

**Original Research**

**“Neoprivatisation” in Public Schools in Nepal**

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**Abstract**

This article introduces the term “neoprivatisation” in the literature of economics of education. It exposes the consequence of privatisation in education to public school by taking a community as a case and studying in a mixed-method paradigm. The study uncovers that public schools suffer from lesser preference by parents, and underuse or misuse of public expenditure, so that, like private schools, have added the facilities of English medium, extra-class, preparing students for test by charging fees, as well as advertising to attract more students. As a result, the narrow focus to achievement score rather than developing qualities in students as expected by curriculum has threatened the presumption of ‘quality education’; and the commodification and commercialisation of education along with diminishing professional accountability of teacher victimise students with the undue burden of irrational extra-classes and fees. Therefore, the added facilities rouse for discriminating students in access to education and larceny of ‘right to free education’. These undesirable phenomena are the consequences of privatisation in education, which has been thus conceptualized as “neoprivatisation”.

**Keywords:** Neoprivatisation; Privatisation in School Education; Professional Accountability of Teacher; Quality Education; Nepal

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## **Introduction**

“Neoprivatisation” is a collective phenomenon that emerged in 'public schools' (though officially called 'community school', we prefer 'public school' for its funding and managing as a public enterprise in comparison to 'private school') that are located around private schools in semi-urban Nepal. It was a neither expected nor intended but novel consequences of privatisation are seen and therefore a 'new form' – the prefix 'neo' – is added. Thus, privatisation in school education (henceforth 'PSE') is the departure point for the conceptualization of “neoprivatisation”. Although a few private schools existed before, privatisation became the component of liberalism policy applicable to 'public schools' since the 1990s. The 10th Plan (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2002) presumed- “a competitive environment in educational service will be developed through encouragement to the private sector for quality education (henceforth QE), and national education policy will be made private sector friendly” (p. 121). Thus, private school was appreciated for relatively 'higher achievement score' and 'pass rate', though the role of school factor in it had not been examined (Thapa, 2012). As a result, “does private school competition improve public school performance?” remains inconclusive (Thapa, 2011, p. 4). Rather, the famous School Leaving Certificate (SLC) study (Mathema & Bista, 2006) suggests that 'two types of schooling' is a practice of discrimination and a source of social inequality. Nevertheless, the government in 2008, though, led by the party which used to oppose 'private school' during the insurgency, instead of implementing a single schooling system, not only legalized the discriminatory practice but fostered commercialization in school education by charging tax. Continuous corroborating (e. g. S. D. Bhatta, 2014; ActionAid International Secretariat, 2017; Joshi, 2017) of the truth obligated the Nepal government to make strategies for “reducing the gap between the education quality delivered from private and public schools” (NPC, 2017, p. 132).

With lesser than a century-long history of mass schooling, policy in Nepal is found to suffer from not only over-centralization but also the interest of donors (Carney, 2003; P. Bhatta, 2011). Moreover, with the emergence of neoliberalism, school education emerged as an attractive profit-making business so that private schools are found extended even in small towns, plain habitations and densely populated mountainous villages. Thus, the private school stood as a parallel to public school. But a few politicians and intellectuals, based on their ideology and empirical studies,

demand to deliver education only through public schools in a thin voice (Madsen & Carney, 2011).

PSE has been, not verified as beneficial as presumed by the 10th plan, reported harmful to the egalitarian society. Even then, the state is carrying it. This controversy motivated us to examine the presumption of ‘PSE’ into public schools. Contrary to the presumption, the study reports underuse or misuse of public expenditure; diminishing education quality, and teachers’ professional accountability; and larceny of ‘right to free education’ and cultivating social equality. These phenomena observed in public schools are summarized as “neoprivatisation” which is a malevolent consequence of PSE. This knowledge warns the policymakers and curriculum designers of their accountability and public school teachers of their professionalism.

### **Privatisation in School Education: Some Literature**

The review has been organized into the four thematic areas that conceptualize PSE, quality of education, teachers’ professional ethics and accountability, and research methods in a quality school.

#### **Privatisation in Education: Quality and Access**

The advocates of PSE claim that it induces market competition in school choice and that results in pedagogical innovation for QE, and any better practices of private schools are borrowed to public school (Brathwaite, 2017). Thus, saved national budget is invested in public schools for the poor (Starr, 1988; Verger, Fontdevila, & Zancajo, 2016). But there is almost no evidence that PSE increases the quality of education (Ravitch, 2013), rather it fosters inequality (Burch, 2009, p. 14) and thus has been opposed by parents (Klitgaard, 2008; Rizvi, 2016). Contrary to the presumption of neoliberalism- “the service providers rather than compete for quality enhancement, cartel for profit maximization” (Brathwaite, 2017, p. 432) so that the “neoliberal reform neither reduces inequality nor creates a system of schools in which all students have equal access to QE (p. 430). Moreover, equalizing QE to ‘achievement score’ is against the motto of - “the curriculum must contribute to the all-round development of a person” (College of Education, 1956, p. 119) that is accepted and expected by school curriculum (Curriculum Development Center, 2071 BS).

## **QE: Professional Accountability of Teachers**

Finland and Japan, two countries that perform consistently well in international comparative studies like Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and equitable variance of learning outcomes (Yada, Tolvanen, & Savolainen, 2018, p. 344) are analysed to understand quality, equity, and professional accountability. The Finnish system relies on the professional autonomy of teachers rather than test-based accountability. The ‘professional autonomy’ makes teaching a valued career where teachers engage with local education authorities to approve the school-level curriculum, and school principals play a key role in curriculum design (Sahlberg, 2011). Since professional teacher concerns- “to what extent am I expert and autonomous in curriculum designing and implementing as per the policy of the state or broader value?”

Japan emphasizes the test-based accountability (Private School in Japan, 2017), and teachers’ professional development through collaborative inquiry in lesson planning, instructional materials, lesson plans. Lesson plans are tested by classroom observation, reflection and sharing frequently along with the principal and expert teachers, and experts from university (Doig & Groves, 2011). Thus, teachers develop a culture of commitment to inquiry, shared goals, and a sense of responsibility to their colleagues and students (Lewis, Perry, & Hurd, 2009). High-stake accountability focuses on making sense of policy and implements into the classroom (Palmer & Rangel, 2011), and “student-centred accountability on the progress of individual students rather than on averages of large groups of students who may or may not share similar learning needs” (Reeves, 2004, p. 6). School accountability systems typically follow testing students, public reporting of school performance and rewards or sanctions based on performance (Kane & Staiger, 2002). Since accountable teacher concerns- “does the quality of education I deliver is as much as the money that I get? Typically, teachers’ salaries and other benefits are proportionate to students’ performance. This approach of accountability is insufficient because “schools focus on test-specific skills to increase high-stakes test scores” (Jennings & Sohn, 2014, p. 127), and these scores discredit the not-school effects (Downey, von Hippel, & Hughes, 2008). Applying a similar comparative perspective, it can be well arguable that the school accountability practice of Nepal of ranking and awarding both schools and teachers on the basis SLC exam score is not helpful.

### **School Quality: Research Methods**

School research engages in examining the role of manipulating and influencing variables such as teacher quality, physical infrastructure, and culture of a school, school-community relationship including shaping the consequence of schooling. Scheerens (2013), after reviewing 109 school effectiveness research, suggests that only 6 could be seen as theory-driven but no method laden. Carney (2003) stresses on wider qualitative methods that concern to multilevel and causal analyses and strengthen the validity of effectiveness research findings for practical school improvement strategies. There is a growing debate about the definition of effectiveness that links to peace, democracy, health, productivity, flexibility, and lifelong learning rather solely to academic achievement (Davies, 2001; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2004). Achievement score based research captures the partial quality of students and cannot identify the points of improvement since an alternative approach to engaging school effectiveness inquiry to locate the issues of social inequality into considerations about schooling is critical ethnography which “advocates against inequality and domination” (Creswell, 2012, p. 467). Carney (2003) not only prescribes critical ethnographic research to expose the role of schooling as ‘symbolic violence’ to address the more recent phenomena in Nepal but also applies ethnography to show the failure of technical-rational modernization of schooling to address the social diversity (Carney & Madsen, 2009). Similarly, Valentin (2011) examines ethnographically the relevance of schooling in securing the modern life of young living in the slum area of Kathmandu.

### **Research Methodology**

To examine the effect of privatisation forces on public schools, a semi-urban region of inner Terai where around 6500 households, 16 public, and 8 private schools are located within a diameter of 5 km was selected. This ‘community’ was the ‘field’ (Creswell, 2012, p. 130) of study selected by ‘purposeful sampling’ (p. 206) as ‘instrumental case’ (p. 465) to illuminate the issue of PSE. The parents and (head)teachers were selected as ‘convenience sample’ (Creswell, 2012, p. 145) for ‘qualitative interview’ (p. 217). The entire fieldwork took place from February to June 2018 for a period of five months.

Research problem guided the collection and analysis of information that embraces quantitative approach in student numbers, fees, achievement scores; and qualitative approach in generating information through informal conversations, artifacts, participant observation in describing facilities and pedagogies and perceptions, values, motives of parents and teachers through vignettes (Azman & Mahadhir, 2017). Thus, post-positivism, interpretivism, and ‘critical theory’ are concurrent here, because imposed fees and cultivating inequality is viewed as ‘exploitation’ (Azman & Mahadhir, p. 476).

This study focuses on “describing and forming an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon” (Azman & Mahadhir, p. 247), and, rather than bonding with paradigmatic stand, dares to employ any perspective, approach, and method that is appropriate to understand the phenomenon as a ‘pragmatist’ (p. 537), but, perplexes to ‘what next?’. Recommending the ways of preventing “neoprivatisation” from the ground of ‘rational-functionalism’ is almost futile because policymakers and teachers are themselves the agents of exploitation. Moreover, the research did not engage in educating victims about the exploitation, organizing them to resist by developing the appropriate ‘pedagogy of the oppressed’ (Freire, 1972). Therefore, the study restricted to just presenting cause and effects, however, a sufficient description of the context is provided to help readers identify the transferability.

### **Analysis and Findings**

The analysis follows the presentation of quantitative findings followed by qualitative analysis.

#### **Parental Trust in School and Utilisation of Public Expenditure**

As we observed the 8 private and 16 public schools in the field, we found higher enrolment in private schools (see Table 1). The recorded students 4645 (56.385%) go to the public and 3593 (43.615%) private schools. All of the private and 10 public schools have run nursery and kindergarten separately.

Table 1

*Student Numbers in Public and Private Schools from the Community*

School/ Grade	N, KG, ECD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
Public (N 16)	537	285	323	356	345	384	417	469	503	588	340	4547
Private (N 8)	663	653	368	336	293	279	210	237	182	194	175	3590

Source: Records from the municipality office 2075 BS

Numbers of public schools are twice as much whereas student numbers are just a little percentage more suggests that private school is preferred more than the public. For the ease of view, data from Table 1 is presented in Figure 1.

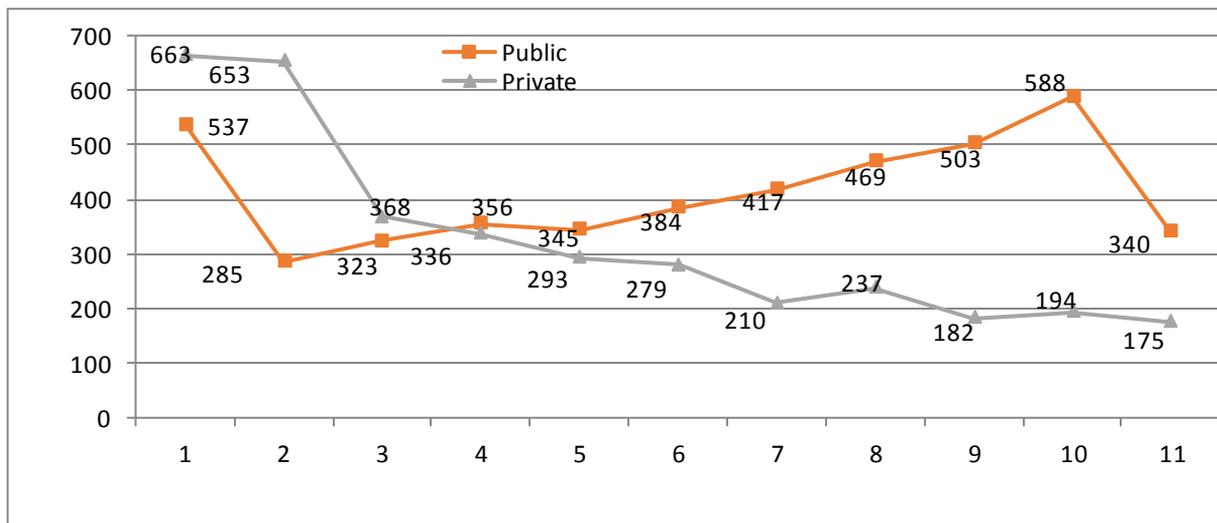


Figure 1. Comparing students’ class wise preference of private and public schools.

Figure 1 illustrates that as the students rise in upper grades, they are shifted from private to public schools.

The enrolment data pushed to search the causes of (i) preferring private school despite economic burden; and (ii) reversing student numbers in from lower to higher grades. For the former, three parents who shifted their children from private to public in grades 5, 7 and 9 were asked to share their opinions about the causes of student shifting, and for the later three (head)teachers were asked. The cause of preferring is that private schools give special attention and intensive care in learning-related matters so that the "formation of the foundation" is more secured in private schools; and on the one hand, give special care and protection to still dependent children, and on the other, cooperate parents in their health and security-related problems so that children are safer in private schools. The cause of shifting is that the grown and independent children need not require much care of private schools in health, security and learning issues; and a few parents want their children to get graduates from public schools to grasp scholarships from the Nepal government in higher and professional education.

This information suggests that teachers in public schools are less accountable for taking care of children in learning, security, and health. As a result, parental trust in public schools is not satisfactory.

**Under/Mis-Use of Public Expenditure**

The government provides teachers, infrastructure development, and stationery expenditure for public schools. Table 2 shows the provided and required teachers in public schools.

Table 2

*Different Kinds of Teacher Number in Different Schools*

School	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Total
Required	9	9	30	8	7	28	3	4	6	8	2	10	10	7	8	1	150
Government funded	4	12	24	6	8	24	5	5	9	8	4	10	5	8	8	3	143
School funded	12	0	16	4	2	30	0	0	2	3	2	1	4	1	1	0	78
ECD	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	0	33
Source: School visit (pseudonyms of schools)																	

Total students in grades 1-10 are 4547, and if they are provided teachers with a ratio of 50:1, they require 91 teachers. There are 143 teachers recruited by the government, and other 78 teachers are recruited internally. Moreover, ECD teachers are paid Rs. 3000 to 9000 additional, besides the government's payment Rs. 6500. Most portion of

this payment comes from students' fees. A total of 537 students are recorded in ECD, but field observation and informal conversations suggest that one-quarter of them attend private schools.

Thus, the consequence of PSE has compelled parents to send their children to a private school in one hand, and underuse or misuse of public resources on the other. This has further cultivated more trust in private organizations than the public. It may untimely lead to submission to private corporates.

### **'Quality Reform' Movement**

With the election of the first CA, private schools expanded aggressively and made student crises in public schools. As a response, public schools too began imitating the practices of private schools to attract students in collaboration with civil officers and local cadres of political parties who were involved in the all-party-mechanism. This movement was informally called 'quality reform'. Some major aspects of the new strategies are as follows:

**English medium.** Public schools have applied the English language as a medium of instruction. The Municipality has supported schools by providing training to some of the primary level teachers on "teaching in English medium". Teachers use the textbooks written in English, teach by translating into the Nepali language and write the answers to each question of the exercise for students. They seldom describe the content in English and no student can talk about the content in English, except a few who were shifted from certain private schools. If schools have two sections, they are parallelly running Nepali and English medium from 6th to 10th grade.

**Extra-class.** These schools run extra-classes generally three months for Maths, English and Science subjects for the students of 8th grade, and only one month for the students of lower grades before the final exam. But for 10th grade, 3 months of rigorous residential care teaching is run. Private schools generally run a one-month long package three times a year before the first term, mid-term and final exams for all grades.

**Tracking.** Students are tracked into sections where there are at least two sections. Table 6 suggests that the achievement score of the students who were in the English

medium is better than those in the Nepali medium. The tracked students are taught and given further practice as per their expectations and ability.

**Preparing students for the test.** All the schools use the strategy of exam preparation. Students are kept in a group and they are provided old question sets, model questions, guess questions, questions from practice books and asked to submit an answer under the supervision of subject teachers. Their answer books are scored, errors are corrected and returned. The definition of an expert teacher is one who can guess the items that are likely to be asked in the upcoming exams and prepare the students accordingly. A comparison of the educational standards of private and public schools of the locality is made based on the 8th grade and SEE exams, which are external. Teachers sometimes feel the pressure of these tests for their social prestige, and student attraction.

**The incentive to teachers.** Some of the comparatively better schools have adopted teacher motivation techniques with monetary incentives and social recognition such as award and felicitation to the high performing teachers individually and collectively. A high performing teacher is defined as the one whose students pass with higher grades in his or her respective subject. Usually, some money or best teacher award, laptop, and pen-drive, etc are given as an incentive. Likewise, some money is given for substitute teaching, extra-class teaching. Similarly, teachers' tour and heavy picnics are offered collectively.

**Infrastructure development for learning.** Six public schools have their transportation so that students from as far as 3 km away can admit in this school. Some parents send their children to private schools only because those schools carry their children by school buses from home-door to school-door. Ten schools have maintained furniture and TV set in nursery and kindergarten classrooms, cemented and coloured classroom, compulsory uniforms with tie and belt for both students and teachers. Others also have similar but fewer provisions.

### **Diminishing Education Quality**

Two distorted practices were observed in public schools with 'quality reform'. One, they have misinterpreted QE as 'achievement score' against the curricular goals that expect developing skills and attitudes (CDC, 2071 BS). Another, they have practised

irrational ways of teaching with the undue investment of time, effort and money of students in the name of QE.

QE is that which can develop expected performance in students as stipulated in the curriculum. But achievement score (presented in Table 3) secured in the final exam by answering the questions that demand lower-order thinking skills has been accepted as QE, and all the efforts of ‘quality reform’ are directed to increasing achievement score rather than translating curricular goals into students’ behaviours: (a) Their teaching methods are- question answer, recitation, rote memorization, preparing for tests by practising the items form text and practice books which are not significant to achieving curricular goals; (b) Tracking- “all students, regardless of ability, would learn more in a tracked class relative to a non-tracked class” (Zimmer, 2003, p. 307), but tracking is effective only if the different ability students are catered with different ways, styles, and pace of support. Contrary to the principle of tracking (i.e., leading to the same quality by different ways and paces to different students), here all the students are applied the same methods - practising and memorising but to lead different levels of learning; (c) Added facilities such as- uniform, school bus, fans are not directly related to the quality learning. A professional teacher does not impose extra text and practice books to implement the curriculum; (d) Incentives- teachers are felicitated, publicly applauded, or awarded prizes based on students’ achievement scores rather than real behaviour. This incentive does not contribute to developing professional accountability; (e) Extra-class: Nothing laudable ‘extra’ is taught in ‘extra-class’ rather than repeating the same what teachers are responsible to teach in a regular class. This irrational burden of time, money and effort may be counterproductive to students’ development and child-friendly learning; and (f) English medium- English language texts and instructions are supposed to be more helpful to develop English skills than the Nepali language, but the classroom practices do not lead to developing the four skills of English language. Instead, some contents- stories, general knowledge included in English language texts are decontextualized, and against the principle of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Luitel, 2009). Rote memorization of answers that were written by teachers for the preparation of tests does not contribute to the transfer of knowledge (Ertmer & Newby, 2013).

Privatisation is culpable for this: (a) it is a result of imitation of private schools; (b) state mechanism adopted the achievement score base benchmark of quality by imitating

the developed countries, getting advantage of the weak regulatory body, private schools for maximization of profit interpreted the trivial quality as laudable.

**Commodification and commercialization of education.** Originally, education, a process of developing the inner talent of a person, and individual quality of fulfilling the responsibility of social, national and international responsibility, on the one hand, has become the commodity for consumption and profit-making by branding and marketing with consumer identity (Schembri, Merrilees, & Kristiansen, 2010). On the other, even in public schools where education is assumed a process of leading out the inherent talent free of cost is becoming expensive.

**Extra Fee for Extra Score**

‘Quality reform’ has added certain activities besides regular schooling, for that study must pay. School charges fees in the cost of studying in the English medium, and students are compelled to admit legally- (e.g. we have few seats in English but none in Nepali) and psychologically- persuading students as English medium is superior”. Students are compelled to buy text and practice books written in English and published by private companies- English medium requires extra classes and books; the books developed by the government of Nepal and teaching these books at a regular time are not sufficient to result in good quality, otherwise, “students may fail, and they are not responsible for failure”. Thus, teachers create fear for students and compel them to attend some tuition classes. Parents also reported that teachers ask questions (in tests and exams) from those that they emphasise in extra classes. Total cost-shared by students to complete 8th grade in 2074 District Level Exam and achieve scores in different schools have been presented comparatively in Table 3.

Table 3

*Cost for Achievement Scores of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade in Different Schools*

	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Achievement score average</b>	<b>Annual cost in NRs.</b>	<b>Cost (NRs.) sharing by students for unit score</b>
English medium	Z	560.43	17,875	31.35
	T	558.45	16,500	33.85
	I		14,415	
	N	490.74	10,810	45.40
	L		10,090	

	Schools	Achievement score average	Annual cost in NRs.	Cost (NRs.) sharing by students for unit score
Nepali medium	K	402.72	3,670	109.73
	J	375.69	2,750	136.61
	M	370.15	1,900	194.82
	R		910	
Annual cost includes admission, monthly, extra-class, and exam fees, and cost of text and practice books, tie and belt.				
Source: school record and conversation with teachers and students (pseudonyms of schools)				

Table 3 suggests that: (a) no school teaches students without charging a fee; (b) students pay extra for extra score willy-nilly; (c) more the pay, higher the achievement score (higher the quality); and (d) there is class segregation within a public school.

Synthesising the ideas emerged above suggests that the motive of ‘quality reform’ is economical- moneymaking by exploiting students in the disguise of pedagogical efforts. This fact substantiates a shameful condition of teachers’ professional accountability. ‘The imposed fees’ is happening in the involvement of elected members and officers of the local government. This fact indicates that the state itself is violating the constitutional provision of free school education, and the mechanisms of the state are helpless in front of the force of commercialization to fulfil its promise of ‘free quality education’.

### Advertising School Facilities

Public schools want to make more students, and for that, they advertise their facilities. Table 4 presents some of the extra facilities they advertise in some selected schools.

Table 4

#### Marketing Methods With Facilities

Facilities/Schools	I	L	M	U	K	N	R	J
Extra class with fee	yes							
English medium	yes							
Extra books	yes							

Facilities/Schools	I	L	M	U	K	N	R	J
School bus with fee	yes				Yes	yes		yes
Free Tiffin*					yes	yes	yes	yes
Free Stationery*						yes	yes	
Furnish and toys*	yes							
*These facilities are provided only to ECD classes. In tiffin chiura, vooja or biscuits are provided. Nearly three sets of pencils and copies in a year. The floor is carpeted, a low table, some plastic chairs, a few toys, wall paintings, and a TV set.								
Source: Field visit (pseudonyms of schools)								

They are misleading the ignorant clients that physical facilities are tantamount to QE. Meanwhile, QE has been compared to extra-fees charged in school. Some of the above schools convinced parents stating that parents need to send children to their (teachers’) school, where they have- playground and open space, clean drinking water, toilet facilities, rooms with fans in summer seasons, RCC buildings, cycle stand, and canteen for QE. Thus, schools are misleading the parents by interpreting these tangible things like education, and their qualities as hallmarks of QE.

Schools claim that there are “qualified and experienced teachers”, and call for admission. They claim ‘qualified’ for those who have an academic degree of Bachelor and Master’s level, and ‘experienced’ for teaching many years. But, legally and professionally- qualified is that who has the license for this level and subject, and experienced is who has been certified as a professional development career path (Angell, Ryder, & Scott, 2005), - ‘the second stage in Nepal’ (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 39). Almost teachers for whom the schools claimed as qualified and experienced were fake. It suggests that the schools are using misleading advertising- the consumers (parents) get an incorrect understanding (Das, 2016). Schools mostly in the season of admission use different ways of marketing their services and facilities to the potential clients. Rather than collaborating with the community in creating a better learning environment together, teachers separate them as producers and parents as consumers and advertise their schools and facilities. This is a measly imitation of private schools.

This fact suggests that public schools as a commercial market engage in the advertisement to attract clients, and commodified education like goods of profit-making. Private organizations explicitly and implicitly provoke the teachers for

omitting the professional ethics and accountability (e.g. private schools to impose extra-classes, and publishers to impose extra books).

### **Crisis in Teachers' Professional Accountability**

The vignettes (Azman & Mahadhir, 2017) from the field note that tried to capture teachers' values and attitudes presented below are followed by a brief reflective analysis.

#### ***School 1***

Five days before Shreepanchami, I found a teacher was taking sunbath by sitting on a chair in front of the office room. A piece of our dialogues is as follows:

Q: Is it your leisure period sir?

A: These days we have relief because the students of 'teaching practice' are taking our classes. Last week, 12 students came here from school 'A', this week 6 students came from school 'B', next week, 5 students are coming from college 'A'.

Q: Are they capturing your classes?

A: Though they are not enthusiastic: they like neither to observe our teaching to learn nor get observed by us for feedback. Nevertheless, they are taking classes, so that teachers pay a home visit for admitting children on Shreepanchami, I am here to look after the school.

Q: Why does this 'government school' need to seek students?

A: Government rule is that one ECD facilitator is provided for 15 children, and another facilitator is added if the children number exceeds 15, we have two such facilitators and 22 students.

Q: May I see them now?

A: Today, there are only 8 children, on average per day 10 to 15 students come to school. Some of them are admitted here but go to private schools, some admitted in other schools also to get the scholarship, clothes, stationery, etc. The children of, not only the other subject teachers, even, the facilitators go to private schools; however, they are counted here for a record.

Q: Is it comfortable for this school to attract students as it has declared: free Tiffin, free stationery, and free dress to the ECD children?

A: Yes, they are provided with a fistful chiura (beaten rice) or vooja (puffed rice) or half-pack of biscuits at midday. This much is not sufficient to attract the children of haves, but quite effective to make the admitted children stay in school till the tiffin time if not the whole day.

## ***School 2***

In the office room of school "X", the researcher, headteacher, and other two subject teachers were sharing their opinions on student enrolment, socioeconomic status of students, education quality, etc. A piece of dialogues was as follows:

Q: Why the parents are taking their children to private schools whereas the public schools also have the English medium, extra class, tests, qualified teachers but in relatively low fees?

A: Those parents who can afford, school choice for them is a matter of prestige, those parents who have no alternatives, they send to public school as their obligation.

Q: Why and how sending children to public school became a matter of embarrassment?

A: Because a public school is the place of the children of the poor, broken family, "lower caste", workers, etc.

Q: What do you think is the prime cause - education quality or prestige?

A: Both, if the students from good families come here, if they pay much for tuition, we also can give the best quality as given in other schools, we do not have potential students. Parents are ready to pay Rs. 100,000 to private school, but hesitate to us, if they pay even a half, we provide higher quality than the private schools.

Q: How do you think the potential students come here?

A: It is the duty of community, local leaders, the elected members. . . First, they should manage the resources and then convince the parents. In school 'A', a

teacher earns more than 2 lakhs from the extra-class and also earns prestige of good result. But here, we earn very less.

Q: Why don't you teach your children in this school so that other rich parents would also send their children here?

A: We do not bear the risk of educating our children with the children of low economic status; if they are spoiled who will take the responsibility?

Q: "XYZ" schools have the policy of forcing teachers to bring their children.

A: This policy should be implemented from the top, not from the bottom- elected members of the municipality, and other officers.

Q: No, no, I mean... it is irrelevant to put the condition of the mayor, while you are asked, - are you not sure that your teaching is sufficient for your children?

A: Do you think I am under qualified; yes, I am qualified. But, do you take the guarantee of other teachers, ...we cannot force them, violate the children's right to school choice.

### ***School 3***

This school is approved only up to 5th grade, running to 8th and planning to go till 10th grade. It has extended a hand in government offices, I/NGO and individuals of foreign countries for infrastructure development, learning materials, scholarship for poor and genius students, teacher salary, etc. The authors visited the schools many times- in the beginning, they were greeted and requested for hunting donors, but later ignored when they showed their interest in helping the school in pedagogical reforms rather than connecting with donors. They were asked: if it is painstaking to run the schools in the misery of classrooms, student numbers, materials, teachers, and salary for them, why do you bother, whereas you can limit it to the 5th grade? The headmaster, a primary level permanent teacher, said- "though I am a primary teacher by post, I have qualifications of higher degrees (other five teachers too), the desire of teaching at the secondary level, and aspiration of holding the post of a big school". And the Chairperson said- "I took the responsibility of a chairperson when the school was about to collapse. I made teachers regular and punctual, implemented English medium, and upgraded. Our slogan is 'QE in relatively low price', but in practice, it seems as

‘English medium for poor’ still the rich parents are sending their children to private schools, not here”.

The vignettes presented above suggest that: (a) teachers send their children to other schools because they are not confident of their professional skills and accountability; (b) a facilitator of EDC, counts the child in public school and gets the job in his name, but sends his/her own child to a private school; (c) Ward chair, school chairman, education officer, headteacher, and colleagues engage in the school and know it is unethical but do not feel as immoral. Teachers in public schools are found motivated to fulfil either physiological needs- i.e. earning extra money; or sociological needs- i.e. commending for achievement score; but not to psychological need- i.e. empathetic joy from students’ learning, involving in curriculum designing and implementing, pedagogical innovations. Only the psychological need motivates one for professionalism (Maslow, 1943). Contrary to this assumption that public workers are motivated by ‘policymaking, compassion and commitment’ (Ritz & Waldner, 2011), teachers in public schools are found detached from professional accountability. Meanwhile, agencies of the state are silent even knowing the facts of schools are violating the students’ right of ‘free and quality education’.

### **Discrimination and Injustice**

There are inter-schools and intraschool differences in fee structure, dress code, textbooks, hours of extra classes and finally achievement scores, which create a feeling of superior and inferior. This undue and unfair discrimination victimizes the students even within a public school. Thus, the state imposes unequal opportunity to the students, this inequality harms some, therefore is injustice (Rawls, 1971). School choice of parents shows ‘self-categorization of class’ and ‘school segregation’. High ranked persons of the society- elected members of local government, school teachers, and members of school management define their own identities concerning social groups like ‘self-identity theory’ (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and define public school as inferior, and appropriate only for- working classes, broken family, ‘lower caste’. Thus, schools create a brand where parents make their brand identity. It implicitly encourages laymen to send their children to a private school, or English medium of public school painstakingly, otherwise be a victim of embarrassment for sending children to Nepali medium. In this way, schooling creates ‘symbolic violence’

(Valentin, 2005). Moreover, education in public school too is not free of cost. Thus, the state steals the right to free education away deceitfully against its promise in the Constitution of Nepal (2015) - “compulsory and free education up to the basic level and free education up to the secondary level” (article 31. 2).

### **Neoprivatisation**

The term “neoprivatisation” has been used to comprise the phenomena observed in public schools that were elicited under the analysis section above. Underuse or misuse of public expenditure; quality diminishing, and commodification and commercialization of education, de-professionalization, and de-accountabilisation of teachers, and class segregation in school and social injustice are the malevolent consequence of PSE. Therefore, these are collectively defined as “neoprivatisation”.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

PSE has created a threat to equity for marginalized groups not only in Nepal but globally (Verger et al., 2016). Its presumption – “the market choice and competition lead to innovations in efficient pedagogy and management to increase quality, that can also borrow to public school” (Lubienski, 2003), is found to be false, not only in underdeveloped Nepal, but in the ultra-developed USA, where the charter schools are decried for relatively low ranking in PISA, and the transfer of public funds to private management (Ravitch, 2013), and in middle developed Chile, where the public school is made the place for low socioeconomic family (Carnoy & McEwan, 2003). This study (a) consolidates with- “school education should not lead to the marketization of education such that education is no longer directed to the full development of a child’s personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities, but instead only to profit-making and achieving measurable outcomes” (National Campaign for Education-Nepal, Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, & Nepal National Teachers Association, 2016, p. 3); (b) claims that acceptance of ‘quality reform’ without knowing the extra advantage made parents “idols of consumption” (Kellner, 1989, p. 154); (c) associates the irresponsibility of state mechanism against the exploitation of students to the “in a capitalist society state is an ideology apparatus to serve the benefits of the ruling class and exploiting the others” (Althusser, 1971); and (d) corroborates to privatisation as a project imposed by rich and exploiter by virtue it creates inequality and serves for a few corporate inequalities (In The Public Interest, 2000). Finally,

concluding the moneymaking deed of teachers even exploiting, and the dispassionate of the state are the effects of the context that was created and shaped by privatisation- “man's consciousness is determined by his social being” (Berger & Luckmann, 1991, p. 17), the study asserts that adopting privatisation and capitulating “neoprivatisation” seems quite sardonic to the state that envisages ‘socialism’.

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