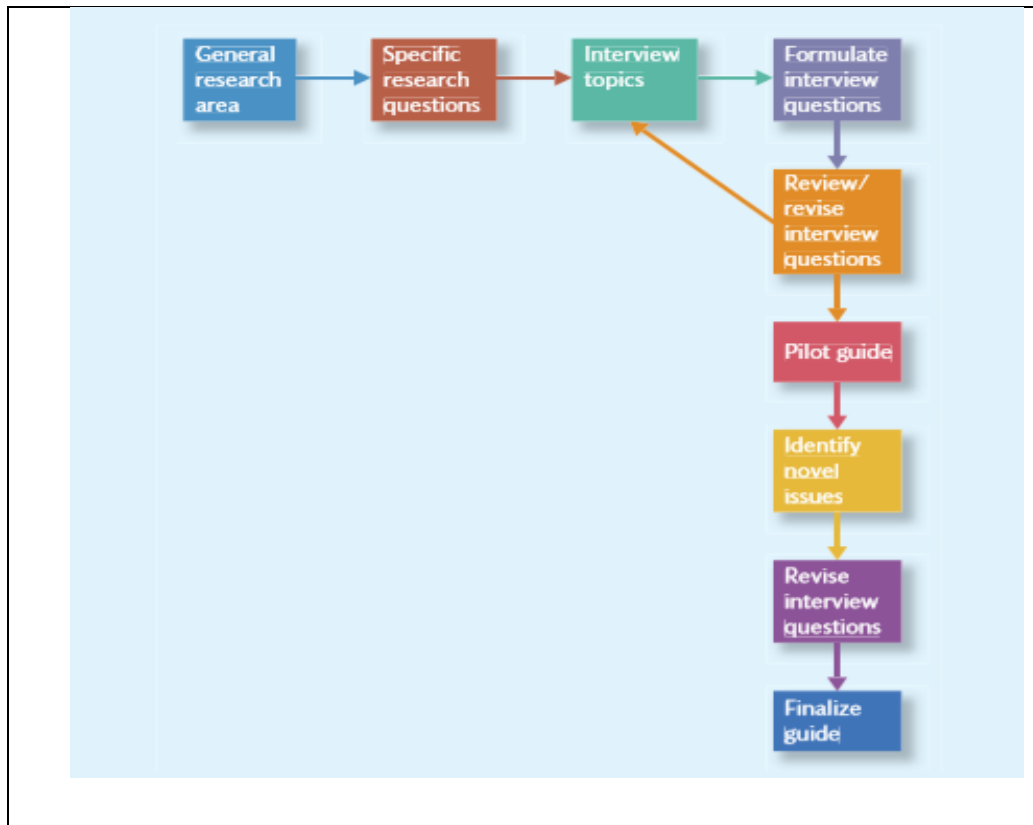


Figure 6 Steps for formulating research questions in interview guide (Bryman, 2012, p. 476)

Interviews can be of different types, but most commonly structured and semi-structured interviews are employed by the qualitative researchers. I chose semi-structured interview model for my study purpose. The purpose of my study was to find the perspectives and perceptions of the individuals on how they associate the medium of instruction with quality of education. I was also interested in finding the views of the people on how the different quality dimensions of quality interact with the suitable use of medium of instruction in school education in Nepal. Therefore, I had planned to design the semi-structured interview questions following the theoretical framework on quality of education. I chose it over structured interview model because instead of asking very straightforward and rigid questions, I put enough room for the respondents to put the response in their own way. Questions were also modified, reframed and restructured while doing the interview but at the same time I

based the questions on the theoretical framework. I chose two public and two private schools based on the criteria and then reached to six different groups of individuals including students, teachers, parents, managers, officials and language experts. These people were selected following the criteria described in table no.3.

### **5.5.2 Documents review**

According to Bryman (2012, p.543), documents are the recorded resources in various forms that any social science researcher can use for obtaining the relevant information for their research. The researchers in qualitative research approach usually find the documents review as the good source of supplying secondary data to increase the validity and scope of their research. Bryman (2012) further mentions that the documents are written in different context and for different purpose. Hence, “considerable interpretive skill is required to ascertain the meaning of the materials uncovered” (p.543). Such different documents have their contents which can be the indirect resources to study person’s or group’s behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, values, ideas and practices (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p.483).

Bryman (2012, p.543) has listed wide range of document forms which can be used in qualitative research. They are:

- personal documents in both written form (such as diaries and letters) and visual form (such as photographs);
- official documents deriving from the state (such as public inquiries);
- official documents deriving from private sources (such as documents produced by organizations);
- mass-media and virtual outputs, such as Internet resources.

In this research project, I have also used the documents review as the supplementing research tool to derive the relevant information required for the project. In contrast to the deep content analysis, I have superficially reviewed the most relevant and available documents to find only the specific information to contribute to the analysis of my research. In this process, as Bryman (2012) discussed in his book, I have also reviewed the following types of documents to obtain the secondary data for my project.

### **Personal documents**

As for this type, I have especially studied the personal interviews and speeches available in my research area. I have found some biographical notes on linguistic perspectives of late Mahatma Gandhi which has given remarkable insights to work during the research. I have also personally talked with friends, teachers, administrators and analysts working in the country and abroad to deeply understand the research issue. Most importantly, I reviewed different articles and research papers of my friends and teachers working in different filed in Nepal to prepare and discuss the issue more effectively. I took the information as they are to minimize the influence in my research project.

### **Official documents from the State**

The issue of my research has many things to do with the State structure, their dialogues, policies and practices. Therefore, I had to go through different kinds of official documents of the State. I collected most of the State official documents from the authorized and authentic websites of Government of Nepal. I also derived some of the foreign State official documents provided by the governments of some Asian and European countries especially India and Norway. It helped me not only to study the policies but also provided me with different links of scholarly written articles. Therefore, all of such documents I reviewed during research may not be the part of my reference list, but they guided me in many different ways to continue my research project.

### **Official documents from other institutional bodies**

The official documents I collected and studied from various institutional sources have a long list. Primarily, my current university has a big role to provide me all different types of reading materials, references, books, journals, articles, research papers and relevant theses. I also studied the research papers and articles available on the home website of many national and international private or semi-private organizations such as World Bank, UN, ILO, UNESCO, World Education, Save the Children, NELTA, OECD, NORAD, UGC, Newspaper agencies, on inline academic platforms and many more.

### **Mass media and virtual documents**

Most of all personal and official documents I mentioned before can be included in this category of documents because they were collected through mass media and virtual resources of internet. To highlight here, I tried to study from local, national and even international mass media and TV channels, shows, speeches, debates, interviews, newspaper articles, editorial columns, conference reports, presentations, political speeches and so on. I have also read and studied different information from Wikipedia, Facebook, online Journals, think tanks, public statuses, online news reports, etc. as parts of virtual documents. Since the online documents available may be misleading or false, the careful attention was given to screen the authentic and reliable sources of information before they were used as reference.

## **5.6 My role as researcher**

I had shown my interest in language related research, right from the first semester at University of Oslo when I was asked to write down the paper in the course EDU-4100. Then onwards, I started refining my perspectives and with the help of more insights on research methodology, eventually I chose this topic for my final thesis program. At University of Oslo, I have learned how to develop the researchable projects out from the cloud of vast interest, information and expectations. Although I have faced many difficulties, but I have never compromised with my core interest to study the language issue that is suitable for my country, Nepal. There were many hidden ideologies and reflections behind choosing such a topic which I tried to clarify in previous heading.

Technically speaking, I started with a topic in the beginning that best reflect my area of study. It took me more time to make the suitable topic of research. Proposal writing has helped me to overview the whole research process before starting the project. I studied more and more materials, took some classes on methodology and discussed with friends and teachers to finalize three important aspects of the research. They were topic, research questions and the theory or the framework required for the research. After constantly moving between topic, research questions and theory for some days and weeks, I have finalized them and started the project. For me it was very important because based on them I could review the literatures and design my detailed interview guideline. The interview questions were made following the guide, but I took the suggestion on questions from my friends and supervisor before using them as pilot questions. In piloting phase, I took the interview of some friends in Norway,

some teacher friends and students in Nepal and collected their views and reflection about the questions. The self-reflection and various feedbacks on pilot questions helped me further in designing the final interview questions. After having communication and necessary consent, I took all the interviews online and saved it securely for the detailed analysis.

I collected the relevant data for the research by reading course notes and searching online internet resources. The library of University of Oslo helped me a lot to gate access to authorized international documents. I personally contacted few scholars over the phone and the email for sharing their written books, articles, videos, presentations, papers on the related topics. I collected some model thesis studies from university library for taking structural guidance. For technical appropriateness, I used the model template and rules prescribed in the website of the University. Tables, figures, abbreviations and references were noted down in their places side by side during the whole writing process. Headings for different sections were identified with clues and time was scheduled accordingly to finalize the sections.

I have tried to be unbiased during the research process but honestly speaking the more I studied the more I became biased in my mind. However, the good news is that I have realized myself every time I seemed to be biased. It happened because of my self-talking and sharing habits. Both self-talking and sharing with my relatives and friend always helped me to study more and finally reflect on what I am doing. This has helped a lot to restructure research topic, its purpose and, methodology. Therefore, I could unbiasedly design the questions and put them in front of the interviewee confidently. The questions were created to collect the information on given key issues of the quality framework. Participants were selected and involved by following the open criteria. Context was decided according to the suitability of the research need and scope of the data collection. Throughout the entire research process, I have kept myself as silent observer, listener and investigator to collect the information as they are and then through analysis reach to any conclusion for discussing the findings. All the interviews were observed and listened many times before deriving the individual case and cross-case themes. The close analysis of the data was done in the reference to the detailed quality framework used in the research. Final themes as findings were elaborated and discussed taking the due references from primary and secondary data. The first draft was sent to supervisor to necessary feedbacks. Meanwhile, more inputs and feedbacks were taken about the study from the friends and the scholars working in the similar field worldwide.

Finally, all the feedbacks and comments were analyzed, and finally modified and improved draft was made and submitted to the University for evaluation.

## **5.7 Identifying, categorizing, analyzing key information**

This is one of the important parts of the whole research process. Identifying the key information in collected data from primary and secondary resources was not very challenging for me. It was because, I had already developed the guideline containing description of the possible key areas of inquiry based on the theoretical research framework. In this process, at first, all the individual interviews were studied alone, and the key information was taken out. The key information obtained after analyzing the individual interviews was then studied through cross- cases analysis and finally the information keys were identified for the five key areas of quality research framework. The information which seem difficult to put into any pre-defined category, were identified and noted down for further discussion.

In this process, the Quality framework had guided me with five major dimensions of the quality and more literature review helped me to further outline those five dimensions into sub-categories. The interview guide with questions were prepared in reference to these sub-categories. The data collected through research tools were studied against these sub-categories for analyzing their relationship to the five major dimensions of the quality framework. Furthermore, all the categorial and out of category information were studied and analyzed and major finding themes were developed to discuss the findings in reference to the research framework.

## **5.8 Quality strategy**

It is very important for social science researchers to maintain the quality of their research to fulfil the research objectives. To assess the quality of the research, validity and reliability are the two most common principles used in the field of social science research. Generally, these are quite common in quantitative type of research, but they have been also used in assessing the qualitative research. Hence, I have discussed here how it is necessary to have validity and reliability to increase the quality of the research. I have explained these terms in brief in this section and tried to discuss the quality of my study. I have also taken the reference of the



criteria that Dr. Sara J. Tracy proposed to follow to ensure the quality of qualitative studies which I have shown very briefly here.

### **5.8.1 Reliability**

Reliability concerns the trustworthiness and consistency of the research (Bryman,2012). The researcher needs to design and conduct data collection in such a way that can ensure consistency of the measures over time. It requires the high coherence between the research theory and its indicators used during the study. The overall strategy needs to be transparent in terms of research theory, methods and tools for achieving the similar result over time. Thus, reliability can be achieved mainly through two characteristics of research. They are internal and external reliability.

Internal reliability concerns with appropriateness of the indicators and consistency of the result on these indicators from more than one observer which is also known as ‘inter-observer consistency’ (Bryman, 2012, p.390). My research study included the selection of the indicators based on the established research frameworks which helped to increase the appropriateness and the transparent description and criteria used in research methodology also decreased the risk of losing the inter-observer consistency.

External reliability deals with the stability of the result over time. Bryman (2012) explained it in his book as “this consideration entails asking whether a measure is stable over time, so that we can be confident that the results relating to that measure for a sample of respondents do not fluctuate. This means that, if we administer a measure to a group and then re-administer it, there will be little variation over time in the results obtained” (p.169). External reliability promotes the replicability of the research as well. However, this quality feature is difficult to achieve fully in qualitative kind of research as it is influenced with subjective information of different social settings and circumstances that keep on changing with time (Bryman, 2011, p.390). I am sure here that my study can be replicable because the research framework I used has clear and defined indicators with descriptions that help to design the similar interview questions that follows the consistent data collection. However, the result of the research may vary since this study has not represented all the contextual variations that can exist in different contexts.

## 5.8.2 Validity

Validity refers to “the issue of whether an indicator (or set of indicators) that is devised to gauge a concept really measures that concept” (Bryman, 2012, p.171). Fraenkel & Wallen (2006) defined validity as “it refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of the inferences a researcher makes” (p.150). It seems the validity is more applicable principle to apply on qualitative type of research to evaluate their quality. Although validity can have different orientations and names as per its uses, I am going to discuss here how internal and external validity affect the quality of the qualitative research study.

Internal validity concerns with the quality of the indicators devised out of the research theory that can best define or represent the proposition. I find the concept of construct validity and triangulation comes in internal validity. It is because in construct validity, a measure is judged against its close relationship with the concepts of research (Bryman, p.172). It means it shows how the researcher find the best indicators and collect the data that fulfil the spirit of research concepts. Triangulation strategy helps to promote the internal validity by ensuring the close relationship between the indicators and the concepts of the research. I have chosen single case issue as medium of instruction for this study and collected the multiple case views on this single topic. Furthermore, I have used both interviews and documents review to collect the data required for the project. Taking the multiple case views through multiple data collection devices has increased the triangulation effect in my study and thus contributed to raise the internal validity. Moreover, designing the questions keys and then interview questions taking the direct reference to the research framework has also increased the consistency and appropriateness of the indicators which contributed to achieve higher internal validity of the research.

External validity refers to “the degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings” (Bryman, 2012, p.390). This feature helps to increase the generality of the research study. In this research project, the adoption of multiple case study design with embedded approach has helped to increase the generality of the findings because of investigating the specific single aspect among multiple cases. Selecting the general theme as a problem and acquiring the relevant data from possible stakeholders and again doing cross case analysis for discussing the final findings have certainly contributed to increase the external validity of this

research. However, the assumptions and other contextual factors may bring the changes in reference to different settings because of multiple diversity exist in the country.

### 5.8.3 Alternative criteria for quality

Assessing the quality of research can be done by applying different criteria or principles. Tracy (2010) lists her eight criteria to assess or ensure the quality in qualitative research. Reliability, validity, replicability, appropriateness, usefulness, trustworthiness, transferability, predictability and so on are all mostly included in her criteria. I have used her criterion framework as guideline for carrying out my study from beginning to the end. Although I have not explained here how it has been incorporated in my study in detail, I am sure most of the strategies as explained in previous chapters fulfils the demand of these criteria shown in the table below.

Table 4 Eight criteria for excellent qualitative research (Tracy,2010, p.840)

| Criteria for quality (end goal) | Various means, practices, and methods through which to achieve  |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Worthy topic                    | The topic of the research is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant</li> <li>• Timely</li> <li>• Significant</li> <li>• Interesting</li> </ul>   |
| Rich rigor                      | The study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical constructs</li> <li>• Data and time in the field</li> <li>• Sample(s)</li> <li>• Context(s)</li> <li>• Data collection and analysis processes</li> </ul>                       |
| Sincerity                       | The study is characterized by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s)</li> <li>• Transparency about the methods and challenges</li> </ul>  |
| Credibility                     | The research is marked by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (nontextual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling</li> <li>• Triangulation or crystallization</li> <li>• Multivocality</li> <li>• Member reflections</li> </ul> |
| Resonance                       | The research influences, affects, or moves particular readers or a variety of audiences through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aesthetic, evocative representation</li> <li>• Naturalistic generalizations</li> <li>• Transferable findings</li> </ul>                                  |
| Significant contribution        | The research provides a significant contribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conceptually/theoretically</li> <li>• Practically</li> <li>• Morally</li> <li>• Methodologically</li> <li>• Heuristically</li> </ul>  |
| Ethical                         | The research considers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedural ethics (such as human subjects)</li> <li>• Situational and culturally specific ethics</li> <li>• Relational ethics</li> <li>• Exiting ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research)</li> </ul>                   |
| Meaningful coherence            | The study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieves what it purports to be about</li> <li>• Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals</li> <li>• Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other</li> </ul>     |

## 5.9 Ethical consideration and challenges

The ethical consideration in the research project is important for the researcher to maintain the quality of the research. It applies all the way from beginning to the final submission of the study. The researcher needs to be honest and follow the ethics essential for the study. There may be different guidelines and principles to follow given to different contexts and areas of the research, but most fundamental considerations apply to every possible research study are few basic things to consider. Bryman (2012) mentions Diener and Crandall (1978) and discusses their four main areas as ‘useful classification of ethical principles in and for social research’ (p.135). They are harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception. I have considered these issues during my whole research process besides the challenges to avoid any ethical harms. However, these ethical issues seem four different areas, but they are quite interrelated (Bryman, 2012, p.135). Therefore, the discussion I have made here also might overlap.

Primarily, NSD in Norway which work for research study approval helped me a lot to inform me about different ethical norms we must follow during the research. They guided me with ethics related to research topics, participants and their privacy, data collection techniques, reporting and publishing principles and so on to finalize my approval. It was difficult in the beginning but with necessary changes and modified strategies, my research was accepted by NSD. Then following the necessary guidelines, I started my project. Most importantly, all the participants in my project were fully informed about the interview process and its outcomes. I had taken their consent and permission beforehand and given them full authority to deny the interviewing or stop the process at any time if they were not comfortable from their side. I had kept the open choice of any language they can speak as far as we could understand each other. It was not very difficult for me because most of my interviewee were comfortable with Nepali as their first language. Some of the time we used English words and sentences as per to contribute individual understanding. I tried my best to make the conversation as friendly and informal as possible to avoid any kind of biased opinions during the interview process. Since I was doing this study from Norway as graduate student, I had realized that some of the interviewees had shown more seriousness and formality during the interview, but I hoped that it did not affect much in conveying their opinions on the topic.

Privacy of the informants were another important concern. Therefore, I have recorded all the information with secure and authorized recording device and the data was stored with lock having the password. The participants were fully informed, and all the relevant information were given to every interviewee to ensure their right for data protection, editing, deleting and publishing. Participants of interview were given full right to introduce in any way they like. They were also informed and ensured about the handling of the data and its purpose. However, the people in the interview were very happy and excited to introduce themselves but as the study demanded I had only asked for professional position and years of experience from my side. Informal documents, articles, news reports, individual presentation and speeches, debate and any other kind of such materials consulted during the study were taken with the prior permission of the informants or authors and proper quotation and citation were used if any of them were used as reference for the study. During the discussion inside the thesis, the personal and other irrelevant social information were avoided to maintain the privacy of the individuals.

## 6. Findings

This section analyses the data collected through interviews and documents review. The analyzed data has been then discussed in the form of findings of the research. The entire process follows the thematic analysis to generate the key themes for analytical integration and discussion of the collected data. As Garner, Kawulich and Magner (2012) says, “thematic analysis is a general approach to analyzing qualitative data that involves identifying themes or pattern in data” (p.231). I had used the theoretical framework that has described the categories in detail before collecting the data. Therefore, I have used here ‘deductive approach’ to generate the themes out of the data gathered. Research questions, theory and purpose were constantly kept in consideration to integrate the data and present the findings in more meaningful way possible (Boeije, 2010, pp.102,117).

The individuals participated in the interview have been given codes for recognition. T stands for teacher, P stands for parent, S stands for student, O stands for government official, M stands for manager, and E stands for expert in Nepali subject. The number behind the letter indicates the number of informants.

### 6.1 Need of implementing suitable MoI

The data reflects that the stakeholders of school education have their different views about this issue. Different types of schools running in the country have their own medium of instruction in different levels although the constitution and the recent SSDP has recommended some policy provisions on maintaining the medium of instruction in school level. The policy advocates the provision of mother tongues as medium in early schools to enhance learning and decrease dropout rate but due to the heterogenous or mixed classroom identity in many places and lack of enough resources and support, the MTBEP are not successful. Teachers teaching in community schools informed that mostly poor and less privileged community children choose community schools and they face language problems in the beginning. They even feel difficulty to adjust them in even the national language of the country for some years. English remained as a foreign or alien language for them. Teachers and officials also shared the difficulty of managing skilled mother tongue teachers for all different types of community learners in one school. On the other hand, the respondents also accept the importance of both Nepali as national language and English as international language.

The global lust to English language has also added this to happen throughout the country in a very short time. Referring to the gap between private and public schools associated with medium and quality of education, one of the teacher respondents (T1) replies, *“Seeing the wide gap between private and public schools, it seems that the education in Nepal is producing two types of manpower”*. T2 also shares, *“The dilemma around the choice of suitable medium of instruction has increased recently because the nation has undergone the federal democratic system and the independent local bodies also seem to provision their own ideology for suitable medium in the states”*. M1, M2, T2, T3, P1 and S1-4 view that the language is a medium that should help in learning and it should be decided according to the context of learners but at the same time we cannot leave the national language, Nepali and the international language, English. All the students I inquired also pointed out that they want to take Nepali and English hand to hand.

## **6.2 Understanding the role of MoI**

Medium of instruction in education is one of the highly raised issues in the world. It has been associated with various educational factors that can affect quality of education (UNESO, EFA, 2015). Addressing the issue of language of education has become the area of great research and development in the multilingual settings of poor and undeveloped countries because language is seen to be associated with national development (EFA,2015, Pinnock,2009). Nepal is also one of them. International organizations like UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UNDP, UNFPA, OECD and many more are also working worldwide through their educational programs which includes local languages promotion for enhancing the educational outcomes. Several international studies and literatures focus on the use of mother tongues as medium at least in early schooling to promote the learning along with preserving the indigenous languages and culture (Awasthi, 2004,2015, EFA, 2015, Khubchandani, 2007, Phyak, 2013, Pinnock, 2009 Watson, 2007).

The data collected through interview also reflects how the suitable language as medium can bring the benefits in education. Understanding the content was taken as important aspects of quality. Almost all of the respondents agreed that the content is easily understood if the medium of instruction is in their own familiar language. T4 replies, *“medium needs to be so simple that helps learners to express them logically, interact with others, creatively engage in school activities, apply the learned knowledge in the practical life outside the school”*. T2, E1

and E2 share that the medium in school should also be the part of day to day communication in the society and it should be used in various social and cultural exchanges, interactions and other formal and informal activities otherwise it affects in learning because learners learn and apply many things in the social life outside the school. T2 further opines how the law students learning in English medium in and out of the country may face problems when they have to work in Nepali language in the court of Nepal. Similarly, it was also shared how the Nepali medium students may face challenges in higher study in the country or abroad where they have to use English as medium (S1-4, T3). E2 and O1 explain how language as the carrier of past heritage and it helps to transfer the knowledge as well as culture to the next generations. It helps to promote the identity, faith, tradition and nationality among the people (P1, S1, S4, E2, E3, O1).

Education is the broad phenomenon that cannot be limited within the school. Learners learn from various experiences, sources and contexts. However, respondents gave their own justification about how they think the language is useful in education. The data show that the people indirectly related the role of language to most of the factors of quality education that have been recognized in the international literatures.

### **6.3 Language as quality issues**

The data show that the issue is mainly between the use of mother tongues, Nepali and English language. The use of mother tongues in early schooling has been the growing issue since the government policy and international organizations are also promoting it for ensuring the quality in education (Awasthi, 2015, MoE, 2016, UNESCO, 2005, 2015). However, many challenges and multiple issues exist in the ground reality to transform the MTBME in the present school context of Nepal (Awasthi, 2004, 2015, EFA Report, 2015, MoE, 2016, Ojha, 2018, Phyak, 2013).

On the other hand, Nepali language as the national and mainstream language of school education is also on the verge of being replaced by English medium instruction. The data show that more and more private schools running in English medium are increasing day by day throughout the country. Most of them do not have skilled manpower and required resources to run such schools entirely in English medium but they are claiming for quality education (Phyak, 2013, Sah and Li, 2018, p.110,). O1 says, “*the trend of adopting the*



*English medium is so high that it cannot be controlled yet few more years*". M2 shares his experience of starting English medium education in his public school to meet the higher demand from the parents to teach in English. He shares, *"they have now the greater number of students enrolled in English medium primary classes than Nepali medium"*.

The data presents different views behind decreasing the attraction towards Nepali and other local languages as medium in education. S1-4, P1, T1 and M1 opines that the good management, enough infrastructure and dedicated manpower are difficult to find in Nepali medium school therefore people choose English medium schools. E3 relates, *"the importance of Nepali language is not decreased since it has been used as the choice of language in various meetings, seminars, informal gatherings, party, functions and even Nepalese people living in abroad use it in various programs"*. E2 highlights the lack of systematic attempt to enrich Nepali language adding more technical vocabularies and he also blames the scholars including the government that failed to apply the uniform Nepali language structure in education. O1 shares how the public schools are also attracted towards English medium even though the policy guideline suggests promoting local language medium in school. E1 and E2 points towards the danger of losing the culture, identity and national languages in the near future if the trend keeps on going like this. Phyak (2013, p.14) also mentions how the dominance of English language is replacing other national languages heritage and culture.

*"when resistance against the Nepali-only MOI policy, in the changed political context, has begun to evolve, the dominant elites moved to promote the English-only MOI policy, both in private and public schools, reproducing the middle-class-literate habitus and marginalizing the dominated groups' cultural and linguistic capital"*.

The data further suggest that the main reason of this kind of English medium encroachment is the result of people's mind set of taking language as quality in education. All the respondents were agreed that English language has been seen as a quality in Nepal. Most parents in Nepal want to send their children in English medium school right from their childhood reported P1 and M2. T4 emphasizes on this by saying that English is taken as quality and if the children learn English well, the parents are mostly satisfied. T1, T3 and M2 remark that most of the parents also want their children to learn everything in English medium only. It is quite clear to see why the majority of people take English as quality because of its global influence and high materialistic opportunities available in the world. Most of teachers, parents and experts

share that the people seem to have believed that both quality in education and the competence of English language can only be achieved through English medium instruction. In my interview with the respondents, I have also realized that people have deep rooted and strong belief that the language can be developed only if it is used as medium of instruction in education despites having its learning and other challenging factors. S1 and S4 mentions *“Although Nepali is our heritage language, but we cannot leave English medium otherwise we are not able to go for higher study, communicate with tourist or foreign citizen”*. The data show that people in Nepal seem to take English language as end not as mean to get quality education.

## **6.4 MoI and dimensions of quality education**

The main idea of this research is to explore how the use of languages as medium in school education in Nepal affect the quality of education. Language as medium of instruction is related with various factors that affect teaching and learning activities and the overall quality of education. There are many factors involved in developing the quality of education in the given contexts. They are variously mentioned and explained in many national and international literatures (Barret, A. et al, 2006, Barret and Tikly, MOE, 2018, OECD, 2005, 2013, Tikly, 2011, UNESCO, 2005). I have uncovered those national and international conception of the quality in previous chapters through analyzing some of the available literature resources. The study has identified various factors that have been raised as some of the important areas of quality. The data has been collected taking the reference of five key dimensions of quality framework as efficiency, effectiveness, equality, relevance and sustainability.

The research has studied comparatively the issue of medium of instruction between local mother tongues, Nepali and English language in school education in Nepal taking the reference of the quality framework. Thus, researcher has explored the necessity of Nepali as MoI in school education by investigating its role in the factors of quality education. Therefore, under this theme, I have presented the data on how primarily Nepali as MoI has been associated with factors of quality along with other languages of concern in school education of Nepal.

## 6.4.1 Efficiency (Input)

Efficiency is one of the components of quality education among the five key dimensions or components, the Barret, A. et al (2006) mentioned in their quality framework. The concept of efficiency has been further elaborated through the help of several other international literatures as well. It generally includes the inputs in education that are related with understanding, involvement, affordability, interaction, communication, access, and policy. The data gathered in this research has shown the significant relationship of these inputs with the mediums of instruction in school education.

Understanding of the content has been taken as one of the key factors that affect the learning achievement and its application. Medium of instruction plays the direct role to enhance the understanding. Interviewees perceive Nepali as medium in school education in Nepal that promotes the understanding between multi stakeholders involved in education (T4, M2, P1, E1, E2). They also share that especially learners are motivated and involved in teaching learning activities and education programs conducted in Nepali more than English as medium of interactions (P1, M1-2, O1, T1, T3, T4, S2). P1 shares *“the students even in English medium schools get the real taste of the educational activities if conducted in Nepali.”* P1 being involved in CTEVT programs further shares that the technical curriculums are mostly translated in Nepali to make them more understandable. T2, T4, O1 and P2 opine that the role of medium is very important for learning achievement and they share that Nepali as medium in Nepal can better address the mixed linguistic mini societies in most schools since the use of mother tongues is very limited. They further add that Nepali as medium can function as the inclusive language since it is in the common practice throughout Nepal and most dialects also share the similar spoken and written forms. O1 points out, *“the EGR and Early Child Development programs (ECD) working to enhance the literacy of Nepali language are very helpful to uplift the educational development of children and thus more efforts should be applied to promote such programs”*. Students as respondents prefer the use of both Nepali and English language in teaching learning activities simultaneously but their response suggest that they want the vocabularies, terms and structures in English but want to understand them in Nepali. T1 and T3 relate their experience in teaching in English medium school and share, *“the students feel difficulty if entirely English medium is used during the lesson. The most students expect them to translate or explain the content with the help of Nepali language”*.

Some of the respondents inform that English medium schools are also found using Nepali as medium in various written and spoken mode of interaction or communication programs that involve the multi stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, administrators, government officials, etc. for the purpose of effective communication (P1, M1, M2). T1 teaching in English medium school says, *“they use English medium in simplified form in school activities but use Nepali as medium to run parents’ interaction and other administrative work in school”*. E1-E3 explain that the teaching and learning resources, references, research studies in Nepali medium for school level are not as much as EMI but sufficient for greater learning achievement if they are explored and applied with skill and dedication. E1 highlights the strength of public institutional bodies including MoE, CDC, Language Commission and many more that have been contributing for long time to develop and produce the teaching learning resources in different national languages in Nepal. He further insists, *“with the clear language policy, it is not very difficult to raise the resources of Nepali language in Nepal as the most other international languages have been developed”*. E2 claims, *“the teachers teaching after the recruitment of government as permanent teachers in Nepali medium public schools give up using and exploring the updated teaching learning resources and methods due to the reluctance, the lack of positive attitudes and poor supervision and support that ultimately results into the negative perception towards the efficiency of Nepali as medium in school education”*.

Policy wise, Nepal government has recommended to use Nepali as MoI in school education. The recent SSDP (MOE, 2016, p.27) encourages the stakeholders to increase the proficiency of Nepali language through literacy programs so that the children won’t face problems in learning in school education. Community languages or local mother tongues have been advised to use as medium only in those areas where they are quite dominant, but the plan limits it up to grade three as medium and three class onward, it suggests transiting Nepali as medium in school education. So, the plan seems to be in the favor of Nepali as medium of instruction whereas local mother tongues and English to be treated as subjects of language development. The new Constitution of Nepal (2016) acknowledge the Nepali as official language and other spoken languages in the country as national languages. However, T2 shares, *“the constitution does not seem to clearly define the position of languages used in Nepal”*. The recent SSDP (MoE, 2016) and HLNEC (MoE, 2018) have also not specified anything against the increasing trend of using English as MoI in private and recently even in public schools. Moreover, some respondents share that the publication of both English and

Nepali language questions sets in board exams, freedom of language choice between Nepali or English or both in Public Service Commission (PSC) like national recruitment processes have further increased confusion among the common people, policy makers and implementers (T1, T3, P1 and E3). Some of the respondents believe that the increasing trend of using it in different public and private domains has further indirectly encouraged the people to adopt English medium instruction in school education (T1-4, M2, P1, E2, E3). In this context, the private institutions seem to take the advantage following the age-old economic liberation policy since 1990 and spreading English Medium Instruction (EMI) in their school education. (Phyak, 2013, Shah and Li, 2018, p.110).

O1 relates the complexity of using the mother tongues as medium in school because of its multiplicity and lack of resources. He says, *“none of the 14 local bodies in Kailali district have introduced mother tongues as medium in their schools”*. P2 opines that it is easier to use and study Nepali than other mother tongues in Nepal. E1 points out that the teachers with English medium schooling feel difficulty in teaching subjects in Nepali medium. He further says, *“private schools are adopting EMI in rural and remote parts of Nepal from early stage of education ignoring their language use, ability and social life which has made the education as an extra burden for them”*. E1 and T4 point that the people are attracted towards EMI because they are not aware of the effect of language as medium on quality of education.

## **6.4.2 Effectiveness (Output)**

The data presents some of the key output areas of quality education here. One of them is institutional function which is affected by the governing constitution, laws, policies, contextual characteristics of the existing institutions in Nepal. The data first explored the policy related provisions of medium of instruction in school education that can affect the smooth function of institutions in Nepal.

The new Constitution in 2016 that has acknowledged the importance of all the national languages, but it has put Nepali language with the greater influence and importance in the country. It has declared Nepali language as the official language of the nation (The Constitution of Nepal, 2016). Recent SSDP (MoE, 2016) plan has identified 60- 70% of schools in Nepal having learners who are homogenously Nepali speaking on entry to ECED

or Pre-Primary Education (PPE) or grade 1. These types of schools are encouraged to have Nepali medium instruction. The rest of schools have been also recommended to support and prepare the children for Nepali medium education. According to the report of Parajuli (2019), the majority of the schools are community school that are supported by the government and have Nepali medium school education. They are 29,032 which is 82 percent of total schools in Nepal and 6.1 million students out of total 7.4 million study in community schools in the country. This data shows how the organizational structure and its development are deeply rooted in the line of practicing Nepali medium of instruction in school education for long duration in Nepal.

Contextual characteristics has further affected the institutional function of schools in Nepal. Linguistically, due to many different social and economic factors, the multilingual classrooms are growing and increasing in Nepal. The trend is not only high in higher level but also can be found in basic school level. O1, P2, and M2 opine that there is a great challenge for implementing mother tongue medium instruction effectively in most places. Plenty of research studies have also pointed towards various problems in conducting the English medium instruction especially in basic level of school. T2, P2 and O1 sharing their reality of teaching in English point many challenges for the community students who even have the problems of understanding and speaking their national language, Nepali. One of the participants says, *“much efforts have also not been taken to enhance the resources of Nepali language to use it as mainstream medium language as the recent policy (SSDP,2016) and the Constitution (2016) inferred”* (E1). Moreover, Nepal has actively shown its commitment to achieve several international educational goals by practicing many human right principles including the right of mother tongues in education. However, most respondents opine that the demand of English medium school education is still very high in Nepal. It shows that recent policies are struggling to find the best way possible to address the contextual realities of present Nepal. These factors seem to be largely responsible for affecting the institutional function to achieve the internal effectiveness in education.

The responses mainly highlight the use of Nepali and English as medium in schools since the provision of Mother tongue education is not institutionalized and practiced everywhere. However, it has been raised in discussion with few stakeholders. Student informants took Nepali as their native and national language and insisted on using it along with English language. English language has also been valued and advocated to embrace it tightly to avail

the opportunities it can offer in and outside the country. T1 says “*Nepal being dependent nation, rely upon many things that requires the use of English whether it may be international opportunities, higher education, private sector jobs or technical education*”. T1 further shares the obligatory situation of the students that have to learn and express the knowledge in English language in higher education even though they practice Nepali medium in their school education. Most of other respondents also raise this issue and feel the need of bringing uniformity in medium in whole education system to bring the improvement in education and motivate the people towards the use of national language as medium in Nepal (P1, T1-2, T4, E1-3). Some respondents (T1, T3, T4, P1, O1, E1 and E2) view that there is deception among the people that students become more qualified and skilled only through English medium. T2 and T4 further share that many good students studying through Nepali medium school education turn out to give very good performance in higher education and they are mostly even selected in the TSC and PSC level different positions. S1 and S2 advise to study the language environment of the students to choose the suitable medium policy in Nepal. All respondents including students have given prime importance of using Nepali language in education to promote and preserve the Nepali culture and traditions.

### **5.4.3 Equality**

The Constitutions in Nepal (1959, 1962) had also declared Nepali as *Rastra Bhasha* (language of nation) and inferred to use it to sustain and promote the unity in the whole nation (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, p.19). The national government in Nepal had also emphasized the role of language on this issue as “the government policy stressed the importance of adopting a native Nepalese language (as opposed to Indian Hindi or English) to unify the nation and to establish strong national identity” (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, p.21). Although the present Constitution of Nepal (2016) has acknowledged all the national mother tongues including Nepali as *Rastra Bhasha* (language of nation), Nepali is still seen as the main language of nation due its wide coverage, development and official status in Nepal.

O1 remarks, “*people of democratic Nepal have freedom to practice their own languages but developing Nepali as language of nation and medium of education in Nepal can contribute to promote national unity and equality in education*”. P1, O1 and E2 opine that the development of all the languages as medium of education is very difficult and not even possible for the

poor country like Nepal but the local languages and dialects can supplement Nepali medium to make the teaching learning activities effective and applicable in the given context. T1 even shares his experience on how he switches *Doteli, Tharu* (Dialects), Nepali and even English terms in his class to help students' understanding. P1, P2, P4, E1, E2 and O1 opine that the most languages and dialects used in Nepal share the same script (Devnagari) as Nepali language. Therefore, the speakers don't have much problems in grasping Nepali language in school education. E2 says, "*the majority of dialects are just the little variations and undeveloped forms that can be easily integrated and represented by Nepali language without losing the culture, script and social traditions*". E2 shows his worry to see how people of different geography insist on establishing the dialects of Nepali language with different names causing further complexity and confusion. E1, E3 and T4 take Nepali language as one of the highly spoken and used languages in Nepal. Some of the respondents share that even the minority communities in Nepal have also started developing the use of Nepali more than before due to fast urbanization and migration in last few years (E1, P2, T2, O1). O1 and E1 share how it is difficult to ensure education in multiple mother tongues in different contexts due to lack of their development as language and availability of human and other resources. The data indicates the accessible and inclusive nature of Nepali as MoI in the context of Nepal.

#### **6.4.4 Relevance**

It is one of the integral components of quality that determines the previous parameters for the given context. It means education needs to be based on learners' characteristics, context and scopes of education. (Barrett, A. et al, 2006, p.10). With two interview questions, the data was collected on how languages especially Nepali as medium relate to the areas of quality education that reflect the relevance as one of the dimensions of the quality in education.

Relevance includes the study of factors such as religious and cultural heritage, social norms and practices, contextual set up, concepts and characters, real life examples, associations and application, teaching-learning resources, infrastructure, national policy, human manpower etc. Many of these areas were touched and discussed in previous headings because relevance is closely related to the most factors that affect the efficiency, effectiveness, equality and even sustainability in education. However, I have presented few of the findings here.



According to E1 and E2, despite the multilingual diversity in Nepal, Nepali as a language is used by the majority of people from Mechi (river) in the eastern end to Mahakali (river) in the western end of Nepal. It has been developed as the common national language for facilitating the trade, communication, education and official activities of the Nepal government. E1 further adds, *“many agencies of the government have been working on developing the curriculums and other resources to conduct Nepali medium school educational programs for long time”*. Moreover, E1 also opines, *“the interlanguage gap between Nepali and most of other highly spoken and developed languages such as Maithali, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Hindi is very less”*. Some of other respondents say that the communities using different script languages have also been exposed to Nepali language for long period of time and therefore developed the foundation for enhancing their ability of using Nepali language (E1, E2, P1, T2, T4). On the other hand, English as medium has not been encouraged in the context of school education in Nepal by the government policies, national and international literatures, news report and research studies due to several factors that are needed to be addressed to make it relevant in the context (Awasthi, 2004, 2015, Brock, 1995, Ferguson, 2006, Gyawali & Khadka, 2016, Mathema, 2018, MoE, 2016, 2018, Phyak, 2013, Sah and Li, 2018). However, M1, T1-3, P1, E1 opine that English medium is helpful to gain more opportunities and even easy for the learners of some cities that get plenty of homely and social exposures in this medium.

The data show that Nepal government has in dilemma on how to include local language promotion along with preserving Nepali language and deserving English language development in school education. This has created conflicting situation in conducting the school education in Nepal. M2 says this in his final remarks, *“it is not clear for them to use any one medium or multiple mediums in school since the government has not provisioned the straight medium policy for all types of schools including private and public schools in Nepal”*. He also shares how the parents view the products of different mediums as different manpower. P1 relates how most of the children get drop out and even fall behind due to the problems of medium of education. She claims, *“it is the strongest reason due to which more and more people move in gulf countries for foreign employment”*. E1, E2 and E3 opine that Nepali language in Nepal has already developed rich literature and it can be further developed through incorporating technical vocabularies. They also see the possibility of developing Nepali language in global scale if the serious attempts are done in this direction.

## 6.4.5 Sustainability

Although sustainability is not much elaborated issue in international literatures, some of the key areas of sustainability of education appear to have close relationship with use of medium in education. The data have shown how medium of instruction affects the sustainability of school education in Nepal.

Languages as medium also found to be closely associated to gain sustainability in Nepal. Several features relating the sustainability of education that involve other key dimensions of quality education show the positive effect of using Nepali as medium in school education. P1-2, T1, T2, T4, M2, E1, O1 and S1-4 opine that it is easy and engaging to conduct teaching learning activities, parents' interactions and other educational activities in Nepali medium in school. E2 shares, "*Nepali language as one of the influential and developed language of Nepal that has been used and instituted for long time in national educational curriculum and resourceful activities*". E3 even see for its possibility of global development. E1-3, M2, T1, T4 opine that Nepali language has plenty of resources needed for school educational activities. E1 claims, "*the local businesses, agriculture and tourism sectors need identifying and improving the cultural and natural resources that is facilitated more effectively in Nepali and other community languages*". All of the respondents agree that the tendency of going out of the nation after high school in Nepal is increasing whether it is for higher education or for work. T4 says "*the inefficiency, lack of consistent use of medium level wise and dominance of English medium also have added more complexities that results into foreign emigration*". On the other hand, T1 claims, "*the brain drain has nothing to do with medium, it is the result of unpractical and less skill oriented educational practice in Nepal*". E1 says, "*Nepali language should be promoted to contribute independence and self-employment in the nation*".

English as medium also appear to be important for developing the competence of English language, addressing the issues related to higher education, national and international job market, foreign opportunities, economic and social status. The present SSDP in Nepal has recommended "to increase students' learning through enhancing its relevance which includes the contextual curriculum, medium, teaching learning resources and outcomes" (MoE, 2016, p. 15). Therefore, community languages have also been encouraged to use as medium especially in early educational programs to facilitate learning and preserving the language and its cultural heritage. However, according to the recent study of HLNEC (MoE, 2018 p.194)

Nepalese education system has been blamed for not creating the opportunity for employment, not encouraging to adopt the ancestral profession, not producing the civilized and ethical citizens. It is also blamed that the education has only become ‘the factory’ for sending the youth out of the country. These issues have been significantly raised in concern with sustainability of education in Nepal.

## **6.5 Summary**

The chapter has assessed the current need of implementing suitable MoI in the Nepalese context. The data clearly show that there are many obstacles in implementing the public policies in practice even though they do have advantages. It is also the case that the government authorities fail to design the consistent language policy and implement them effectively with full support and supervision. English as MoI has been increasing in both private and public schools in reality. Local language development policies are limited only in policies. The role of language as medium is not taken seriously by the ground stakeholders though they have been raised seriously in literature and public policies. Language especially English has been perceived as the quality and people have great desire to learn it for achieving various successes in their life. The respondents don’t seem to understand the direct relationship of medium and quality education. However, the advantages of language as medium they shared, show the significant contribution of MoI on developing quality education in Nepal.

Moreover, Nepali as medium in Nepalese school context have significant contribution on developing five key dimensions of quality framework. It is also appeared that the mother tongues and English language have also their advantages in improving the quality dimensions. However, the challenges and difficulties on ground seem to be more in these languages as MoI in compared to Nepali language while exploring their role in the five key dimensions of quality education in Nepal.

## 7. Discussion

This chapter makes the analysis of the data and findings presented in the previous chapter. The discussion will be based on study findings and the theoretical guideline used during this research. I have specifically attempted to answer two of my research questions here. The first question has been discussed as how the language as MoI has been evidenced as the integral part of quality of education in the context of Nepal. The second research question tends to be answered through the discussion of necessity of promoting Nepali as MoI in Nepalese school education.

### 7.1 MoI as integral part of quality education

The study findings and the relevant literature reviews of this study clearly show the important role of language as medium in developing the quality of school education in Nepalese context. National and international literatures insist on developing the effective language policy in education that helps to achieve the quality. Although the quality remains context specific, the five key dimensions of quality framework in education proposed by Barret, A. et al, 2006 represent the most common aspects to be addressed through efficiency, effectiveness, equality, relevance and sustainability of education. The language as medium does not seem to affect the quality in general but it has been evidenced in this research how language as medium concerns with all the factors of five key quality dimensions discussed before. The communication, understanding, knowledge transfer, application and innovation are not effective in the lack of understandable and usable language as medium in school education that ultimately results in poor quality. Quality of education as in effectiveness principle, aims to develop the individual potentials but lack of English competence as medium causes further complexities among the students in higher classes who passed out from school in different medium. Similarly, the non-contextual and foreign use of language as medium in early education creates burden for the young minds and that results into very slow improvement or even leads to high drop out. Adopting the international languages as MoI in education lacking the environmental (social, economic, cultural, contextual) exposure not only adds complexities in education but also leads towards the loss of indigenous and national identity.

Each language has its own advantages and uses inside or outside the nation. There is no problem in learning any language anywhere for fulfilling the given purpose but using the

language as medium in education is completely a different case. Through the key dimensions of quality education as discussed in this research, it is clear that aim of education is not only teaching any language but ensuring the other quality aspects successfully with the most relevant medium of instruction. English as one of the most dominant and useful international languages which has many advantages as a language in the whole world including Nepal but unfortunately the trend of taking English as end or quality has overlooked the development of several aspects of quality education in Nepal.

## **7.2 Necessity of promoting Nepali as MoI**

Historical evidence, the constitutional and environmental context in Nepal has positioned Nepali as one of the most valuable national languages of Nepal. It has been used as the official language and used as medium in public school education for long time. The data also suggest that it is used by more than 50 percent of people as mother tongues and majority of the rest of the population use it as first language all throughout Nepal. The language has wide scope in almost every sector in Nepal. It has also developed the literatures and other teaching learning resources needed for conducting the school education in Nepal. Majority of spoken languages after Nepali have close relationship with one another. There are many dialects and local mother tongues that can be represented and preserved by Nepali language. Due to the urbanization and migration, it is also believed that the majority of minority language speakers also developed the foundation for using Nepali language.

On the other hand, the research studies indicate several challenges to implement mother tongues and English as medium in school education. However, the school education in practice is increasingly turning towards English as medium. As a result, using of mother tongues or local languages as medium even in only early schools are extremely limited and on the verge of losing the practical ground. In this multilingual and complex developing identity, Nepali as medium has been overlooked to be promoted as inclusive language of Nepal. The contextual characteristics that it holds make it unique from any other languages of discussion as medium in Nepal. Being a popular and national mother tongue, it can address the issues associated with mother tongues such as lack of resources, users, domains, inclusiveness and at the same time appears to contribute in minimizing the challenges caused by English medium instruction. Resolving these issues through effective language medium is itself an important topic of concern. The findings of this research have indicated the positive effects of using

Nepali as medium on quality of school education. The data show the significant contribution of Nepali medium in developing the five key dimensions of quality education in Nepal.

Understanding, involvement, affordability, intercommunication and teaching learning resource management are few of the indicators of the efficiency of education. Nepali as medium has been in use for long time in Nepal. Participant students in both English and Nepali medium schools perceive that Nepali as medium helps them to understand the content of education far more easily than English medium. Teachers also feel easy and open to teach the content in Nepali medium. It is also found that students and majority of parents prefer using Nepali language in various school based interactional activities to show their full participation. The data also suggest that it has developed all the necessary educational resources to effectively implement the school curriculum in Nepal. Being a first language of majority of people in Nepal, it has more resources and working domains than any other national languages used in Nepal. Moreover, it imposes less economic burden to grow and train the manpower in the poor country like Nepal.

Effectiveness of quality education reflects the role of education in developing individual and social resources. School education in Nepal acts as the foundation of for this kind of development. Nepali as one of the developed mother tongue and official national language in Nepal has been presented as the effective MoI in this regard. Institutions can function well and easily implement this medium to achieve different social and contextually relevant outcomes. There are great number of schools throughout the country that have been operated in the line of Nepali medium for long duration. It shows the long institutional efforts and preparation to run the school education in Nepali medium. Therefore, institutionally it looks like established language as medium that can be easily promoted and implemented more effectively to achieve the educational outcomes. Better functional institutions can better produce resources through education. At present, it is difficult to avoid the increasing multilingualism in the classroom and increasing attraction towards English as medium in school. At the same time, there is a global influence of adopting and developing the local languages in education. This has brought many challenges to effectively run the school education to achieve the desired outcomes for the country. Especially, the education has been blamed for not being socially driven and supportive for developing the national infrastructure. It has been blamed as 'the factory' that produces manpower only for fulfilling the interests of foreign countries (MoE,2018, p.18). Amidst this, Nepali as medium has been neglected but

the majority of the data of this research show that the problems can be overcome in efficient ways through supporting Nepali medium school education.

Equality in education also possesses great importance in the context of Nepal where multiversity exists. The diversity is the matter of pride for the Nepal, but it has caused several challenges to address the issue of equality in education. Large linguistic diversity has further initiated a debate of developing the education through the implementation of suitable language policy in the country. The data has explored the inclusive characteristics of Nepali language in Nepal. It has found the close solidarity between Nepali and many of the national languages spoken in Nepal. Most of the dialects and undeveloped forms of languages used in different communities also appear to have close relationship with Nepali language. Nepali as a language historically was also proposed to bring the unity in the nation. It is relevant that instead of putting efforts on developing all the languages and dialects for education in different states, inclusive language like Nepali can be supplemented through integrating similar language forms. It thus helps to embrace and sustain the national norms, social traditions and culture and further helps to avoid further complexities, conflict and confusion.

Contextual demand and multiple diversity in Nepal have put the issue of relevance in the center of quality education. It is also reflected in most national and international literatures which advocate for the implementation of contextually relevant educational programs. The aims and objectives of School education in Nepal also clearly mentions the outcomes that put more emphasis on developing the relevant education. The emphasis on developing mother tongue-based education is the part of it. However, the rapid globalization has challenged the development of such education to achieve the contemporary demands of the society and people. English as an international and influential language has had increasing demand for acquiring the global success and development in Nepal but it has its own challenges in the context of Nepal. Therefore, the confusion has increased to develop and implement any clear language policy to achieve the desired outcomes. In this regard, Nepali as medium in school education serve as more resourceful national language. It has also the significant potential to be developed into national language of wider scope. Moreover, other issues raised in different other quality principles before has already shown the positive influence of Nepali medium in Nepal. These factors together help to further define and elaborate the importance of Nepali medium in the area of relevance as the key dimension of quality education in Nepal.

Sustainability is resulted from the continuous and integrated efforts applied in the areas of quality I discussed before. It is not a separate phenomenon. It takes the account of efficiency, effectiveness, equality and relevance to address different issues of quality education. As for the medium, Nepali as medium in school education having the contributory functions on these quality principles as discussed before also have positive significant impact on achieving sustainability. Exploring the contextual resources and utilizing them to develop the long-term cycle of both individual and social development are very essential in sustainability. Increasing brain drain and dependence in the country are associated with lack of proper planning of educational management. The effective use of language and its development in education is needed to educate and train the human resources required for the overall development of country in easier and accessible manner. It also important to preserve and sustain the cultural and social heritage of the country for saving the national identity. At the same time, contemporary needs and aspirations of the society and people should also be fulfilled through education.

### **7.3 Summary**

The chapter has answered the research questions of this study. The first research question explored the role of language as medium on developing quality of education. It has evidenced that language as MoI is significant and integral part of education. It affects the various factors of quality. Therefore, selection and implementation of MoI in school education in Nepal also has its direct and indirect effects on quality. The second research question seeks the need of promoting Nepali as medium in school education in Nepal. It has been discussed taking the reference of five quality principles. The final analysis shows the importance of promoting Nepali as medium for developing the quality of school education in Nepal. Nepali as a national language, has been serving as lingua franca for long time in Nepal and it has also the official status at present. It is also language of wide coverage and most importantly inclusive in the context of Nepal. Therefore, the data argue that Nepali as a medium can contextually more relevant and implementable than both mother tongue and English medium for achieving the quality of education in Nepal.



## 8. Conclusion

The present research has been conducted in small part of Nepal with limited time and limited resources. Therefore, I don't claim it to be applicable for the whole country Nepal but the issues I have dealt with, have many common features and scopes that help to make it useful for different study purpose even for the whole country.

In the country like Nepal being struggling for economic and educational development, more priority should be given towards developing the quality of education through different measures. Deciding and implementing the effective MoI is one of the measures to achieve the quality in education. It significantly affects all different domains of quality without which the quality education is never achievable. The language as medium is perceived as not to directly improve the quality, but it has been found to play crucial role to develop several factors that are the parts of quality education. It indicates that the MoI should be taken seriously to address the issues of quality education in Nepal. The government seemed to have emphasized on the potential of developing Nepali as the mainstream language medium for addressing the multi linguistic complexities in Nepal. (Baldauf and Kaplan, 2000, p.21, MoE, 2016). The present findings of this research have also shown the positive role of Nepali as medium in developing the quality in Nepalese school education. It is also one of the highly spoken and resourceful national languages that has been appeared as an inclusive language that can be developed as mainstream language of education in Nepal. In nutshell, the research points the necessity of promoting Nepali as MoI but it has also identified the importance of using mother tongues and English as language in Nepalese school education. Hence, the educational policy on medium of instruction needs to study the possibility and scope of these issues instead of blindly acknowledging the policies aligned with international interests and claims that do not mostly have contextual ground.

## 9. Recommendation

I have recommended some of the key areas which have evolved during the research as the important concerns for the government and policy makers. I have also proposed some questions that helps to guide the researchers to carry on the future study.

The first concern is developing the integrated medium of instruction. It is essential at present to address the problems of both multilingualism and development of quality education. For the poor country like Nepal, it appears to be more important to drive the education towards achieving quality dimensions by developing and using most inclusive and accessible national language as mainstream medium of education. Therefore, it is better to think of integrating languages and promote identifying, planning, developing and implementing the mainstream MoI that is more beneficial and adaptable in the contextual realities of the country. Integrated language approach neither support monolingual medium policy not it encourages multilingual medium use in education. It allows the inclusive language as mainstream medium to be supplemented by the use of other local, national and even international languages. As Bhaskaran (2017) also suggests not to debate between MT and English medium instruction instead put efforts on maintaining the multilingual characteristics of society in general and in classrooms through integrated linguistic endeavors (p.212). The great soul and nationalist linguist of India, late Mahatma Gandhi in Brock (1995) had also inferred how the national unity and solidarity can be promoted in multi diverse country like India through developing the inclusive national language (*Hindustani*) through continuous integration and development.

The second concern is the early language support. The research studies have shown that early language development in prospective medium is essential to improve the learning experience. Government official, teachers and managers in my research as well indicated how it is difficult in early stage to adapt the different medium of education in Nepal. Some of them also shared how the literacy development programs of the government, NGOs and INGOs such as Early Grade Reading (EGR) programs contribute in various ways to uplift the achievement of education in public schools. These programs prepare the learners of different backgrounds to understand and use the medium in school. Early language support in public education does not seem as effective as in private preschool programs. Therefore, majority of students lacks basic literacy in public schools.

The third concern is about handling the influence of international languages. There are many neighboring international and global languages which have their great importance and usefulness in the present scenario of national development of Nepal since the current Nepalese government has forwarded the principles of international collaboration and integration to rapidly achieve the economic development in the country. Moreover, to handle the increasing globalization and its effects, clear and strong international language policy seems to be inevitable in Nepal. Dilemma of the medium of instruction would be easier to solve if the state has clear international language policy.

Following are some of the research questions that helps to explore and study more on these issues.

- Can Nepali language be developed as the mainstream MoI in the context of Nepal?
- How and to what extent the integration of languages is necessary? Will it have the positive impacts on developing the quality of education in Nepal?
- Should ECD classes support children of multiple backgrounds to prepare for mainstream medium or they should focus on multiple languages development?
- Can we expect quality through international languages as medium of school education in the multilingual context of Nepal where the children even feel difficult to grasp the national languages?
- Is acquiring international languages without making them as medium of school education not possible in Nepal?

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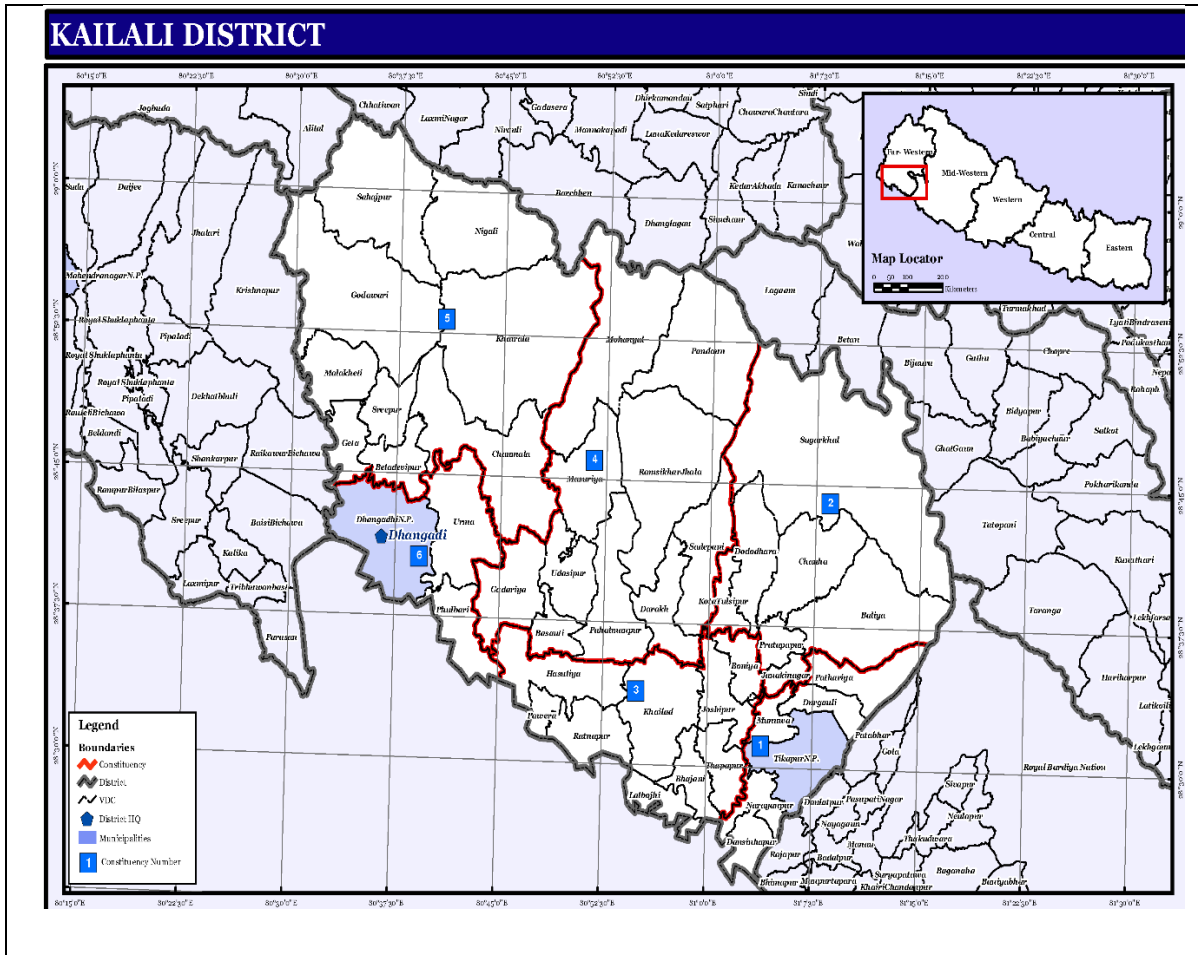
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# Appendices

Appendix: 1 Location map (Kailali District of Far western Nepal)



Appendix: 2 Interview guide

| Research Themes                        | Keys  | Questions  | Probes/Sub keys  | Respondents   |
|--|---|--|--|---------------|
| General Inquiry on MoI                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of MoI in school education</li> <li>• MoI for Quality of education</li> <li>• Nepali as MoI in school education</li> </ul> | 1. What do you think about the need of implementing suitable medium of instruction in school education of Nepal?   | EMI, NMI, MTSE   | All           |
|  |   | 2. How can a language as MoI contribute to develop the quality of education?   | Teaching, learning, resource development, context                      | All           |
|  |   | 3. How do you find the use of Nepali as MoI in schools of Nepal recently?  | Decreasing, increasing, ineffective, to be promoted                    | T, P, O, M, E |
| Nepali as MoI and Quality in education | Efficiency (Input)  | 4. Do you get benefited in conducting teaching learning activities in Nepali medium at school? If yes, how?  | Understanding, involvement, affordability, teaching learning resources | S, T          |
|  |   | 5. How can Nepali as Medium help in making effective interaction between students, parents, teachers and schools in Nepalese context?                      | Need of translation, communication gap, involvement                    | All           |
|  |   | 6. What is needed to improve the teaching learning in Nepali medium at school?   | Competence, resources, access, policy                                  | O, E          |
|  | Effectiveness (Output)  | 7. How can Nepali as MoI contribute to achieve the educational outcomes of school education in Nepal?  | Skilled manpower, national spirit, higher education opportunities      | E, T, P, O, M |
|  |   | 8. Do you find any contribution of Nepali medium school education in identifying and promoting the local needs, resources and careers in Nepalese context? | National resource development  | P, T, E, O, M |



|  |                        |   |   |            |
|--|------------------------|---|---|------------|
|  | Equality               | 9. In order to distribute the school education easily and equally in the context of multi-diversity in Nepal, what is your concern about using Nepali as MoI in school? | Inclusiveness, Inter language gap and relatedness, accessibility  | E, P, T, O |
|  |                        | 10. In the context of recently developing democratic federal Nepal, do you see the importance of using Nepali as MoI in school education to develop the national unity? | social and religious harmony, mutual co-operation, unity in diversity   | All        |
|  | Relevance              | 11. How can the use of Nepali as MoI in school education help in teaching and learning the social culture, customs, beliefs, trends of the country?                     | religious and cultural heritage, social norms and practices, contextual set up, concepts and characters, real life examples, associations and application | All        |
|  |                        | 12. How challenging do you find it to deliver the school education in Nepali medium in Nepal?   | teaching-learning resources, infrastructure, National policy, human manpower  | O, M, E    |
|  | Sustainability         | 13. How does the school education contribute in developing and mobilizing the internal resources, businesses, professions and suitable manpower for the country?        | High emigration for study and work, role of language in education   | All        |
|  | Other concern (if any) |   |   |            |

**Respondents:** -T- Teachers, S- Students, O- Official, E- Experts in Nepali language, M- Managers, P- Parents.

