

LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SECONDARY LEVEL FEMALE SCIENCE
TEACHERS: A COLLABORATIVE AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY

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A Dissertation

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Sarita Nepal* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in STEAM Education*, presented on *23 January 2026*, entitled *Lived Experiences of Secondary Level Female Science Teachers: A Collaborative Autoethnographic Inquiry*.

APPROVED BY

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This Collaborative Autoethnographic Study investigates the challenges Secondary-level Science Teachers face as they balance multiple roles, work-life scenarios, and reasons to continue their professional journey through their lived experiences. This research study explores the stories from childhood, understanding, and struggles, to becoming a competent professional science teacher. The theoretical framework of self-determination theory has guided us to view our professional growth with unwavering commitment, a source of motivation to continue our professional journey despite various challenges. Likewise, by using the liberal feminism lens, this study investigates how gender dynamics affect female teachers' day-to-day practices and opportunities, along with playing multiple roles.

This method of study helped capture my lived experiences and the life stories of three participants in this research. Through the interview and observation, I generated data from the participants, and I also generated data about myself through reflection and by noting events and stories; our own life experiences have been used as data for the research. The study presents a critical and interpretive collaborative thematic analysis to explore our identities as science teachers and the challenges we face as we build our identities through diverse life experiences. Our lived experiences and stories were interwoven to yield the final insight into the challenges female science teachers face throughout their life journey. As a female science teacher, I have

different roles like biological imperatives, domestic responsibilities, and professional duties in my daily life as an individual toward work-life balance.

The collective analysis reveals the pervasive impact of this triple role on our daily schedule regarding time balance, mental, and physical energy, among female science teachers. This study argues that acknowledging and addressing these interconnected roles is crucial for retaining women in their respective fields. Furthermore, secondary-level female science teachers addressed multiple challenges in advance of their careers, personal identity, independent status, role models, quality of life, social respect, and a happy family. Moving beyond a generic discussion of work-life balance, this inquiry deepens the ground reality in the specific gendered struggle, such as unequal pay for males and females for the same work, negative perceptions of male colleagues, barriers in leadership roles, low participation in policy making, and the workload of females in our school setting. This study emphasizes a more equitable and supportive school ecosystem to combat gender discrimination and motivate secondary-level female teachers.

It concludes that resilience, power, and a resolute attitude enabled female science teachers to flourish in their careers despite role dilemmas, work-life balance challenges, and other challenges. Gender parity and educational progress can be achieved in our educational system by reimagining the teaching profession, defying established roles, and recognizing the multiple roles of female teachers.

.....

23 January 2026

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शोधसार

स्टिम शिक्षामा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर उपाधिका लागि सरिता नेपालको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक “माध्यमिक तहको महिला विज्ञान शिक्षकहरूको प्रत्यक्ष अनुभूति: एक सहकार्यमूलक अटोएथनोग्राफीक अन्वेषण” ९ माघ २०८२ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो ।

.....
उप. प्रा. रोशनी राजवंशी, पीएचडी
शोध निर्देशक

यस सहकार्यमूलक अटोएथनोग्राफीक अध्ययनले विभिन्न सामुदायिक विद्यालयको माध्यमिक तहमा कार्यरत तिन जना महिला विज्ञान शिक्षकहरूको जिवन अनुभूति वारे अनुसन्धान गर्दछ । यसले माध्यमिक तहका विज्ञान शिक्षकहरूको पेशागत कार्य र जिवनका परिदृश्यका बहुभूमिकाको सन्तुलन संगै जिवन्त अनुभव चुनौतिहरूको अन्वेषण, चुनौतिका बाबजुत पनि पेशागत जीवनको निरन्तरताको दिनुको कारण अध्ययन गर्ने लक्ष्य राख्दछ । यस अध्ययनले महिला शिक्षकको बाल्यकालको बुझाई देखि एक सक्षम व्यवसायिक विज्ञान शिक्षक बन्ने सम्ममा आइपरेका संघर्षका कथाहरूलाई समेट्छ । यस अध्ययनमा प्रयोग गरिएको आत्म निर्णय सिद्धान्तको (Self-determination Theory) सैधान्तिक रुपरेखाले चुनौतिका बाबजुत पनि हाम्रो व्यवसायिक वृत्ति र दैनिक अभ्यासहरूमा परिस्करण गर्न प्रयोग भएको अटल प्रतिवद्धता प्रेरणाको स्रोत र विकासलाई हेर्न निर्देशित गरेको छ । त्यसैगरी यस अध्ययनमा प्रयोग भएको उदारवादी नारिबादले लैंगिक भेदभावले महिला शिक्षकको दैनिक अभ्यास, अवसर र विभिन्न भूमिकाहरू निर्वाह गर्नमा कस्तो असर गरेको छ भन्ने वारेमा अनुसन्धान गरेको छ ।

यस अध्ययनको विधिले म र म जस्तै जिवन कथा भएका दुई सहभागिहरूको जिवन्त अनुभवहरू कैद गर्न मद्दत गर्यो । अनुसन्धानका लागि मैले सहभागिहरू बाट अन्तरबार्ता र अवलोकन द्वारा तथ्यांक संकलन गरी हाम्रो आफ्नै अनुभव र जिवन कथाहरू उजागर गरेर आफ्नो जीवनको बारेमा प्रतिविम्बन गरि घटना र परिघटनाहरूको वारे विश्लेषण गरियो । यस अध्ययनले हामि विज्ञान शिक्षकहरूको पहिचानको अन्वेषण गर्न व्याख्यात्मक प्रतिमान र समालोचनात्मक ढाँचाद्वारा सहकार्यात्मक विषयगत विश्लेषण पद्धति प्रयोग गरेर हामिले भोगेका चुनौतिहरू र चुनौतिका वावजुत पेशागत निरन्तरता र महिलाको बहुपक्षीय भूमिका वारेमा अध्ययन गर्दछ । हामि महिला विज्ञान शिक्षकहरूको जिवनको जीवन्त अनुभव र जिवन यात्रामा सामना गरेका कथाहरूलाई अन्तरदृष्टि प्राप्त गर्नेगरी अध्ययनलाई अन्तरनिहित गरिएको छ । यसको अतिरिक्त एक महिला विज्ञान शिक्षिकाको रुपमा हामिले विभिन्न पेशागत, घरेलु र जैविक भूमिकाहरू निर्वाह गर्नुपर्छ ।

यस अध्ययनमा समाजमा एक महिलाको रूपमा तोकिएका दायित्वहरु निर्वाह गर्दै पेशागत, घरेलु र जैविक भूमिकाहरू सन्तुलन गर्न आईपरेका जीवनका तितामिठा अनुभव लाई उजागर गरिएको छ । यस सामुहिक विश्लेषणले महिला बिज्ञान शिक्षकहरु माझ समय संतुलन, मानसिक शारिरिक उर्जाको सम्बन्धमा त्रिपक्षिय भुमिका र प्रभावको व्यापकता प्रकट गर्दछ । त्यसैगरी माध्यामिक तहका महिला विज्ञान शिक्षकहरुले आफ्नो जिवन वृति छात्र, व्यक्तिगत जिवनमा प्रगति हासिल गर्न, गुणस्तरीय जिवन तथा छोटकरी खुसी परिवार निर्वाह गर्न धेरै चुनौतिहरु सम्बोधन गर्दै आएका छन् । यस सोधपत्रले आफ्नो पेशागत कार्य र व्यक्तिगत जिवन सन्तुलनको अलावा शिक्षण पेशामा रहेका विशिष्ट लैंगिक संघर्ष जस्तै समान श्रमकोलागि महिला र पुरुष शिक्षकको लागि दिईएको असमान तलव, पुरुष शिक्षक द्वारा महिला शिक्षकलाई हेर्ने दृष्टिकोण, महिला शिक्षकले नेतृत्व भूमिकामा रहन भोगेका वाधा, नीति निर्माणमा महिलाको न्यून सहभागिता, कार्यभार र विद्यालय भित्र भोगेका विभेदको जगको वास्तविकतालाई गहन विश्लेषण गर्दछ । यस अध्ययनले तार्किक रूपमा यो अन्तरसम्बन्धीत भुमिकालाई स्वीकार तथा सम्बोधन गरी हरेक क्षेत्रका महिलालाई आ-आफ्ना उत्प्रेरणा समेत कायम राख्न र लैंगिक भेदभाव विरुद्ध लड्न जरुरी रहेको दर्शाउछ । यस अध्ययनले अझ बढी समतामुलक र सहयोगी विध्यालय कार्य प्रणाली बनाउन महिला शिक्षकहरुको भुमिका र महिला नेतृत्व लाई जोड दिनुपर्ने कुरा उत्प्रेरित गर्दछ ।

संक्षिप्तमा, यस अध्ययनले महिलाको पेशागत कार्य, व्यक्तिगत जिवन संतुलनका साथ महिला शिक्षकको बहुभुमिकालाई पहिचानका साथ प्राथमिकता दिदै विद्यालयको वातावरणमा महिलाहरुलाई बेवास्ता गर्नुको सट्टा सम्मान गर्ने गरि शिक्षण पेशाको पुनः कल्पना गर्दछ । यस अध्ययनले महिलाहरुको लडेर उठ्न सक्ने शक्ति र दृढ मनोवृत्तिले गर्दा महिला विज्ञान शिक्षक हरुलाई भूमिका निर्वाहमा देखिने दुबिधा, कार्य-जीवन सन्तुलन, र अन्य चुनौतीहरूको बावजुद आफ्नो पेशागत जीवनमा निरन्तर अघि वढ्न उत्साहित गर्यो भन्ने कुरा दर्शाउछ । त्यसैगरी, महिला शिक्षकहरूको बहु भूमिकाहरूलाई पहिचान गरेर शिक्षण पेशाको पुनः कल्पना गरेर मात्रहाम्रो शैक्षिक प्रणालीमा लैङ्गिक समानता र शैक्षिक प्रगति हासिल गर्न सकिन्छ भन्ने कुरामा जोड दिन्छ ।

.....

सरिता नेपाल
उपाधि उम्मेदवार

९ माघ २०८२

This dissertation, entitled *Lived Experiences of Secondary Level Female Science Teachers: A Collaborative Autoethnographic Inquiry*, was presented by *Sarita Nepal* on 23 January 2026.

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I understand and agree that my dissertation will become a part of the permanent collection of the Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

..... 23 January 2026
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university.

.....

Sarita Nepal

Degree Candidate

23 January 2026

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all the female science teachers who serve as role models and inspire young women in the teaching profession. Likewise,

my mother, Sannani Nepal,

my father, Shiva Ram Nepal,

my mother-in-law, Kamala Lamichhane

my father-in-law, Binod Lamichhane

my better half, Santosh Lamichhane,

the angels of my life, Aahana, Aarohan

my siblings, my Participants

and

my school family.

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ABBREVIATIONS

B. Ed.	Bachelor's in Education
B. Sc.	Bachelor's in Science
CAE	Collaborative Autoethnography
CEHRD	Centre for Education, and Human Resource Development
CET	Cognitive Evaluation Theory
COT	Causality Orientation Theory
ECA	Extra Curricular Activities
GoN	Government of Nepal
HCT	Habermassian Critical Theory
ICT	Information Communication and Technology
LFT	Liberal Feminism Theory
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery
MPhil	Masters of Philosophy
ODL	Open Distance Learning
OIT	Organismic Integration Theory
PSIT	Personality System Interaction Theory
RMT	Relationship Motivation Theory
SD	Sustainable Development
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SEE	Secondary Education Examination
SES	Socio-Economic Status
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee
SRT	Social Reproduction Theory
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
TU	Tribhuvan University
WSTs	Women Science Teachers

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I explored the lived experiences of women secondary-level science teachers regarding balancing multiple roles, perceptions of others towards female teachers, and the issues and challenges they face in the workplace within a male-dominated society. The main objective of this study is to examine work-life balance, multiple roles, and effective professional delivery among female science teachers. This chapter includes the study's background, the statement of the problem, the research question, and the study's significance.

When I was a child, I saw that my mother was a homemaker. She used to wake up early every morning to clean the home, cook, wash clothes, and take care of my family. During the daytime, she used to be busy cutting grass and grazing domestic animals. She used to feel guilty for not having the chance to read at a higher level. So, she always encouraged me to read hard and get a good job. I used to think that women have been seen as capable of multitasking for a long time. Now, the social structure has changed, as both husband and wife have become more independent, though young women face more challenges due to multiple roles. When I became an adult, I took a job as a secondary-level science teacher, but it wasn't enough to build a good life. I have to be a good homemaker, a perfect teacher, a diligent scholar, a caring mother, a workaholic daughter-in-law, and a lovely wife at the same time. Not only this, but playing other biological and domestic roles and fulfilling social responsibilities are becoming more challenging for me to balance work and life. However, I have to stand tall to make my children laugh, to run my home, and to make tomorrow morning.

Research Setting

I still remember my congested classroom of class 10, with more than a hundred students. Of them, only 35 were female students. Another mesmerizing thing is that out of a hundred students, we three female students were in the optional mathematics class. Most of the time we used to be part of jokes among our friends. Another surprising thing is that I was never taught by female teachers in my school days. I vividly remember that when I was in grade six, a female teacher came to our school to teach at the primary level. We were so happy and went to see her. These

incidents of my life also show the low participation of females in teaching learning process. While studying at the master's level, there were only 5 females among 25 students. It shows that girls are behind boys in school enrolment and higher education. After completing my master's degree, I was thinking of getting a job. I found one vacancy in my village for a secondary-level science teacher. So, I went there to teach as a secondary-level science teacher. On the first day of school, all the school teams were waiting for a new science teacher. After entering the school, I learned students' and teachers' views and perceptions of female science teachers. They were quite amazed to see a woman as a secondary-level science teacher. When I was in class 10, students were whispering to themselves, 'How can a female teacher teach us?' I asked them why they were gossiping. Then, they replied that they had never been taught by a female science teacher before. So, they were feeling something new. We discussed that topic for some time, and days passed normally. After a few months, the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) Examination was there, and I visited the center of my school along with other teachers. On the day of the science examination, all the science teachers were standing outside the school. A memorable thing is that I was the only female teacher among all the science teachers from the 7/8 schools. We discussed the low number of female science teachers in our group. All the male teachers' friends also shared their experiences and concluded that low enrollment of female teachers is not only a problem in our area but also a problem nationwide. After my appointment in Kathmandu valley as a secondary-level science teacher, when I went to teach at a renowned school, the situation was the same. There were no female secondary-level science teachers appointed at the school in its history, and students were also not taught by female teachers in grades 9 to 12. My experience in these two schools and discussions with other teachers showed that there are fewer female science teachers in the science subject.

When I appeared for the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) examination in 2019, there was also a significant difference in the male-to-female teacher ratio in the published results. Likewise, the result published by the TSC in 2025, among 23 vacant posts for secondary-level science teachers in Bagmati province, showed that only 3 female teachers passed the examination from the female reservation quota. It also shows that no single female teacher qualified for the open competition (TSC, 2025). The number of female teachers at the secondary level, across all subjects and in both community and private schools nationwide, is 18.37%. Likewise, 5.1% of

female students choose science at the higher level (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2024). This data shows that the number of female teachers is less than one-fourth of male teachers. We can imagine very low participation by female teachers in the future if the data continues to show similarly low levels. In the future, it could become a serious issue for all education stakeholders.

After completing my master's degree, I struggled to build a career before marriage. After hard work, I passed the TSC examination. 2 years into our marriage, I gave birth to a daughter. After about 3 months on maternity leave, I returned to work. For me, it was very hard to leave my three-month-old daughter at home while I went to work. I am staying with my family, so my mother-in-law was taking care of my daughter while I was at school. Likewise, I want to progress in my professional career, which is not as easy as before, and to give time to my studies. Many challenges have been added to my life while balancing work, home life, and further study. Despite all these challenges, I am continuing my further studies of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) education. I have been able to focus on my career with my family's support. Otherwise, it would not be possible for me. As a secondary-level female science teacher, I have experienced many challenges, constraints, and issues, and I decided to explore our collective lived experience by reflecting on them and choosing this research topic.

Background of the Study

Teaching worldwide is known as one of the most complex and diverse professions, as teachers must teach learners according to their backgrounds, interests, abilities, and surroundings (Scheerens, 2009). Sometimes it will be very difficult to adapt to a new situation to provide meaningful learning. In recent days, society has become more modern & improvised day by day. Likewise, schools are the backbone of society, helping transform society by accomplishing various new goals, such as improving students' academic skills, fostering global understanding, and preparing students to achieve the national goals set by the Government of Nepal (GoN).

Gender Inequality

In Nepal, a teacher who teaches grades 9-12 is known as a secondary-level teacher. Teachers serve as role models for society, from whom students learn, get inspired, and are motivated. Most students prefer a role model of the same gender. From my experience, I can feel that female students are more comfortable, easier to learn, and free to share their problems with female teachers. Not only this, but female

science teachers also have to challenge the perception of administration, the school management committee, parents, society, head teachers, and male colleagues towards them in day-to-day experience. In their perception, female teachers are looked down on as weak in content and difficult to control the class. Some people even think that female teachers cannot teach science subjects and blame them for the poor results in science in the Secondary Education Examination (SEE). This is based on research by Bista (2006), which shows that among 100% male teachers, 38.8% male teachers only agreed that women are competent to teach Science and Mathematics to male teachers, but 61.2% disagreed. The proportion of female teachers in 1975 was less than 1%, which has increased to 30% in 2003, which is still not enough (Bista, 2006). However, these gains have been less than desirable. In the remote areas of Nepal, schools continue to face a shortage of female teachers. In some schools, female teachers are working as representatives. After passing the TSC examination, one of my participants has been posted to a school in a rural part of Nepal. The school management committee and the school administration disagreed with her appointment as a female secondary-level science teacher. They said they need a male teacher who can give more time to the school, because it would be difficult for a female who also has to spend time with children. In such a male-dominant society, it is very difficult for female teachers to adjust, and they might feel lonely, face different forms of harassment, leading to weaker performance than expected.

A 27-year-old lower secondary level female teacher committed suicide in Dhangadhi after she could not face the threats, pressure, and harassment she was subjected to by the school inspector (Buda, 2025). Female teachers are going through such a situation, so we can imagine the worst situation of female children. Female students at one of the well-known schools of Lalitpur district complained that they were sexually molested by their math teacher for decades” (Taylor & Rana, 2019). This is one example that happened inside urban areas, but in remote areas, the case is even worse, where many female students are facing sexual harassment by their male teachers. Rai (2026) mentioned that a 53-year-old male teacher was taken into custody for molesting his students at Kanchanpur. Moreover, the gender-based violence nationwide data of 2024/25 from the police headquarters says 57.32 % of victims were female students. Given these kinds of problems, we can conclude that girls are deprived of learning opportunities. Likewise, the research conducted by Bista (2006) shows that females are more backward than males in terms of enrolment,

quality of grade, and learning achievement, as measured by existing educational indicators. This finding is similar to that of the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD), the total number of teachers in all secondary-level community schools is 24792, of whom only 4227 are female. The data seems similar for institutional schools. The total number of teachers at the secondary level is 22079, of whom 4375 are female, as shown in the Flash Report I (CEHRD, 2022).

I would like to remember one experience regarding this. A few months back, my students told me that they had written an application for me as a class teacher. I have read the application, in which they wrote that they wanted to be taught by a female math teacher because they do not feel comfortable reading with the existing male teacher. While teaching, he uses different facial expressions and symbols that make learning difficult. It was not in my hands to change the teacher, so I replied that I would convey your message to the administration, as it was not my responsibility to do so. Later, I gave that application to the school's headteacher. After receiving it, the headteacher told me this was a meaningless application and urged me not to listen to them. After this incident, I felt that the number of female teachers should be more to promote girls' formal education, decrease their dropout rate, increase their enrolment, and make them feel comfortable for pre-teenagers and teenagers.

Multiple Roles of Female Teacher

We, as female teachers, are obliged to perform three roles: domestic, professional, and biological. Domestic or household roles start outside of school hours when all family members require us. For a biological role, we must give birth, which requires undergoing physical, psychological, and physiological changes in our bodies. Likewise, we have to breastfeed, take care of our young ones, and nurture them. Besides professional roles, there are other desires and accomplishments such as getting a higher academic qualification, developing new skills & knowledge for professional development, and training. Not only this, with all these activities, it is difficult for female teachers to manage their time at home for lesson preparation. As a result, it is challenging for female teachers to teach technical subjects like science, mathematics and English at the secondary level. I have been working as a secondary-level science teacher for 7 years. As we know, teaching is an evolving process, and we have to stay updated on ever-changing pedagogical practices and prepare to present myself in the classroom. Similarly, I am a mother of a 3-year-old toddler, so I must take care of her. Likewise, to continue my teaching-learning process and

improve, I have been studying as an MPhil scholar. It is more difficult to manage different roles at the same time. Mim (2015) stated that “Time management is a major source of strain to maintain work and home responsibility” (p.15). One of my friends recently took 3 months of maternity leave and is now facing the challenge of caring for her daughter while working. She had to take care of the child while working and had hired a woman to look after her children; she could not rely on that woman alone. So, she has been visiting home during office hours, coming back to work, and returning home in the evening. As a result, she has not been able to work properly in the office. Based on my experience, I can say without a doubt that female teachers balance their various roles despite various challenges. This low number of females is due to these challenges and the balance between work and life. Women face challenges balancing multiple roles; despite that, they are doing their best to succeed in their careers. This is more challenging for women in this era, who are urged to be independent in their fields. As a result, in our secondary school, there is still a shortage of female teachers to teach various subjects.

Statement of the Problem

Teaching is not only a profession, but also the king of professions, for it is the foundation pillar upon which all other professions and society itself are built. The teacher should act differently for different learners according to their ability, interest & necessity. This profession needs more time than other jobs. As teachers, we must set aside time to prepare lessons at home, make examination questions, check answer sheets, and plan lab work and another project work. Besides that, as a secondary-level female science teacher, I am struggling with other complexities and multiple roles. A study by Bista (2006) also found that secondary-grade teachers regretted their decision to become teachers more than primary-grade teachers. I was scared by the findings of Chakraborty (2014), as it mentioned that only 8.5% male teachers had a higher attitude towards the female teaching profession, while 66.5% teacher’s views were average towards the female teaching profession, and shockingly, 25% displayed a lower attitude towards the female teaching profession. Such findings discourage us from making our career in the teaching profession. Correspondingly, most of the schools have a negligible number of female teachers in technical subjects at the secondary level. Research conducted by Gibney (2017) showed a significant difference in perceptions of men and women regarding receiving support and encouragement in the teaching profession. After being involved in the teaching and

learning field for decades across different schools, in most cases, I have witnessed that the perceptions of male colleagues, the school management committee, society and headteacher also demotivate female teachers in their dedication to the assigned job. Female teachers are encountering different types of harassment in school premises for being female or for being in low numbers. Not only this, but there are other existing causes that demotivate and reduce the satisfaction levels of female teachers. I hope the authorities and education stakeholders take responsibility for identifying other potential demotivating factors and addressing them accordingly to increase the motivation of females working in the field of teaching science at the secondary level. (Dynamic Institute of Research and Development Private Limited [DIoRDPL], 2018) mentioned that it is essential to implement two provisions of the terms and conditions of the job (service), making them comparable to similar other government jobs, for the encouragement of teachers. In my view, the working environment, daily activities and behavior, space for female teachers in Extra Curricular Activities (ECA), and equity-based behavior are important for improving the current status of female science teachers. There are a few female teachers in subjects like science and math, which is similar to Bista's (2006) finding that more men than women choose English, Math, and Science. Compared with male teachers in secondary classes, female teachers face many difficulties & constraints in the profession (Bhatta, 2024). Besides all these, what drives them to work and how they manage various roles need to be studied. In our society, people judge women based on their careers, income, professions, and capacities, among other things. For me, I am engaging in this profession despite various obstacles and hindrances to build my career and achieve economic independence. In this research study, I sought to examine the meanings of challenges and issues from multiple vantage points to deepen my investigation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine how secondary-level female science teachers narrate their lived experiences across their personal and professional lives by using a collaborative autoethnographic approach. This research brings together the voices of three female science teachers as co-researchers to critically reflect on their everyday practices and identities within their institutional context. It seeks to understand how female science teachers negotiate personal, professional, and domestic roles and find the balance between work and life. This study seeks to

illuminate the complexities of their identities and contribute to gender responsive educational discourse. Moreover, this research study investigates the challenges they encountered in teaching and learning practices within the institutional context and examines the motivation and resilience despite these challenges.

Research Questions

1. How do secondary-level female science teachers make sense of and narrate their lived experiences within their professional and personal context?

Subsidiary Research Questions

1. How do female science teachers negotiate and balance their multiple roles and responsibilities across personal and professional contexts?
2. What challenges do female science teachers encounter in their teaching practices and institutional environment? Despite different challenges, how do they respond to these challenges to continue their journey as secondary-level female science teachers?

Significance of the Study

This research study provides evidence of the hardships and biased behavior that female science teachers face in their schools. This study also helps to explore the multiple roles, responsibilities, and contributions of the female science teacher in balancing work and life. It shows the female teacher's day-to-day struggles and how she goes back to work after work. It is also helpful to empower all girls and women in their respective professions and encourage them to achieve gender equity by recognizing the burden women bear and keeping them at the center. Even today, schools in remote areas of Nepal lack female teachers, which is a major challenge for stakeholders, the government, and policymakers seeking to increase the number of females in rural and urban areas. It encourages and motivates female professionals to perform their jobs by balancing domestic, professional, and biological roles and responsibilities. The findings of this study provide insights into the challenges and multiple roles of female teachers, as well as ways to overcome them, which is an essential insight for the formulation of appropriate policies and privileges to enhance female teachers. Similarly, it might help to change the perception of male colleagues, head teachers, society and stakeholders by realizing the presence of female teachers at the secondary level as necessary to make the environment girl-friendly. Likewise, this research study helps to improve the overall science education quality by addressing

the gender-based barriers in the classroom to fill the gap between policies and the actual classroom setting. It provides a guide to manage work-life conflict affecting teacher performance, including emotional, social, and gender dimensions of teaching. It encourages giving equal opportunities in teaching and promotion for institutional reform. It provides grounded evidence about the multiple roles and challenges faced by female teachers. Likewise, it supports conducting training based on real challenges and helps policymakers to design realistic support and intervention programs for female teachers.

Delimitation of the Study

There are some delimitations during the research. As a researcher, I tried to explore different roles, such as biological, personal, and professional, of a secondary-level female science teacher. A researcher is focused on the problems and challenges faced by secondary-level female science teachers in the teaching and learning process. This research focuses on the hindrances that prevent capable females from becoming secondary-level science teachers, a topic that has been considered by researchers, and studies have been conducted within a specific area of Kathmandu district only. Three participants, including a researcher from the same community, were selected by using a purposive sampling method for this research study. In the methodology, a mixed-methods, sequential and concurrent, collaborative autoethnography was used, as the participants shared mutual expectations. A mixed-methods collaborative autoethnography is used in this research due to my participants' interests and time constraints. This research used a qualitative method, so narratives, interviews, reflections, and observations were used to collect data. This research is only focused on the roles (domestic, biological, and professional) and the challenges faced in the school ecology of secondary-level female science teachers. Likewise, it focuses on the challenges faced in work-life balance and ways to overcome them for female science teachers.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the background of the study: gender inequality, multiple roles of science teachers, statement of the problem, research questions, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to female teachers and their motivation to identify the research gaps. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology by using the mixed model of a collaborative autoethnographic approach of qualitative methods. Chapter 4 presents

the intro of my participants, their lived experiences related to family support, career growth, and challenges faced by them in their professional journey. Chapter 5 explores the findings of the struggle among the multiple roles and gender understanding of work of female science teachers. Likewise, Chapter 6 investigates some reasons: professional competencies, room for self, independent status, and children's better future are some reasons to continue the professional journey despite having some challenges. Finally, Chapter 7 provides the conclusion, reflections, implications, and limitations of the research.

Essence of the Chapter

This chapter provided an overview of my research and its rationale. I started writing a research setting by reflecting upon my own childhood lived experiences. In this chapter, I explored the study's background, purpose, research questions, and significance. The background of the study was written into two sections. In the first section, I talked about the gender bias and harassment faced by female teachers and students at school. While writing the background, I went through the gender-based violence nationwide data, which shows 57.32 % of victims were female students. This data reveals the bitter reality of our society and shows that our girl children are not safe even in their own school. Likewise, in the second section, I explored the three roles, such as domestic, professional, and personal. I stated an example of a female science teacher's struggle with work-life balance. In this chapter, I stated my experience as a girl student in my childhood. I discussed the status of low female teacher participation in the teaching and learning process.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In any research study, reviewing the literature is a crucial part, that helps to create a foundation for any research study and consolidates knowledge to explore the existing body of knowledge. In this chapter, I will review the relevant theory, themes, prior studies, and policies.

Theoretical Review

Every research is guided by some theories or principles. It is just done to connect our research with the linked theory. The theory used is directly linked to the research, which helps provide a clear orientation & explanation, offering a way through the development of the argument and where it leads. When searching for related literature reviews on the lived experience of female science teachers at the secondary level in teaching & learning, plenty of international literature is available, but finding relevant research papers in Nepal was quite tough.

In every sector, people's motivation is involved in their performance. The higher the motivation towards their profession, the greater the efficiency & attention people pay. I will use Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in this research to analyze the motivational factors of female science teachers (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This theory was developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan and is related to motivation profiled in self-determined perspectives. Self-determination theory focuses on the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that influence individual behavior. Intrinsic motivation is an inner force that leads female science teachers to achieve personal goals. If we are intrinsically motivated, it drives and inspires us to fulfill various responsibilities through self-gratification and pleasure. Similarly, extrinsic motivation is an external force that enables one to meet personal and organizational aims by guiding exchange for rewards. It can take the form of collaboration among teachers, between teachers and students, a good working environment, and leadership, among others. Autonomy, competence, and relatedness are three components of this theory. These three needs are essential for teachers and students to make and be motivated, respectively. Self-determination theory describes the individual differences in people's capacity towards self-determined behavior. Motivation is like a roadmap for us, guiding, balancing, and guiding us toward a goal. Motivation also involves

emotional, social, and biological factors that drive people to engage in day-to-day behavior. I have used different forms of self-determination theory, such as social reproduction theory, structuration theory, relationship motivation theory, organismic integration theory, causality orientation theory, and cognitive evaluation theory, to discuss and analyze the themes developed from the participants. Likewise, I have used Habermasian theory and Mezirow theory to analyze some themes.

Due to a lack of role-balancing skills, female science teachers are demotivated to perform multiple roles. Motivation helps set new goals in a person's life, focus on their own dream, and generate new ideas, concepts, and principles that drive us toward the future by making us ambitious, determined, and self-confident. Motivation plays a vital role in choosing any profession and to be engaged in any occupation for women as well as men.

To understand motivation in the teaching field, I reviewed Hung (2020), who noted that intrinsic factors such as responsibility for work, capacity for professional growth, and ways of achievement are some intrinsic factors. Likewise, salary and job security work as the extrinsic factors. These factors help to enhance teachers' professional performance. If teachers are highly motivated, they tend to deliver quality services, good performance, and help to ensure the quality of education. Teachers' motivation helps to stimulate teachers in their professional journey for better performance. When enough attention is given to teachers, it helps to increase the value of quality education. If the basic satisfaction needs of teachers are fulfilled, then they become more satisfied, dedicated, and effective in performing their tasks. This finding is similar for secondary-level female science teachers.

However, I felt that self-determination theory was insufficient to explore the challenges and hurdles faced by secondary-level female science teachers. So, I used feminist theory as an assistance theory. This theory is related to gender bias. There are four waves of feminist theory. First wave feminism theory is focused on the right based on racism, the right to vote. The second wave is focused on raising their voices regarding issues of equal rights in their own workplaces. Likewise, the third wave responded to the failure and criticism of the second wave. Further, the fourth wave of feminism has inspired thousands of women worldwide to speak and write about the body shaming experienced daily, sexual harassment, and employment discrimination. Nepalese women, including professionals, have also experienced the same. Hence, feminist theory is relevant to the journey of secondary-level science teachers. Lorber

(2001) has identified three basic forms of feminism to address gender inequality: gender reform feminism, gender resistance feminism, and gender rebellion feminism. Among them, gender reform feminism includes: liberal feminism, socialist feminism, and post-colonial feminism. Liberal feminism argues that women's oppression is caused by their unequal access to legal, social, political, educational, and economic institutions. The solution lies in advocating women's equal legal rights and participation in public spheres such as education, politics, and employment (Budig & Jones, 2008). Not only this, Walby (2011) noted that feminist theory is primarily focused on reducing gender inequality and on exploring women's interests to free women from certain boundaries. It encourages them to have access to quality education, to practice social responsibility, and to find employment. Research conducted by Bailey (2016) argued that society holds the false belief that women are less intellectual and physically less capable than men. Liberal feminism strongly supports men's involvement in feminism to ensure active participation by both men and women in the movement. Furthermore, Beasley (1999) added that women's position in society is seen as unequal rights and an artificial barrier to women's participation in the public world beyond family and household. Not only this, it focused on the value of individual "autonomy" and "freedom". SDT theory also helps analyze the importance of independence and freedom in collecting and interpreting data in the research. This theory also guides my research in linking internal motivation to the researcher's working context. Likewise, feminist theories encourage challenging the traditional, male-oriented approach through data and enlightening us about stereotyping practices in our profession.

Theoretical Limitation

The self-determination theory provides a valuable framework for understanding motivation through autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This theory is a useful lens to understand motivation. However, the main notion of autonomy in SDT may not fully capture the decision-making process, and less engagement in the administrative role experienced by female teachers. This theory is mainly focused on individual motivation, though it does not cover the structural gender inequalities, workload disparities, and institutional bias faced by female science teachers. Moreover, it may constrain the dialogic nature of co-constructed narratives. It could not offer a more holistic understanding of female teachers' multiple roles and responsibilities. Likewise, liberal feminism theory is a useful lens

to examine the issues of access and equality. It gives more emphasis on individual agency and formal equality, though it does not overlook the structural, cultural, and relational factors affecting female teachers' careers. This theory advocates for gender equality in the public sphere, but it may have limited attention to role dilemmas and work-life balance faced by female science teachers. This theory inadequately captures the importance of family support in career building. Likewise, it shows the limited engagement with structural power, such as gendered expectations, male-dominated leadership, power hierarchies, and informal practices implemented in the school setting. This theory is not to challenge the patriarchal system; it is only focused on empowering women effectively by removing the barriers in their field.

Thematic Review

It is a review of the research study's topic. In a research paper, a thematic review is needed to break down the topic into different terms & explaining them for meaning-making to draw a theme. Gessler and Siemer (2020) stated that "In a thematic review of the literature, the researcher identifies a theme of the topic and briefly discusses it through citation and reference to documents within this theme" (p. 190). When we define the topic simply, other audiences can clearly understand the research study. We can find that theme -related literature review is done in any research, journal, article and dissertation by noting the references. In this research study, I will review the themes of science education in Nepal, the challenges and issues faced by secondary-level female science teachers, and the implications for science education.

Science Education in Nepal

Science and Technology education is offered by the government, public, and private sectors through different scientific institutions. Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu University, Pokhara University, Purbanchal University, Nepal Open University, and Farwestern University are offering general, medical, engineering, and applied science education. Nepal Sanskrit University is offering Ayurvedic science education (Thapa & Mishra, n.d.). These universities in Nepal offer science education programs in the education stream to produce competent human resources for teaching professions and meet global demand. Initially, Tribhuvan University (TU) was running a three-year B.Ed. in science education. This program has been upgraded, and the four-year bachelor's program is currently running. Similarly, one-year B. Ed., A Bachelor's in Education in science education is also offered, focusing on Bachelor's in

Science (B.Sc.) graduates at the center who want to become secondary science teachers after passing the Bachelor's level in science. The Government of Nepal has stated that a one-year B.Ed. is compulsory for students in non-education streams who want to pursue a career in the teaching profession. A four-semester master's program in science education is also running, including three streams: chemistry education, physics education, and biology education, to produce globally competitive teachers in Nepal. Recently, three semesters' programs regarding science education courses have been launched in Open Distance Learning (ODL) for bachelor graduates in any stream. This is highly effective for those willing to work in the education sector (University Grant Commission [UGC], 2020).

According to Paudel and Rajbhandary (2022), science education development in Nepal is facing various challenges, issues, and problems. The education policies seem more focused on products than on the process. Due to insufficient funding and limited communication among stakeholders, it has remained only on paper. Lack of well-equipped research centers, allocation of a smaller budget to science and technology, lack of well-trained and well-equipped professors, poor management systems, and lack of collaborative efforts are among the major problems that have deprived science education in Nepal. It is evident that less care is taken with regard to science education reform. It is necessary to improve education reform policy and programs by allocating the required funds, reframing the science education curriculum, and enhancing the quality of professors and educators to emphasize the nation's educational goal of sustainable development. To enhance Nepal's development, it is essential to advance science and technical education. Moreover, the Science Education Project was established to improve the quality of school science education by upgrading science teaching skills. Likewise, in-service teacher training and professional development programs are provided to enhance the quality of science subjects and teacher education (Bhatta, 2015). In addition, SDGs aim to include women in the technology sector to empower women. School Sector Development Program 2016-2023 (SSDP) aims to promote the adoption and strengthening of effective policies and appropriate legislation for gender equality, and to empower women at all levels, as mentioned in (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2016).

Experience of Secondary Level Female Science Teacher

It is essential to conceptualize the multiple identities of women, which helps to intersect gender practices and gendered actions of women science teachers. The gendered actions refer to the deeply rooted mindset in our societal norms regarding the behavior or roles of males and females, such as that unpaid care and domestic work must be done by females. These gendered actions should be modified continuously through social interactions and the dissemination of educational research. These practices and identities, such as marital status, age, geographical background, traditional gender ideologies, and struggles, should not be homogenized into a single category.

As a secondary-level female science teacher, my professional journey has been full of ups and downs to date. In our society, in a patriarchal context, Women Science Teachers (WSTs) are struggling with heavy responsibilities, social and cultural norms, deep-seated beliefs of family members, and a narrow perception of daughters-in-law (Mim, 2015). Along with these challenges, it is very difficult to balance biological, professional, and personal roles. Despite these various resistances and obstacles, women science teachers continue their profession. By engaging with the lived experiences of different women science teachers, minute changes and nuances will be identified to address gendered structures. Such hindrance factors obstruct females from choosing a career in the teaching profession. Female teachers face various pressures in their work. This is also stated by research done by Adhikari and Upadhyaya (2024). If such a patriarchal structure persists continuously, then women can neither be monolithic nor unchangeable. To empower women's lifelong learning, the institutional mechanism should be made flexible, and educational policies must account for sociocultural realities. While women balance their personal and professional lives, they shoulder more burdens than men do. Mahat and Aithal (2022) stated that women in Nepal have always been considered subordinate citizens born to serve men and reproduce. Likewise, to increase the participation of women, the MoEST (2022) includes a gender program responsive budgeting for the promotion of gender equity, selection of teachers from marginalized groups applying through quotas, and at least one woman must be selected among the members of the school management committee.

Different Roles of Female Science Teachers

As mentioned earlier, we, female science teachers, have to play multiple biological, professional, and personal roles. Mim (2015) noted that it is difficult for women science teachers to serve as role models because of socially established norms, such as welcoming guests at home, taking care of children, and marrying at an early age, as well as restricted freedom in a patriarchal context. These societal values, practiced in school and society, play an evil role in our professional lives, too.

All these activities demoralize enthusiastic women science teachers within the school, family, and community. It is not the same for male teachers, as they are not required to attend to guests or take care of babies by taking leave in the office. In addition, women teachers have many unseen barriers in their daily lives. Despite the various barriers, they are positive towards the teaching profession (Bhatta, 2024). Married WSTs are also pressured by their communities to assume subordinate roles, limiting their opportunities for growth. Also, gender differences are seen in the uncomfortable relationships between the women science teachers (WSTs) and their male colleagues. Women, as “daughters” and “daughters-in-law,” have to put in more effort and attention than men. Not only this, but invisible discrimination is very common in career promotion and leadership roles (Xu, 2024). Likewise, a study by Islahi and Nasreen (2013) shows that, in our context, the responsibilities and priorities of routine life will change drastically after marriage in both traditional and nuclear families. As females will be busy taking care of and managing household chores, this could be the main reason for the sharp decline in the effectiveness of married female teachers. However, among married males, the decline in teachers’ effectiveness is less pronounced than among females.

Empirical Review

I reviewed previous studies on my research topic to understand the experiences of female science teachers. It helped to know the gap between the status of problems reported in previous research and the current situation of the same problems (Creswell, 2009). Similarly, which methods and strategies can be applied to study this field of research, & central argument controversies in this area can be known from empirical research?

One research study done by Koirala and Acharya (2005) has identified eight hindering forces for participation in Science Technology and Engineering (STE) subjects they are viz; gender biased social construct, theoretical aspects of teaching,

submissive social orientation of girls, agrarian lifestyle or poverty, grace giving culture, boy students' attitude towards girls, notion of early marriage system, classroom setting and seating arrangement. This finding is similar to that of Bista (2006), who noted that favoritism, nepotism, political influence, and perceptions of education stakeholders toward females pose challenges to females in nurturing their professional careers. Another study by Munnawar and Awan (2020) also identified several hindering factors for female teachers. They have categorized issues faced by female teachers into three factors: organizational, personal, and social. Relation with the principal, recognition of female teacher's work, collaboration of school administration, harassment during working hour, less opportunity for professional development are some organizational factor, posting in far flung area, unsupportiveness of administration, leadership ability, overcrowded class, school policies, reasonable salary, deficiency of modern teaching facilities are some personal problems and respect from society, the political involvement of people, gap between society and school are the some social factors affecting the performance of female teachers in higher secondary schools. According to Bista (2006), professional qualities, home furnishings, attitudes toward the teaching profession, professionalism and the working environment, gender dynamics in schools, and perceptions of education stakeholders are among the factors hindering females from choosing a career in the teaching profession.

Besides these issues, Bista (2004) also mentioned the dual roles of female teachers, gender discrimination, and the challenges they face in the workplace. While continuing our profession as female teachers, we must also carry other burdens alongside it. We should prepare for double responsibility. Also, we have to face other obstacles, such as a lack of quotas for women, dealing with favoritism and nepotism, fierce competition under a double burden, political influence in selection, lack of knowledge about the teacher selection procedure, etc., that prevent competent women from becoming female science teachers. Likewise, Nath (2008) argued about the problems faced by secondary-level teachers daily. According to this research, it is impractical for a single teacher to instruct, evaluate, and grade many students, particularly in some schools where the number of students exceeds 500 at the secondary level. There should be a comprehensive approach to addressing the problems faced by science teachers at the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels. Improper food habits, lack of exercise, and relaxation may lead to an increase

in both mental and physical stress, so irreparable damage may be caused to any of the important body systems even at an earlier age, as mentioned by them.

Another study, Mim (2015), also agreed that a small number of women science teachers (WSTs) across the country, especially in rural areas, manifest their cultural norms regarding their co-workers, students, and guardians, revealing masculinization. This study also argued that the double burden and more pressure in domestic chores for married women teachers is visible through the lower strata of gender power dynamics. In contrast, unmarried women teachers have enough time and opportunity to pursue their careers in the sciences without as much pressure. The geographical differences also play an important role in the realm of sexual harassment. This problem is much more distinct in semi-urban areas. However, Munnawar and Awan (2020) found no significant difference in the perceptions of education stakeholders and colleagues towards female teachers in urban and rural areas.

It is not easy for women science teachers to serve as role models by performing well across all aspects, due to deeply seated gender-specific norms and roles determined by society, as well as institutional constraints. Despite having prescribed gender roles and constraints, these women are coping with their circumstances and have the potential to become role models for their students, as suggested by Mim (2015).

Policy Review

A review of policies is conducted to identify relevant provisions on the topic in the field of this research. It is done to make the research paper authentic, inclusive & transparent. While reviewing the Constitution of 2015, I found articles 18, 24, 38, and 42 relevant to my research. In Article 18, the right to equality is mentioned, in which all citizens shall be equal before the law. No person shall be denied the equal protection of the law. Likewise, no discrimination shall be made on the grounds of gender regarding remuneration and social security for the same work. Article 24 mentions the right to be free from untouchability and discrimination. It states that any act of untouchability and discrimination in any form committed in contravention of this Article shall be punishable by law as a severe social offense, and the victim of such an act shall have the right to obtain compensation in accordance with law. Article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of Women elaborates that women shall have the right to participate in all bodies of the State on the basis of the principle of

proportional inclusion. Likewise, Women shall have the right to obtain special opportunities in education, health, employment, and social security through positive discrimination. In article 42 right to social justice states that, the socially backward women, Dalit, indigenous people, indigenous nationalities, Madhesi, Tharu, minorities, persons with disabilities, marginalized communities, Muslims, backward classes, gender and sexual minorities, youths, farmers, laborers, oppressed or citizens of backward regions and indigent Khas Arya shall have the right to participate in the State bodies on the basis of inclusive principle (Constituent Assembly Secretariat [CAS], 2015).

Education Rules, 2002 states that if there are 3 total teacher *darbandi* in a primary school, one must be a female teacher. Likewise, if there are 7 total teacher *darbandi* in primary school, at least 2 must be female teachers. If there are more than 7 teacher *darbandi* in total, then 3 must be female teachers. It also mentioned that, while appointing teachers at schools, female teachers will have only a 6-month observation period after getting appointed (Nepal Law Commission [NLC], 2002). The Teacher Service Commission Rules, 2057 (2000) states that 45% is allocated to the various clusters, and the open competition will be conducted among them to ensure the Teacher Service Commission's appointment of teachers from various groups in community schools is inclusive. In total, 33% is allocated to females; among them, 3% is allocated to Dalit community females and 2% to Muslim community females (NLC, 2000). Under the National Education Policy (NEP), 2076 (2019), Present programs related to positive discrimination and inclusion will be continued to increase female teacher participation in schools. It also mentioned that, to increase female participation in leadership roles, female teachers will be prioritized for appointment as head teachers in schools (MoEST, 2019). It has also been mentioned that teachers' professional development will be increased to teach the content related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, through various teacher training and capacity development programs. A teacher's union will be formed to promote the professional rights and welfare of teachers (NLC, 1971). All working females shall be entitled to a maternity leave of a maximum of Ninety-Eight days, with remuneration, before and after delivery. Maternity leave may be taken only twice during the entire service period. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 and the Labor Act 2017 require the establishment of a childcare center, where 50 or more working women must be provided with an additional 30-minute break for breastfeeding and

pregnant women (CAS, 2015; NLC, 2017). It provides 15 days of mourning leave to women employees in case of the death of their husband, their own parents (father and mother), and in-laws (father-in-law and mother-in-law). It is mandatory to avail of maternity leave in case of stillbirth or miscarriage for working women.

After reviewing the policies, we can see that fostering and encouraging plans and policies for females are mentioned, though the TSC-allocated reservation quota is insufficient to increase the number of female science teachers and maintain gender equality at the secondary level. Similarly, the government of Nepal is providing teacher professional development training, but it is not sufficient for teachers' holistic development. A specific program or training for female science teachers should be provided to increase motivation for balancing these different roles. In Nepal's Constitution of 2015, fundamental rights stated that every woman shall have equal lineage rights without gender-based discrimination, and women shall have the right to obtain special opportunities in education, health, employment, and social security, based on positive discrimination (CAS, 2015). Though we female teachers are facing various types of visible and invisible biases at our school premises due to the lack of execution of the policy. So, these policies should be implemented and strictly enforced to ensure that female science teachers are legislated to address gender disparities in this profession. The supporting rules and regulations are still pending implementation. I hope it will be implemented effectively in the coming days.

Research Gap

I reviewed the literature on female teachers' experiences, challenges, and roles. One study conducted by Mim (2015) examined the low number of women science teachers and argued about the domestic and professional roles, though it did not address biological roles or the time allocated to caring for children. Another research study by Koirala and Acharya (2005) identified eight hindering factors for low female participation in STEM, including gender-biased social construction, theoretical aspects of teaching, and an agrarian lifestyle. However, work-life balance, the multiple roles of female teachers, and workplace challenges are not mentioned. Likewise, Bista (2006) found that favoritism, nepotism, political influence, and societal perceptions are challenges faced by female science teachers, though this study did not explore why they continue their professional journey despite these challenges. Most of the papers I have reviewed focus on the performance of female teachers, problems faced by female teachers, girls in technical education, and the status of

female teachers. However, while reviewing various papers, I could not find one on the hindrances and challenges faced by secondary-level female teachers in their lived experiences with the balance of women's different roles. Most of the available papers were analyzed by using quantitative methods in an international context. There was a smaller number of quantitative and qualitative research available regarding female science teachers that evoked lived experiences in the context of Nepal. Moreover, I realized that I should focus on the invisible discrimination regarding the availability of equal opportunities, participation in decision-making, and the hidden challenges faced by female teachers, and on ways to overcome those hindrances and challenges, as well as on the problems of balancing different roles of women based on their own lived experience. Not only this, but I also found some gaps in policy-making, as the NLC, (2017) made it mandatory to establish a child care center in the office. However, the provision of breastfeeding rooms is also not mandatory in the Education Rule, 2002 (NLC, 2002). Likewise, the Ministry of Health and Population advocates that every woman exclusively breastfeed for 6 months, whereas the Education Act, 1971, grants 98 days of leave to mothers (NLC, 1971). The policies of the different ministries of the government of Nepal seem contradictory in this matter. These loopholes during policy formulation should be improved and implemented strongly with proper coordination.

Essence of the Chapter

I discussed the literature, theoretical, and empirical reviews in this chapter. In the related literature review section, I highlighted the key keywords and themes related to my research to address the thematic review. Likewise, in the theoretical review section, I covered self-determination theory and liberal feminism relevant to my research. Furthermore, I identified a research gap across the various studies after reviewing the empirical section. Similarly, I have highlighted some policies related to the situation of female teachers. I reviewed education-related policies and also explored the various articles in our constitution related to women's situation. I also mentioned the lack of policies and practices to encourage females. In the next chapter, I will be talking about my participation, research site, my philosophical consideration, data collecting, analyzing, and interpreting process, and quality standard of my research.

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used in this paper to answer my research question. Research methodology is the specific procedure used to identify and select different research paradigms and methods. In this process, we also analyze the information obtained from the research study. The main goal of this chapter is to show the reader how I conducted my research, primarily using qualitative methods. In this regard, a paradigm is essential at the beginning for the foundation of a research study. The qualitative research methods used here will help identify the issues that females face in balancing their roles and the challenges they face in the teaching profession. Similarly, it will ensure a comprehensive understanding and deep insights into the major factors that affect females' engagement in hard subjects. According to the Molung Foundation (2014), the teaching profession is perceived as a challenge by female teachers. Qualitative research is used to understand the challenges they face, the perceptions of male teachers, administrators, and society towards their profession, ways to balance the different roles they play, and more.

Philosophical Consideration

Here, under the philosophical consideration, are how we view the world from our perspective, how we generate knowledge, and the value of research. Therefore, the three assumptions, i.e., ontological assumptions, epistemological assumptions, and axiological assumptions, will be used as philosophical considerations in my research study.

My Ontological Assumption

Ontology means the theory of reality. Broadly, there exist two kinds of reality in this world. One is objective (single) reality, and another is subjective (multiple) reality. It concerns valid and correct thinking, in which logic examines the rules of inference. The ontology focuses on the certainty about the nature and existence of objects, which is being researched by researchers. Realist ontology holds that there is a single reality that can be studied, understood, and expressed as truth (Moon & Blackman, 2014). The ontology of this research is multiple realities. Every individual is different and special. As female teachers, we all have gone through different experiences & challenges, critical events in our profession, according to our own

surroundings, administration, and more. It includes the reality of existing status, hindrance & female related issues through various perspectives. As an educator, I encountered various hurdles, challenges, and obstacles in the journey of a female teacher through social, gendered, and economic perspectives.

My Epistemological Assumption

Epistemology is the core area of philosophical study, being the science of method and ground of knowledge (Levine & Ornstein, 2006). Epistemology seeks to answer what knowing is, what is known, and what knowledge is. It seeks to derive our knowledge source from empirical evidence. The idea of epistemology can be explored by examining the relation between the subject and the object. My epistemology in this research is subjective and concerns knowledge and knowing in the context of instructional methods. Subjective epistemology assumes that reality exists, either within the individual mind or is interconnected with it. It can be expressed in a range of symbols and language, giving meaning to the world, and interpreted in ways that serve them (Cohen et al., 2007). This paradigm's epistemology is a subjective type; in social constructivism, knowledge is obtained through collaboration and critical reflection on the shelves and lived experiences of three female science teachers, including myself. All participants are influenced by the same social structure and have followed a similar career advancement journey. I believe that we have shared the realities. The shared knowledge of research participants can be constructed through a collaborative autoethnographic study through body language, symbols, and expression.

My Axiological Assumptions

It is a value theory concerned with critical analysis of truth, utility, goodness, beauty, right conduct, and applications (Orniestin & Levine, 2006). It is a basis for adding knowledge. Axiology includes ethics and aesthetics. Ethics examines moral values and standards of ethical behavior. Aesthetics addresses the value of beauty and art. It is more about our behaviors, character, and expression. The axiology of my research is considered value-laden. In the lens of feminist theory, female teachers face discrimination regarding gender, balancing work and life, decision-making, and level of education (Lorber, 2001). My participants are from diverse backgrounds. I respect the participant's view. As a researcher here, my role is to encourage & motivate competent females to increase the number of female teachers in leadership roles, as well as in the teaching profession, to maintain gender equality in the teaching and

learning field. This research can be taken in terms of transformative learning, so my value is re-gendering. The Re-gendering challenges the traditional gender perspective within institutions and families. It determines possibilities for change through women's participation, leading to transformation. Gender identity of females seems to be back due to various reasons, so it helps to maintain gender equity by fostering females through social transition.

Multi -Paradigmatic Design

In my search for research paradigms or research worldviews, I encountered the research paradigm spectrum from positivism to integralism (Taylor & Medina, 2011). I was in a major dilemma about which research paradigm to use for my study. Based on my epistemology (subjective knowledge), axiology (value-laden), and ontology (multiple realities), incorporating only one paradigm seems insufficient and inadequate to conduct my research study in a more meaningful manner. Thus, I adopted a multi-paradigmatic design space incorporating interpretivism and criticalism as my research paradigms (Taylor & Medina, 2011). In doing so, interpretivism will help me to unpack and maintain the verisimilitude of my lived experiences and critical events. Similarly, criticalism will help me take a critical stance toward the deep-seated beliefs of a male-dominant society and identify embedded disempowering forces within it.

Criticalism Paradigm

The criticalism paradigm is an alternative to society, whose purpose is to criticize and justify the existing status quo by providing alternative knowledge to produce a better social order (Asghar, 2013). As a conscious, cognizing being, my responsibility is not just to explore my critical events or challenges encountered on our journey, but also to empower other competent females to become science educators. It also enables them to raise their voices and stand for gender bias to maintain gender equality.

As my research is based on collaborative autoethnography, it has a quality of a critical paradigm. This research emerged the lived experience, not just as a biography but also as unfolding critical-reflective stories, epiphanies, unforgettable moments, concealed stories, discrimination-related events, maternity-related incidents, and other challenges faced by female science teachers. In my opinion, researchers should examine the stories and contexts in which power imbalances are practiced. In the course of the study, I investigated the perceptions of male colleagues and education

stakeholders towards female teachers and explored the kinds of gender hegemonic practices that are prevalent and hidden. I tried to challenge my status quo, critically reflect on it, and raise critical questions against the existing belief system. My participant and I unpacked our painful past in a public circle through critical reflection. In my dissertation, I have discussed the defying of existing gender roles, structural inequity, multiple burdens of female teachers, the perception of male colleagues, and the school management committee towards a female teacher. I explored the gendered actions, such as separating the work based on gender, and deeply rooted assumptions of societal norms regarding the roles of male and female. I have highlighted the shared domestic responsibilities, male allies at home, and unequal pay and unequal workload division at schools. I discussed the male-dominated leadership, implicit bias faced by female teachers in promotion, attending trainings, and seminars. Likewise, I critically examined the contradiction in the policy mentioned by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology of the Government of Nepal regarding the maternity leave allocated for female teachers and suggested reforming the gender sensitive policies to ensure the use of a critical paradigm in my dissertation. I tried to address ethical issues by balancing reflexivity, using gender friendly language, and focusing on institutional issues to present information regarding stereotype issues. I believe it will provide me with a mindful epistemological orientation to uncover the experiences of those subjected to such dominant practices.

Interpretive Paradigm

The main concern of the interpretive paradigm is understanding the world as a natural order through individuals' subjective experiences of it. I chose the interpretivist research paradigm, which provides an opportunity to share the lived experiences of myself and my participants regarding the challenges and issues faced by secondary-level female science teachers in the teaching profession. This paradigm will help us examine the challenges we face in balancing our careers across different roles (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022) It helps identify ways to overcome challenges and issues faced by female teachers and encourages them to choose the teaching profession.

Collaborative Autoethnography as a Method of Inquiry

Among the different types of ethnography: community ethnography, collective autoethnography, co-ethnography, and collaborative autoethnography, I chose

choosing Collaborative Autoethnography (CAE) in this research study. CAE is beyond collaborative work, in which participants from the same community have mutual expectations, the same goal, a common critical story, and share, learn, and grow together. CAE is a multivocal approach, Lapadat (2017) stated that “in which a team of two or more researchers work together to share personal stories and interpret the pooled autoethnographic data” (p. 590).

It is a qualitative research design in which researchers work in the community to collect participants’ autobiographical narratives. CAE has the potential to engender a deeper understanding of self and others because it engages in dialogical exchange with each other’s intimate stories. Here, my participants and I explain our lived experiences, feelings, issues, painful pasts, and the critical events we faced as we navigated different roles in our careers and the journey of becoming female teachers at this level. CAE helps me turn the tools of interrogation on myself and my participant, focusing on commonalities rather than studying others. This method preserves the unique strengths of self-reflexivity associated with autobiography, cultural interpretation associated with ethnography, and multi-subjectivity associated with collaboration (Chang et al., 2013). CAE still focuses on self-interrogation but does so collectively and cooperatively within a team of researchers.

Forming a Research Team

Finding just the right companions is a great challenge in CAE. While choosing participants, I was more focused on similar hardships among preexisting collegial relationships and was already privy to some aspects of each other’s vulnerabilities. Otherwise, it is very difficult to create a comfortable space between new participants and researchers, as we are sharing our intimate story. Any prior relationship that coauthors bring to CAE can, when worked through collaboratively, create a supportive environment (Chang et al., 2013).

As per my plan, I selected three female science teachers at the secondary level in a government school in Kathmandu district, Nepal. While discussing the scope of the research, I selected three participants/researchers who share commonalities, similar experiences, goals, and challenges, and who will provide their personal data honestly. As per my understanding, collaboration is tighter when a small group of researchers is involved. Group discussion and negotiation among participants is simpler in a smaller group, which helps to minimize the juxtaposition of individual

voices. The growing collaboration among female auto ethnographers is an interesting phenomenon that deserves the attention of future research (Chang et al., 2013).

As we know, we need a high level of trust and strong bonding among participants to share our personal life stories effectively. When sensitive issues (discrimination, gender bias, harassment, challenges of our journey) were discussed, sensitive care of participants was taken during that time. While sharing stories of struggle with traumatic life events, maternal experience, we may cry together and seek help. So, an ethical and safe place was chosen for further meetings. During this, we protected each other's confidentiality and held each other accountable.

Research design is a plan and strategy for investigating research questions. The research design is the blueprint of the detailed procedures of analyzing the obtained data (Singh, 2001). Through this design method, I aim to explore the narration of lived experience regarding the critical self-reflection of our teaching profession, a hindrance that has made my journey difficult thus far. Likewise, the forms of harassment encountered during the journey, other female-related issues, and ways to balance different roles and tackle these problems are explored.

Modes of Collaboration

There were two modes of collaboration, i.e., sequential and concurrent. In sequential mode, as a researcher, I wrote my story first and then shared it with other participants. After reading my story, my participants tried to add their own story, turn by turn, on different themes. Though it took more time to write their stories, as this process is more specific. In a concurrent model, everyone was supposed to meet and sit together, and start reflecting on their own critical experiences in their own contexts at the same time. This model runs in parallel between the researcher and the co-researcher, as it is broader than a sequential model research (Chang et al., 2013). In my context, only one model was not perfect, so I used both sequential and concurrent (mixed) models. As working women, we must make time for our school and family, so it was not possible to be together for every meeting and write our own story. Then, I organized in-person meetings with individuals who encouraged us to create a safe space to share our intimate stories. Some meetings were held via Google Meet or Zoom, depending on the participants' time zones. If trust is not fully established among participants, they may be tempted to cheat, compromising the data's trustworthiness.

Presentation Style

In this research study, my presentation style was narrative. My understanding of CAE is that I can recall myself throughout the study and delve deeper into similar experiences and dilemmas related to the issue through the multiple voices of my participants. It enabled us to interrogate a social phenomenon to create synergy and harmony. My work throughout this research was to explore the difficulties women science teachers face in balancing multiple roles and the challenges we all face. In this study, I interpreted the real experiences of myself and my participants in the form of stories, drawing on theoretical and philosophical views that have governed our lives. During collaboration, individual stories became richer and more detailed, with hidden assumptions uncovered and critical incidents elaborated.

Complete Member Researcher

In CAE, I am not only a researcher but a participant in my own study. I have shared my personal experiences and challenges with all of us. Researchers play a dual role as researchers and research participants. The researcher's experience and views are under investigation during the investigation process. According to Chang et al. (2013), this dual role is referred to as a complete member researcher. As a researcher, my role is a liberating equalizer as we, the participants and researchers, have equal power. I have pooled my personal stories through collective interrogation. Chang et al. (2013) argued that "This flipping of dynamics among researcher-participants puts all members of a research team on an even playing field" (p.26).

Sounding Board/ Critical Friend

An external or added member can play an important role as a sounding board. We call her a non-auto ethnographer, who passionately listens to others and asks probing questions. She might initiate open discussion and help people reflect critically on their lived experiences and stories by raising new issues. If we include a critical friend on our research team, someone more intellectual can guide us properly to reach our destination (Chang et al., 2013). In my research study, I chose one critical friend having more experience as a researcher, educator, and leader. I discussed the data interpretation with my critical friend and incorporated her ideas. After collecting data, I became lost in my participants' narratives and personal stories and wanted to keep them all. I got insights from her to filter the data, create a set of stories, and fit them into the themes. She mentioned that this CAE methodology is new to her, so she did not offer any insights.

Communication among Team Members

While conducting effective research, we must have strong communication among team members. With more people in the team, there is a chance of unfamiliarity among them. So, we must have clear objectives and goals of research. Likewise, we have to answer different questions (why, how, and when) about conducting this research. Clear expectations and the advantages of the research study need to be communicated clearly and early. If any member who initially agreed to the team drops out, it would be difficult to manage, so committed members should be taken on. According to the CAE approach, I talked and listened with my participant beyond the interview and explored the participant's life outside the research context. While sharing their stories, I listened to them heart to heart, body to body, to absorb participants' stories to learn something deeper about each other.

My Participants

In this study, I selected three female participants, including myself, who are working as secondary-level science teachers. We are currently teaching in a government school in Kathmandu district after passing the TSC. Both of my participants have taught at the secondary level for more than 10 years. All of us have completed the Master's level; one of my participants is a PhD scholar, and I am an MPhil scholar. I am quite familiar with both, but they are not my colleagues. For this collaborative study, we need familiar participants who can share their emotional stories, real feelings, and personal incidents related to biased behavior with researchers. One of my participants has two sons and is taking care of them, teaching at different schools, and continuing her studies. In this study, I explained how she is balancing multiple roles. During her career, she shared her harsh experiences and critical stories while teaching for 15 years. In my research study, I sought to explore her lived experiences to help answer my research question. Another participant is from Rolpa district in Nepal. She completed her schooling in the village, then came to Kathmandu to continue her studies. Now, she is teaching in Kathmandu district after passing the Teacher Service Commission exam. In this study, I explored her career journey from a remote area up to this level. She had also shared various challenges she faced throughout her career journey, as she was raised by single parents. It was not easy for her to manage her home responsibilities, her career, and her further studies. We shared our teaching and learning practices and problems regarding the secondary-level course as good friends.

My obligation toward my participants is to ensure that the research is respectful, collaborative, non-exploitative, and empowering, and to remove the hierarchy among the participants during the collaboration process. Likewise, this research minimizes the harm and honors the participants' views. I was responsible for my participants not to disclose more than they are comfortable with and to respect their experiences. I allowed the participants to review how they are portrayed to avoid the risk of imposing my theoretical lens that misconstrues the real voices of my participants. Likewise, it helps to minimize the risk of being identifiable even with pseudonyms.

Remaining Flexible

During the research study, if we remain flexible, it helps to enjoy the process and reach a deeper interpretation closer to the core of the collected data. The main focus of CAE is giving care to participants. During data collection, we all contributed and shared our data to make the process collaborative. During the process, I supported my team members and managed stress levels to create a mutually enjoyable working relationship. There was sisterhood and longevity among the participants and researchers, which helped provide emotional support and a supportive academic structure.

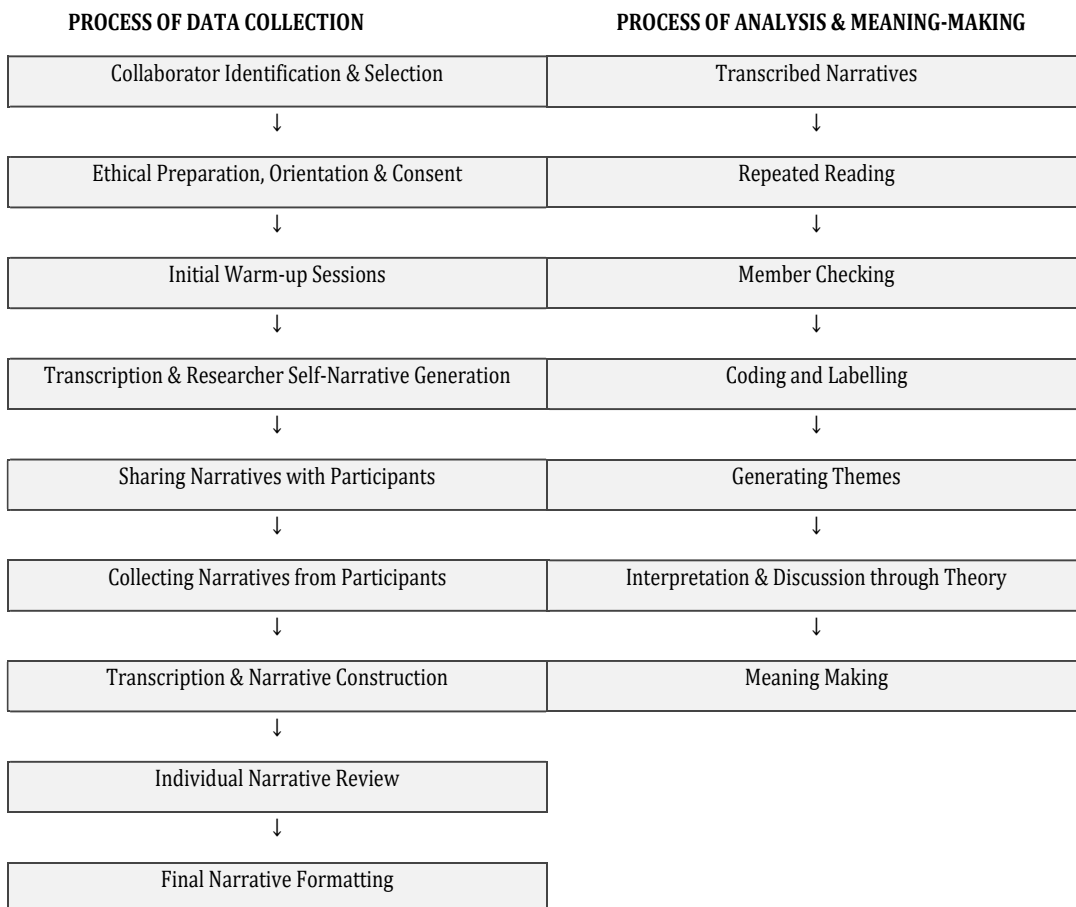
Data Collection, Interpretation and Analysis

Data collection is not a mechanical and linear process. I used purposive sampling in this research, selecting participants based on their pre-collegial relationships. A group of researchers and participants having some commonalities, common interests, the same goal, and differences, wrestling with their own intimate stories for meaning-making and to connect to their own socio-cultural context. It is an iterative process in which we generated and regenerated our emergent stories. Multiple negotiations and rounds of conversation/meetings were organized with participants to reach creative compromises. I have tried to bring a variety of data from my research participants (challenges in their own contexts) and self-data from observing, reflecting, and analyzing myself, my challenges, and my lived experience as a female science teacher. Participants were asked about their perception of teaching to know their motivation. Similarly, they were asked whether teaching was their 1st profession or an alternative, and whether they chose the teaching profession on their own or were forced to choose it. Likewise, further steps to increase their motivation include improving their efficiency.

We went through informal, in-depth multiple interviews, through open-ended questions, Google Docs individually and collaboratively. It was difficult to meet all 3 participants in person due to day-to-day busy schedules. We conducted 1 collaborative physical meeting and 2 rounds of individual interviews until data saturation. Each participant contributed to collective work in their distinct and independent voice by sharing or writing life-journeys. While collecting data, I followed the three-principle suggested by (Chang et al., 2016), 1. Rich data are a prerequisite for a good product; 2. Data collection is not an end in itself; 3. Data is like scraps with little value until something beautiful is made from them.

For the proper management of the data, text data was collected via audio recordings during physical meetings and interviews with participants. These recordings and text data were transcribed. The nature of an informal interview is to explore in-depth the meaning-making of qualitative data. Similarly, note-taking was done after prolonged exposure. I have used narrative through stories, poetic, and non-linguistic genres, such as photographs, drawings, and creative models, to illustrate various approaches and show the importance of art in research.

The qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews and observation of respondents (Creswell, 2009). While analyzing the data, themes were identified and linked to related literature. Reviewing, meaning-making, and reflecting on oneself were focused while writing an individual story. Qualitative data were analyzed through transcribing interviews by writing a summary of each individual interview, Coding and categorizing (de)coding the data by identifying general and unique themes for all the interviews, and modifying themes and summary. Likewise, thematizing the data, linking with the literature, interpreting the data through narrative, and contextualizing themes (Cohen et al., 2011). Figure 1 shows the process of collecting data and ways of analyzing the data for meaning-making.

Figure 1*Analytical Framework***Quality Standards**

The quality standards for each paradigm are different. Considering this, after reviewing various papers for this research study, I became aware of the various research paradigms and their corresponding quality standards. A multi-paradigmatic research design is used in my research study, with different quality standards applied to the trustworthiness criteria. Here, I was more focused on the quality standard of interpretivism and criticalism as these paradigms are used in my research study. My research inquiry is non-positivistic, so the quality standards of validity and reliability will not apply to my case. In this regard, the following will be the quality standards for my research study.

Pedagogical Thoughtfulness

Pedagogical thoughtfulness is the means for educators to grow, change, and deepen themselves through reflecting on living with children in natural contexts.

From the view of pedagogical experience, pedagogical thoughtfulness is the combination of pedagogical situations, relations, and action. In my research study, I critically reflected on our belief system and the challenges of female science teachers in different contexts of all participants more deeply. (Manen, 1991) has defined these initiations of critical reflection as an act of pedagogical thoughtfulness.

Thoughtfulness is the product of self-reflective acts on human experience. According to Manen (1991), a thoughtful person can interpret the inner life of another person, involving the ability to immediately see through motives and cause-and-effect relations. I reflected on the experience and inner life of myself and my participant. Thus, thoughtfulness (tact) knows how to interpret and to sense what is the right thing to do. It is an expression of the responsibility we are charged with in protecting, educating, and helping children grow.

Pedagogical thoughtfulness does not, of course, describe everything teachers know or do, but the real stuff of teaching that happens in the thick of life itself, when one must know with certain confidence just what to say or do in a situation with children. Pedagogical thoughtfulness constitutes the essence and excellence of pedagogy, which observes the internal aspects. Mindful skills enable teachers to act improvise rationally in ever-changing educational situations.

Transferability

Transferability invites readers of research to make connections between elements of a study and their own experience. It describes the process of applying the results of research in one situation to another similar situation. The detailed nature of the results makes research ideal for transferability. For example, in my research, I explored my lived experiences and challenges in my journey of becoming a female science educator/researcher. Given the level of detail provided, readers can apply certain aspects of the experience to their educational context and situation. Not only this, but balancing the different roles of females in my context will also be transferable to others' contexts. According to Stalh and King (2020), transferability is possible only when a thick description provides a rich enough portrayal of circumstances for application to others' situations, and this is usually at the behest of the local constitution. Transfer applications rely on a researcher's detailed description, which includes contextual information about the fieldwork site. The methods and time frame for data collection in the study must be fully described, as well as the entire duration of the field study.

Verisimilitude

According to Bhimenfeld (1995), verisimilitude is the act of establishing and maintaining the appearance of reality within the confines of the constructed setting. It is believed to reflect real-life experience and be true to life. It is considered an important criterion for evaluating and analyzing the value of narrative inquiries. For the study to be trustworthy, it must also exhibit verisimilitude, meaning the audience must experience a convergence with their own experience of a similar, parallel, or analogous situation (Bhimenfeld, 1995). It makes it possible for others to access the lives of others in well-crafted narratives, which allows rich empathy and deep understanding of participants (Eisner, 1997). To maintain the quality standard of verisimilitude, I unpacked my challenges across every aspect of our personal life and provided rich, detailed descriptions of my critical events and lived experiences. Readers will be able to judge the truthfulness of our stories by relating these challenges to their own contexts, lived experiences, and critical stories.

Critical Reflexivity

Critical reflexivity is the process of exploring how researchers and their subjectivity shape what can be designed, gathered, interpreted, analyzed, and reported in an investigation. Personal reflection helps understand the influence of a researcher's identity and position on the inquiry, as well as the mutual relationship between the participant and the researcher. Critical reflection includes critical inquiry, the conscious consideration of the ethical implications and consequences of teaching practice, along with self-reflection, deep examination of personal beliefs, and assumptions about human potential and learning (Larrivee, 2000). There is no doubt that reflective practices are important for practitioners across different professions. According to Brookfield (2015), critical reflection, being a collaborative process, includes colleagues, clients, peers, and experts in posing questions. By challenging dominant assumptions that threaten our sense of identity and increase the risk of marginalization. It raises questions and finds new ways of looking at the practice. In my research study, I used CAE, so all the team members thought critically about our experiences, specific events, and critical stories, which helped us become reflective practitioners, researchers, and educators. Throughout the research study, I tried to identify challenges faced by a female science teacher across different contexts, difficulties to balance multiple roles and ways to overcome them.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues are among the most challenging and essential aspects of collaborative autoethnographic research. Ethical research is the basis of this chapter. In research studies, it is essential for researchers to ensure participants are safe and protected from harm and unnecessary stress. For a novice transformative researcher like me, using autoethnography as a methodology is intimidating. It is because the path of transformative research is a journey of soul-searching and taking an activist stance against prevailing socio-cultural practices (Hammersley & Traianov, 2012). It is essential to conduct effective research, as it helps bring transformative change and opens collaborative, respectful dialogue between the researcher and participants by making participants' lived experiences visible; otherwise, why do it? (Cacciattolo, 2015).

In every phase of collaborative autoethnographic research, both the researcher and the research participant must follow ethical guidelines. As a transformative autoethnographic researcher, I need to be aware of the deep-seated socio-cultural beliefs of a male-centered society and of people's perceptions. Similarly, while integrating the various epiphanies and critical events, I decided what to include and what to exclude based on their relevance to the research study. The stories and events I unpacked in this research study include my lived experiences in private and community schools, as well as the challenges faced by all participants at different points in their own journeys. In this regard, I tried my best to address the evolving privacy and confidentiality issues that will arise during my writing process.

Avoiding Harm

It is carried out to ensure participant well-being by doing no harm and maximizing the potential benefits of the research for participants, including protecting their identities. Although our insight may be grounded in our experiences, our recollection and interpretation might embarrass, harm, or expose others. Likewise, revealing identity like name, gender, race, ethnicity, and so on about a person, events, or sites might inflict harm on others. Recognizing and valuing mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness by prioritizing relationships, nurturing relationships by addressing potential conflict, and maintaining relationships is essential to avoid harm (Mauthner et al., 2002). To minimize risk and maximize benefit, a strategy should be developed to protect participants' privacy and identity. Researchers should make reasonable assessments of the likelihood and severity of the kind of harm. It is essential that

seriousness and actual or potential harm be judged in context. Possible harmful people may be the focus of the study, or broader categories of people to whom the research findings relate (Cohen et al., 2007).

Institutional Approval

It is crucial for access and acceptance of the institution or organization where the research is to be conducted. It offers the best opportunity for researchers to present their credentials as serious investigators and establish their own ethical positions with respect to their proposed research. Achieving goodwill and cooperation is especially important when the proposed research spans a period (Cohen et al., 2011). After being identified by official and significant figures whose permission must be sought, researchers have to clarify in their own minds the precise nature and scope of their research. Regarding the research study, I also took permission from the headteacher of my school to share my personal and professional experience as a secondary-level female science teacher.

Informed Consent

Informed consent assures objects the right to freedom and self-determination. It is the procedure by which individuals decide whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of the facts that are likely to influence their decision (Cohen et al., 2011). It must ensure the principle of autonomy for the participants. The consent process includes a check-in with participants at each stage of a project, from design and fieldwork to drafting and sharing the autoethnographic text. It is a dynamic and ongoing process. Informed consent is a fundamental component and can be given either through signing a consent form or verbally. In my case, I obtained informed consent verbally from my participants.

Essence of the Chapter

In this chapter, I highlighted my ontological, axiological, and epistemological assumptions regarding the research study. I also discussed the paradigmatic design used for my research study, i.e., the critical and interpretive paradigms. Likewise, I explained in detail how collaborative autoethnography is used as a method of inquiry. I explained the formation of the research team, communication with my participants, an introduction to my participants, the types of collaboration, the presentation style used in the research study, and the role of the critical friend in my research. Furthermore, I explained the data collection process, data interpretation, data analysis, and the quality standards used in my research study.

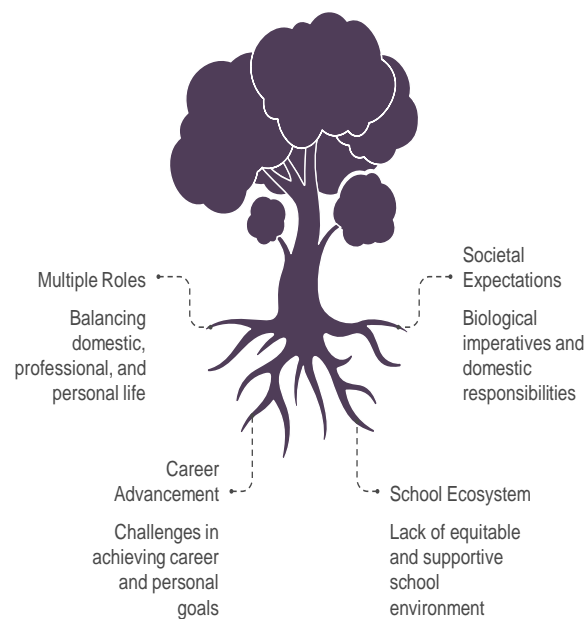
CHAPTER IV PIECES OF STORIES KNITTING TOGETHER

This chapter answers my research question by sharing the lived experiences of secondary-level science teachers. I have also explored the introduction of my participants and their journey to becoming teachers. This chapter focused mainly on the participants' lived experiences. Here, I explored the challenges female science teachers face on their journey and the support they receive from their families despite low income. Likewise, perceptions of others towards female teachers, the difficulties secondary science teachers face in adapting to new places, language issues, job security, and turning points in their lives are discussed under various themes. After collecting data from my participants, I have developed three themes: family support, career growth, and the structural inequity to answer my main research question and explain them in detail simultaneously in this chapter.

Figure 2

Chapter Overview

Female Science Teachers Struggle with Work-Life Balance



The figure 2 shows how female science teacher narrate their lived experiences within personal and professional contexts. It shows the challenges encountered by female science teacher in their teaching practices and institutional environment. Likewise, overall, it shows the lived experiences of female teachers in their day-to-day lives. This figure includes the ways of balancing multiple roles, meeting social expectations, and expressing the challenges faced by female science teachers to achieve their personal goals and advance their careers.

Diligent Hira and her Journey

One of my participants is from Rolpa District, Lumbini Province, in the hilly region of Nepal. She had completed her master's degree in chemistry. According to her, she was the only female child in her village who had the opportunity to study to this level at her age at that time. She is currently a secondary-level science teacher in Kathmandu Metropolitan City, with a decade of experience teaching science at that level. She is a laborious, passionate young teacher. She is always excited to learn new things and implement them in her classroom.

While talking about her childhood, she mentioned that she was a brilliant student. She is an extroverted, outspoken, and confident lady. She used to participate in all the school's extracurricular activities. She used to receive many awards and honors for giving good performance in various extracurricular activities. She was planning to come to Kathmandu to continue her studies in science after finishing class 10 in her village, as there was no campus offering science courses in her district, Rolpa, or in the nearby district of Dang.

She was raised by a single mother along with six other siblings. She is one of the youngest daughters in her family. She mentioned that they belonged to a middle-class family. It was not their cup of tea for her family to send their daughter to Kathmandu for further study. Getting permission to go to Kathmandu was like frying a big fish for her, but her strong determination to pursue her career dragged her there for further study. The family had no choice but to support their daughter's goal of becoming a doctor. According to her, the family was already in an economic crisis, as its main source of income was agriculture.

The journey from Rolpa to Kathmandu was the first step on the ladder of her career. Traveling about 275 km on a bumpy road in a night bus (Kathmandu to Rolpa) was a herculean task for a 15-year-old single lady. In 2005, when she was coming to Kathmandu, no one from her family was staying in the Kathmandu valley. So, her

family was worried about her daughter's residence and security. Her family members were going through multiple questions in their minds regarding the room rent, educational fees, and miscellaneous expenses. While coming to Kathmandu, she told her mother, *"I will return home after becoming an independent daughter, till then, you do not worry about me and take care of yourself."*

(ममी म खालि हात आउदिन, मान्छे बनेरै आउछु, केहि न केहि गरेरै आउछु).

After coming to Kathmandu, she started staying in her friend's room with her friend's brother. For about one year, she stayed in a friend's room, and everything was going normally. Later on, her friend and brother stopped by to support her, started counting the days until she could get out of that room, and showed their true colors. She mentioned that I faced so many challenges in my life while staying away from my family. She suffered a lot during that time. Moreover, she mentioned that the five years of her student life were full of only bad memories (with tears in her eyes), as she had spent several sleepless nights in that room. After heading to Kathmandu to pursue her career, she and her family were caught in storms. According to her, she came to Kathmandu to be a doctor. Finally, she was near her dream despite many hurdles. Luckily, her name was selected for a partial scholarship at a private college to pursue a Bachelor's in Medicine and Bachelor's in Science (MBBS) course, though she had to sacrifice her dream of becoming a doctor due to financial constraints. It was the hardest decision and the most complicated day of her life to date.

After reading her story, I realized how determined she was about her career. She had the morale to face the challenges on her way. She was confident in her own talent and dedicated to fulfilling her own dream and that of her family. She was unsure about what comes next in her life, though she tried her best to convince her mother not to worry about her. Hira's tearful reaction to that difficult situation stemmed from her family background and her false friendships. It was becoming harder for the three of them to stay in the same room for long. She had no other option but to stay with them due to her financial situation. Not only that, it was hard to find a room, and it was unsafe for a single woman to stay alone in Kathmandu. She was staying forcefully with them and facing many moans and groans concerning her presence. While reading her story, I remembered myself, as I also shared a room with my friends. We had a very good friendship; we used to split all the room expenses. In our society, daughters are often seen as weak and unable to make decisions for

themselves. On the contrary, her mother believed in her daughter and let her stay away from home to pursue her further education. As a female child, we can do nothing without our parents' support, but in her case, she had full family support that helped her to make the journey up to here.

By standing on her feet, we can assume how hard it was for her to reach this point. It was not a cup of tea for everyone to publish their name in a partial scholarship in MBBS, but she did so despite various challenges. Somehow, her mother was managing her school fees and other expenses. She was already doing more than she could afford, and she also had to raise other children. Only the partial scholarship fee was unaffordable for her mother, and the dream of becoming a doctor was equally harsh for her daughter. Then she decided to pursue a career in another field, as no option remained but to abandon her journey to become a doctor. It was her hard time when she had to kill her dream just because of the low economic status of her family. Then, she decided to continue her studies with a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) level for the other opportunity. When I asked her, "*Do you feel any guilt about becoming a teacher rather than a doctor?*" She replied to me, "*No, it was not in my luck to be a doctor. So, I am happy with whatever I am doing today.*"

PhD Scholar Mira, in her Mid-forties

Mira is a hardworking, determined, laborious, and perseverant lady who spent about two decades in the teaching field. She had spent more than a decade in the private sector teaching profession. Currently, she is teaching at a government school in Kathmandu as a secondary-level science teacher. Now, she is in her mid-forties and working with the same enthusiasm. She completed her secondary education in her hometown in western Nepal. Then moved to India for further education along with her parents. So, she graduated with a scholarship from India. She returned to Nepal in 2004, after completing her master's degree in microbiology in India. Then she began fulfilling other duties and working for families. She was eagerly waiting for the right time to continue her studies, though she was lost in the web of responsibilities woven by society and family. Finally, after 20 years, she is doing a PhD. in Education from Tribhuvan University.

According to her, during school life, she always used to be in first place. She was the first woman from her community to pass SLC. She also mentioned that, in her childhood, there was no electricity, no mobile phone, and no internet. She used to read with the help of "tuki (oil lamp)" light and remembered burning hair in "tuki" while

reading. There was no culture of educating their daughters at that time. Most students used to get married before or after SLC, but her teachers saved Mira from an early marriage. Her teachers forced her grandparents not to marry and let her continue her education. Then her father came to the village from India and took her with him. From her experience, we can say she was lucky to have teachers who were very thoughtful and cooperative. They convinced her family to continue her further education rather than marry her at an early age after identifying her potential. After going through her childhood story, we can imagine how hard it was for her in her school life, though she was always a brilliant student in her studies. Back then, in 1995, no one was interested in women's higher education, though her teachers were aware of her career.

After going to India, she joined in grade 11 in Andhra Pradesh, where Telugu was the state language. She heard Telegu for the first time. How hard it was for her to adapt to a new place where everything, language, place, culture, people, and surroundings, was new for her. She already left her childhood memories and experiences back in Nepal. It was very hard to adapt to a new place as an adult. After enrolling at the university, the teacher used either Telugu or English, though neither stuck in her head. She still remembered the first day of college, when she hardly understood a single sentence.

She used to stay silent like a statue all day because her friends talked in Telugu, and she could not make a single friend in the whole class. She mentioned that she did not speak with a single friend for a year due to language issues. She mentioned that she used to write all the difficult English words in Roman or in Nepali. After coming home, she used to search for the lesson in the book and make notes in English. She shared one incident with me regarding the first terminal examination.

I submitted blank paper in all the subjects except Hindi. I was asked to write about Gautam Buddha in a Hindi examination. I wrote at first in Hindi, and, unknowingly, in Nepali (with a loud laugh, hahahhha). After a few days, the subject teacher called me to the office. Oh! Lady, come here. Read it once. I want to read what is written, but I couldn't understand it. I laughed at myself while reading the answer sheet. Then I told everything to my professor everything about my condition. She also shared another incident of the zoology practical examination. I still remember the zoology practical exam. One professor had come to our college as an external examiner. I was

supposed to find a nerve ring in an earthworm, and I did, though it is very rare to see one. My external examiner was so impressed after seeing this. He asked me several questions. I knew the answer, but I could not say it because he was asking questions in English. So, I said I don't know. Even in the warm-up question, he asked me the distance from my residential area to the campus. I told him I don't know.

Her experience shows how hard it was to adapt to new surroundings due to language issues. She has been learning Nepali for more than 10 years. She had heard of Gautam Buddha earlier, so she tried to write about him. While writing, she forgot that she was attempting an exam in Hindi. She was afraid of her teachers and could not share anything with them. At least her teacher tried to understand what was written in her copy, which helped to increase her confidence. Otherwise, she could never go to teachers to express her story due to language issues. Everything in her surroundings was new for her, as she could not speak with anyone. She was trying to learn a new language, but it was not that much easier for her in her adult age. If her family members, teachers, peers, and other nearby people encouraged her to learn a second language, it could be easier for her. We can always find barriers between the mother tongue and the second language due to age, social, and psychological factors. If we try to learn a second language as adults, our mother tongue rules will interfere with our effective learning. If we make mistakes while practicing a new language, our peers and teachers might scold or laugh at us. These are sort of psychological factors that demotivate us. Likewise, Social, individual, internal, and external factors contribute to a long gap between mother-tongue and second-language environments (Rao, 2018). Her colleagues and professor used to call her 'oh lady' instead of her name, but later, in the midterm exam, she passed all the subjects as she had improved her English skills by then. When the grade 11 final examination results were published, she was the happiest and most surprised, having been the topper in the biology group. That time, only the lecturers and the principal recognized her as a Nepali girl. In the initial days, no one recognized her, but later on, she became familiar. Then the teacher used to focus more on her as a topper, and she used to read all the time at home. After going through her experience, we can reflect on how much hard work is required to become a topper in that large group. She succeeded in transforming her identity from an 'oh lady' to a Nepali topper. All the hard work

finally paid off, and she was encouraged to work hard in further education, which helped her further her career with full dedication.

After going through a round of meetings with my participants. We learned that we have some common stories, and some are more specific. Regarding the lived experience of female science teachers, I developed three themes: family support, career growth, and institutional bias. After listening to my participant's story, I realized that three of us shared common goals: the same willingness to do something in our lives. Not only this, we all explored our upbringing, family support in continuing our education, challenges faced after marriage, the journey of our career growth, and challenges faced in our workplaces. Likewise, support from our family members despite low income, no gender bias within the family among son and daughter, the chance to explore the world by staying away from home, and our strong determination to be an independent woman in the future are common lived experiences. This helped us to set the same culture as a secondary-level female science teacher. Now, professionally, we are working in the same metropolitan city and facing the same hurdles, issues, and challenges in our professional journey.

Family Support

Our family is the main pillar of our life. All participants received significant support to advance their careers. It was not easy for our parents to invest time and money in their daughter's education despite their low income. However, they let us continue our higher studies. When we reflect upon our upbringing, our parents raised us with gender equality between the daughters and sons. Not only this, but our family members also always stood by our side in our good and bad times. That helped to keep us motivated in our harsh time, too. They never let us feel discouraged throughout our lives.

There was no gender discrimination in my family, as I never felt that I was an elder daughter and I had to do more work than my brothers. In our home, we used to work equally. If I cook food, my brother used to wash the utensils. My father was very conscious of my studies. He was quite interested in giving his children a quality education. Mira

My parents inspired me to do better in my studies. They even encouraged me to keep motivated and handle problems differently. They supported me to pursue my higher education during the economic crisis. They

made me the lead decision maker in the family rather than dominating me.

Hira

I was born in a nuclear family. The main source of income in our family was agriculture. My parents had no job and no regular income.

However, my parents always encouraged me to study hard and get a good job. After passing SLC, they managed everything for my stay in the town area despite having limited financial resources. My Experience

While going through my participant's story, I found myself. I would not have been able to come so far without the constant support of my family. I was born in a nuclear family, and no one in our home had passed the SLC. Then, my father had committed himself to teaching all the children how much they want to read. After 30 years, my home will be the one with the most graduates in my community, and today my dream has become a reality. I never felt gender bias among my siblings in my home, as my participants mentioned. Gender equality is the one crucial factor that encourages us to fly high in our future. According to research conducted by Pokharel (2024), in certain areas, female enrollment has increased, women's representation in leadership roles has also increased, and child marriage has decreased. However, despite various progress, challenges persist in rural areas due to socio-economic factors and social norms (Gandharba & Pant, 2023). The family members of my participants seemed supportive of their daughter's education. All the family members invested in their daughter's education despite low income. Likewise, the family members were deeply concerned about gender equality, as the behavior, division of labor, and upbringing of the son and daughter were the same. All the families married their daughters only after they finished higher studies and established careers in their fields, and were promoted to earn independently. My participants were able to pursue higher education and flourish in their careers after marriage, though at the cost of some compromise.

It was not easy for my parents to provide a complete higher education for their children, having such a poor economic status. My father used to say that I am ready to invest in your studies, so whatever you want to study, you can pursue further studies. My Experience

My father used to say that I cannot even give dowry to daughters and property to sons. I will teach you up to the level you want to study. You have

the opportunity to continue your studies until you can sustain yourself. My dad is a deity for me as he let me study till master's level from his simple job. Mira

The main source of income for my family was agriculture. Of course, it was not easy for my parents to complete our studies on a low income. My mother had to manage money for home expenses, educational fees, and many more. However, my mother never refused to invest money in our education.

Hira

Belonging to a middle-class family, all the family members let their daughters pursue further study to fulfill their dream and to be responsible citizens. After five years, Hira's brother also came to Kathmandu to continue his studies. Finally, they had a long breath of peace when two sisters and a brother started to stay separately. Meanwhile, they were going through many financial problems, though these were nothing compared to the previous ones. Likewise, she pursued further studies and completed a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in chemistry. She was going through her problematic suffering at an early age in Kathmandu. As a female student, I can relate to these things, as I have also been in the same situation. After passing SLC, we had to leave home for better education. Firstly, it is difficult to stay away from parents at a young age. Secondly, it is difficult to manage various challenges in student life. like, renting a home, adapting to a new place, managing money, searching for new sources of income. According to research conducted by Boral et al. (2021), students who are away from their parents have to step out of their comfort zone and face issues such as food, accommodation, homesickness, restricted pocket money, and the use of fast food instead of nutritious food, which can lead to various health issues. Not only this, but coping with academic difficulties and managing all the hurdles on their way might affect their mental condition. There is a poor relationship between the socioeconomic status (SES) of the family and the academic achievement of children in developing countries. Not only this, but low-socioeconomic-status families also have fewer advantages in transferring sufficient property to their children (Zhang et al., 2020). Our experiences of education and life trajectories intersect with many other factors. Parental aspirations and expectations for children's academic success and achievement are linked to the parents' economic status and educational background (Joshi, 2020).

Career Growth

After completing further studies, we all want to develop our careers in our own field. Every female wants to pursue their dream over time. Normally, women get

married before or after completing graduation or post-graduation, and they have to give time to family settlement. It is not easier to adjust to new family, home, and surroundings after getting married. As a result, we have to compromise on career-making, though my participants were able to pursue their careers despite many challenges.

After marriage, my husband and I decided to come to Kathmandu. My main job was a job hunt in Kathmandu, as both of us were unemployed, and I had a one-year-old child in my lap. I started searching for jobs based on my qualifications, having completed my master's in microbiology. After going through many vacancies, I got a job in pharmaceuticals as a quality officer with a salary of Rs. 15000 at the Kathmandu office, but later they told me to move to Birgunj for that post. At that time, the Mass People movement was underway, so I was unable to travel to Birgunj alone, carrying my one-year-old son. While desperately searching for a job, I landed a position as a secondary-level teacher at a reputable boarding school in Kathmandu. I used to get 25% above the government scale salary for that level. It was easier for me to find a job in India because I was recognized as a hardworking, diligent, and good person in my surroundings, but I had to stay with my husband after marriage. Mira

I have also gone through a lot of struggles to get a job in Kathmandu after completing my bachelor's degree. I wanted to be independent and manage my expenses on my own, but they used to offer me a low salary, only about Rs. 5000 per month, though I joined a job in a private school, and I am a witness to having unequal pay for males and females at that time. My Experience

In the initial days, it was very difficult for me to adapt to a new place. I had no other option but to learn new languages, so I learned Telugu and English. I thought about quitting my studies, but higher education was utmost necessary for me, so I motivated myself and continued my higher education up to the Master's level without any break. Mira

We all went through lots of struggles at the beginning of a new journey. After coming to Kathmandu, she was trying her best to make a career and a family. Mira agreed to do the job by leaving her 1-year-old child at home, but it was not possible to go out of valley in that situation. After reviewing my participants' stories, it is clear

that building a career was very difficult, as no one was offering jobs in the early days. After offering the job, the organization's or school's owner would also often offer a lower salary scale to female teachers than to male teachers for the same work. Then, how could we, as women, feel motivated to work for equal pay for the same work? Now, at this stage, as a researcher, I think life is all about compromise and moving forward by accepting circumstances. She quit her job for her family, though her husband and wife were both jobless at that time. A study by Sankalp and Agrawal (2012) found that individuals exhibit different behaviors, so after marriage, women have to sacrifice their careers for their families and adjust in a new environment. As a female, I agree that after marriage, it is not easy to adapt to a totally new environment with new family members. Sometimes we might go through very harsh situations during adaptation, and we might have to make compromises. At that time, she thought it would be easier for her to start her career, but the real journey of struggle and the web of problems in her life began after she came to Kathmandu, due to various circumstances. She wanted to earn and live independently, to be economically stable, and build a happy family. While going through her story, I found myself also trying to be independent and searching for a job after completing my bachelor's degree. I started working to manage my pocket money and other expenses. It was very difficult for me to stay in Kathmandu as a child. They offered me a job with only Rs. 5000 to 10000, but it was very difficult to manage all the expenses with that salary in Kathmandu. Managing room expenses and other stuff with limited pocket money was another challenging factor for me. While I was pursuing my master's degree, I used to go to work in the early morning, then go to college in the evening. It was not easy to cross the journey, though I continued for a better future. It is very difficult to get a job with a higher salary in the early days of a career in Kathmandu due to a lack of experience and other factors, so I moved to a village to get a better-paying job after completing my master's. Likewise, my participant, Mira, received a scholarship in India after grade 11, becoming the topper. She continued her bachelor's and Master's degrees in India, as the scholarship was extended through the Master's level. The university's scholarship was a strong motivator for her to pursue her career. She was able to continue her studies without any disturbances, as her family was fully supportive of her completing her dream. His father was managing all the children's education fees, home expenses, and room rent in India. Hira shared her experience regarding the journey of career.

After finishing my master's degree, I went to the village. At the school in my village, a post for a +2-level science teacher was required. The School had opened a vacancy for the third time, though no one was applying. The Head teacher of that school requested me to apply for this post. After a few days, I got appointed and started to work, but later on faced a big issue regarding my appointment.

After reading her story, we can see the impact of politics on school education. In the beginning, she was appointed as a primary-level teacher to teach grades 11 and 12, as her master's degree results had not yet been published. After receiving the result, she was supposed to be appointed as a +2-level chemistry teacher, as per the commitment. They held a School Management Committee (SMC) meeting in the presence of available committee members, though some were absent. Later on, the remaining committee members refused to sign this minute, as they planned to appoint a male teacher from their party to the vacant post. Likewise, society's perception of the new female teacher was not cooperative. They were advertising the same vacant post for the 3rd time and finally got a teacher during a peak hour, when grade 12 students were very close to their exams. Instead of welcoming her in school, they were preparing to file a case against the headteacher and subject teacher. However, the headteacher was committed to his decision, and he was giving full support to the new teacher. She was giving her best in school, though it was difficult to handle the unnecessary pressure getting from the school surroundings. Not only this, the headteacher was motivating my participant not to express her views on any rumors and to be patient, good times will come very soon. The headteacher was trying to handle this situation with the full support of the new female teacher. Now, after going through the story of both my participants, I realized how difficult paths were followed by my participants though stood tall in their harsh times. They left their comfort zone by compromising on so many things along the way. They were determined to pursue their careers despite all the crises, obstacles, problems, and hurdles. They were intrinsically motivated enough to fulfill their dream. They never thought to give up on their career and keep moving along, treating problems like water under the bridge. Hira shared her experience regarding low pay and gender bias at workplace.

One day, I got a physical attack from an SMC member in a formal meeting. He threw the wooden chair at me. He started to give torture and threats to me personally. They said you may have dreamed of flourishing your career here,

but we will not let you. “तैले यो ठाउमा गरेर खान्छु भनेको होला, तलाइ हामि गरेर खान दिदैनौं” That day, I realized that my self-respect is more important than my job. I stated that I am getting a salary of Rs 17500 per month for teaching biology and chemistry in classes 11 and 12. If this committee does not value my work, and such an unsupportive environment continues with such behavior, I am resigning from this job right now.

She could also have easily earned this salary in Kathmandu, but she was working there for her own school, where she completed her education. The headteacher asked her to complete this session and finish the course, as the science teacher was unavailable. It is a big issue that an SMC member physically attacked her for zero mistakes in the formal meeting of the SMC. One SMC member (a school friend) was opposed to her appointment from the beginning, so he decided to quit SMC, and she was not surprised by his decision. She mentioned that she could tell he would not stay silent and might create problems for my upcoming journey. She could also file a case against them for physical attack. Finally, she spoke for her self-respect and self-defense and resigned from that job. If she were silent that day, then such a male-dominating nature would never end. She was facing all these just because of being a female teacher, or this incident occurred due to the favoritism, nepotism, political influence, societal perception, or personal issue. She was a role model for all the female children in the society, though she was facing harsh situations and homophobic harassment (Meyer, 2008). If a teacher has to go through such a situation, then what can we imagine for a growing girl child in that school? How could this school create a positive, equitable learning environment for other girls' children? In such a situation, it is difficult for a teacher to create a safe, inclusive classroom for all children equally. After a few days, the school family came to her home and said that they were ready to appoint her as a secondary-level science teacher, and after publishing her master 's-level result, SMC was ready to provide a +2-scale salary. Luckily, the situation favored my participant to get a job while maintaining her self-respect. So, it is not good to stay silent and tolerate all the gender discrimination and harassment. After that, she came to Kathmandu to prepare for the TSC. Then she started teaching at the college on the morning shift to support herself in Kathmandu. She applied for the post of secondary teacher and worked hard to become successful in that exam. Finally, she passed that examination and got

appointed in Kathmandu as a secondary-level science teacher. This is her journey to become a science teacher.

Likewise, another participant, Mira, learned more about the Teacher Service Commission after working for about 10 years at the boarding school. She heard from her colleagues about the TSC advertisement, which they said would be more secure. She applied for the vacant post, attended the exam for the selection of government teachers, and prepared well. Finally, she passed that examination and started another journey in her career. In my case, I was taking my academic and professional careers in parallel. As mentioned earlier, I started a job at a private school in Kathmandu after passing the Bachelor 's-level examination. I have given the TSC examination before finishing my master's degree exam. After finishing my Master's degree exam,

I went to the village to teach as a secondary-level teacher in the *Rahat* quota. After working there for only 8 months, my name was published in the TSC examination. I got appointed at Kathmandu, so I completed my master's degree and started my professional career simultaneously. After going through the stories of all three participants, we can see how difficult a journey it has been to become a secondary-level science teacher. All the participants spent 5 to 10 years in a private school to achieve their dream. They were strongly motivated and dedicated to their career. Their resilience helped them stay high in their lives. Getting success in life is a steady, ongoing process.

Structural Inequity

As female teachers, we are facing multiple cases of gender bias in school premises. Likewise, male staff of our school and students humiliate females regarding our body structure, i.e., tall, fat, dumb, and football, bamboo, etc. In our day-to-day lives, we can feel the bias toward male teachers in our workplaces. Not only this, but we can also feel the various types of harassment from our male colleagues or headteachers. Furthermore, my participant, Mira, shared her story of discrimination by an SMC member during a formal meeting and body shaming on school premises.

When I went to search for a job with a Master's level qualification. They offered me a job as a lab assistant with only Nrs. 5000 per month salary in one college. At the same time, they offered a senior post to another male colleague, with a good salary, for a bachelor 's-level qualification. So, I decided not to join that job with a low salary.

While reading her story, we can see the extent of the discrimination. They were offering a higher salary and a senior-level position for a male colleague with low qualifications. In contrary, the administration offered a lower-level job with a low salary for an M.Sc. holder. After going through her story, I recalled myself here. I taught at a boarding school after completing my Bachelor's degree. Where the principal used to pay salaries based on gender. We used to pay different salaries to males and females for the same level and the same work. I used to get less than 10,000 per month, while other male colleagues at the same level received double my salary for the same work. Not only did this principal of that school use to hire more female teachers so he could save more money. Not only this, but at the nearby school, I also found that they hire female teachers for lower levels on a low salary scale. Likewise, they provide a lower salary scale for female teachers for the same job. This type of structural inequity demotivates women from continuing their journey. As a result, Feminist theory encourages us to be vocal about the bias we face in our workplace, even when we lack the courage to speak out at the time. Deeply rooted thoughts of patriarchal society are still reflected in our daily chores. As a result, male colleagues do not want to participate with female teachers in decision-making and leadership roles. Furthermore, they show more interest in policy-making and leadership roles than in physical exercise and classes. I have mentioned a narrative about the various forms of bias female teachers face in the workplace.

One head teacher showed bad intentions towards his colleague. When I was appointed as a secondary-level science teacher in a school in my village. The head teacher of that school was more concerned about my residence in the first meeting. He told me there was no need to worry about being new to this society, as he would handle my residence before I joined the school. The next day, when I went to school, he was more concerned and asked why I hadn't brought my bag, since he had arranged my residence earlier. Further, he added, stay at my home, you don't have to pay the rent as you have joined a job recently, and you can come with me on my bike.

After reflecting on that incident, I can easily see the head teacher's intention, as he was unnecessarily concerned about the new female teacher's residence. He was worried I might not have money either. He also reminded me not to talk to or listen to anyone, as I was new to that school/ locality, and strictly instructed me not to share this information with any other staff now. I refused him as I was already aware that

his house was far from the school, and he himself used to travel by bike with his daughter, who was studying in grade 10. Then, he added I could join him on his bike, which was barely two-seated. One of the senior teachers at that school also asked me about the residential provision, and he assured me that I would find a good, safe place. Then I shared with him that the head teacher of our school was offering me a place to stay at his home. In which he suggested that the head teacher's home was not a suitable place, as people in that community regard him as a low character. In those circumstances, it was not appropriate to use a control strategy with that female teacher by disrupting her conversations or interfering. The consequences inflicted by him hint at a clear case of harassment. I have shared my experience related to residence near my school.

In the initial days, I went to school from my home for about 15 days, then, fortunately, I found a safe place with a lovely family member and started to stay at that home as a paying guest, and informed the head teacher also.

After that incident, as a researcher, I realized how difficult it is for female teachers to be safe in their workplace. The headteacher of my father's age was trying to take advantage of the newly appointed female teacher, rather than offering good advice and creating a supportive environment for a beginner. As a female, most of us might have gone through various forms of harassment in the workplace. In my case, the head teacher used to treat me very well earlier, but afterward, he started to torture me with unnecessary things, gave me a massive workload, interfered more in personal matters, and started to create an unsupportive environment in school. After working for a few months at that school, I came to know the headteacher better. The way he behaves towards other female teachers and students is that he marries his own female students while having his first wife at home. Research conducted by Koole et al. (2019) found that the ratio of gender discrimination and sexual harassment sharply increased for female compared to male teachers in Swedish schools. As a researcher, I prompted my participants to discuss the harassment they had experienced, though they did not share much detail. In our society, as female teachers, we face various challenges. Sometimes, we face both seen and unseen discrimination from our male colleagues, students, and the administration. Here, I have presented one narrative shared by my participants. In this narrative, she explored her experiences with indiscipline, bad manners, and weird and biased behavior exhibited by her own students.

After passing the teacher service commission, I got appointed in the center of Kathmandu. On the first day, only 25 students were in one section of class 10 out of 55. Later on, I scolded them for bunking, disturbing the class, not doing the assigned task, and other unusual behavior. One day, while I was taking a class, one of the students asked for my full name to write an application to the administration, as we were writing a complaint to our headteacher, as you are not letting us do whatever we want, so we do not like you. Hira

In my school, we park our vehicles in an open area. One day, I was in a hurry to get home and went to the parking area to pick up my scooter. Upon reaching there, I saw that various parts of my scooter had been removed. It was not in condition to drive. So, I called a mechanic to have my vehicle serviced. My students have done this with my scooter several times. If we scold our students for not reading, not doing homework, and breaking rules. Instantly, they used to take revenge for that by destroying our vehicle. My Experience

After joining school, Hira found that most of the class 10 students were very eerie, and it was not easy to handle them. Some of the students were overaged, with a few over 20 and others about 20. Another thing is that not all students used to stay in the classroom when the teacher was teaching. Some of them used to bunk class every day, and other students in the classroom were also not paying full attention, as some of them slept in class, were busy talking, shouting, and blowing. After completing one chapter, they were supposed to do an exercise, although they had no habit of doing exercise. One day, after the class, some of the students came to me and told me that a few of our friends do not treat you properly. We feel sorry for that, as we are happy to be taught by you. Likewise, they told me they did not do this much and did not behave so cheaply with the previous teacher, as he used to let them do whatever they wanted. It might be because of a gender difference, and they were not ready to accept me as a science teacher. After digging into my participant's story and the students' behavior toward her, I realized the students were not paying attention during the study taught by their female teachers. Likewise, it was hard for her to handle the class due to the various age groups of students and their unusual behavior. The abnormal behavior, that is bunking the class, sleeping in the classroom, talking with friends, and using a cigarette, was not acceptable in the school premises. Another participant, Mira, also faced the same problems: bunking class, sleeping in class, talking with

friends, smoking, and neglecting their studies. As a teacher, I have found that students at the government school in Kathmandu come from different districts and have diverse backgrounds. Most parents leave their children at home early in the morning to go to work, so children have a lot of free time to join bad company with their colleagues. As a result, students misbehave with their female teacher and show unusual behavior at school. From these narratives, it is also seen that teenage students show biased behavior toward their female teachers due to various reasons. As a result, female teachers feel demotivated and cannot perform at full efficiency in their work, as the SDT theory suggests. After going through such an incident, I personally stopped taking any action against students for not reading, not doing homework, or not paying attention in class. Such behavior by students discourages female teachers from realizing their potential in the classroom, even as liberal feminist theory encourages women to raise their voices and take a stand for themselves (Budig & Jones, 2008).

In our context, some parents come to school to complain about their children for not obeying or listening to them. Some parents complain about their children using mobile phones at home. When parents scold them, the children do not come home regularly. Our students are not showing good behavior toward their parents, so how can we, as female teachers, expect good behavior from our children? Research conducted by Kausar (2023) mentioned that less motivated students typically exhibited violent behavior. Additionally, these kids engage in unsavory social practices, such as making noise in class, disobeying rules, and chatting with friends during class. As a result, they did not understand the concept and quickly forgot what they had been taught. Due to students' disruptive behavior, female teachers are facing a serious challenge; all teachers must find a solution to controlling difficult classroom behavior (Martin & Yin, 1997). As a researcher, I think our students need more counseling sessions each week on how their parents and teachers behave to overcome these types of challenges.

In one of the renowned colleges, there was a vacancy for a lecturer post. I applied for that position after completing my Master's degree in microbiology, but they offered me a lab assistant position instead. Even the interviewer humiliated me regarding my body shaming. Mira

After completing a Master's degree, I was searching for a job in Kathmandu and got an offer where I had to teach in grades 11 and 12.

During the selection process, I went through an examination, an interview, and a demonstration class. I did well in different rounds of the exam. There was no female-friendly working environment, so I did not join that job. Hira

After delving into the story mentioned, I think people should be judged by their talents and academic background rather than their gender, body type, or interests. While they have offered a lecturer post for another male candidate, though he had not completed his master's degree. They humiliated my participants for their slim physique and outlook. They also said that when you enter the classroom, boys will whistle at you. After going through such a situation, she decided not to join that job. Another participant also has gone through such a situation; she shared her experience regarding the bullying nature of students and body shaming by colleagues for her physical appearance (small height, low body weight). As we know, people cannot give their best in an uncomfortable and unfavorable environment. Mate et al. (2019) noted that gender roles can be a barrier to leadership opportunities for many female teachers and to students' career development in Australia and Vietnam. However, as teachers, we have to present ourselves with full confidence in our class after going through the bullying, body shaming, and weird behavior in school premises.

In our surroundings, so many male colleagues assume that men should be in leadership roles, as women cannot lead the institution as men can. Probably the major issue is that males do not want to be under a female's control. It might be due to gender-stereotypical differences; there was no respect for my participant and no positive thoughts towards her throughout the meeting. One related study conducted by Karim et al. (2018) also revealed that when women attain higher education and good jobs, they may enter leadership, so men are more worried and panicked about not staying under female control. She also mentioned that one of the committee members who was against that decision was her colleague from the same village. He did not read further after completing the +2 level, especially since he had played a vital role in discouraging and firing her because of his personal ego. Later on, when he came to know that they could not file a case as a vacancy was opened for the third time, and the head teacher appointed the new teacher by law then, committee members in the meeting were fire with her and showed such a type of body language, and one of the committee members throw a wooden chair at me with full of anger but luckily it did not harm her. In this patriarchal society, he was afraid of more capable

females, as they might be worried about female domination in the future. It is common for female teachers to experience discrimination from male teachers, students, parents, and other administrative staff in our workplace.

When I went to search for a job with a master's level qualification. They offered me a job as a lab assistant with only Nrs. 5000 per month salary in one college. At the same time, they offered a senior post to another male colleague, with a good salary, for a bachelor 's-level qualification. So, I decided not to join that job with a low salary. Mira

I used to teach in a boarding school. Where the principal used to pay salaries based on gender. We used to pay different salaries to males and females for the same level and the same work. I used to get less than 10000 per month, while other male colleagues of the same level used to get double the salary for the same work. My Experience

After completing my graduation, I was trying to make a career as an educator, but it was very difficult to find a job. After a few months, I took a job as a lower-secondary science teacher. They offered me only Nrs 5000 per month. Later on, I came to know that another male teacher of the same level was getting more than Nrs 20000 per month for the same work. Hira

The above narrative also shows marked gender discrimination, as less qualified males were offered higher posts as lecturers and highly qualified females were offered lower posts as lab assistants. Such biased behavior severely undermines and undervalues women's hard work; as a result, their dedication and perseverance are diminished. A study by Grissom et al. (2021) also found a gap in the salaries of male and female principals in the state of Missouri, America. Male principals used to get three times the pay of women leading schools at the same level with similar enrollment. This is relatable to my participants' experience, as we also used to receive one-fourth of the salary that male staff received for the same work. Not only this, the principal of that school used to hire more female teachers to save more money. My participants had no option but to continue the job with low self-respect. Most of the time, the headteacher and some other male teachers participate only in the decision-making process. In my school, when other guests come to visit, only the male teacher is there to welcome them and give them company. Not only this, sometimes we female teachers are not allowed to enter the office when the headteacher is speaking with a guest. Another form of discrimination can be seen in teaching periods, as male

teachers take fewer periods than female teachers. A study by Crothers et al. (2010) also concluded that, despite progress in the education sector and advocacy for equity in the profession, women are earning less than equally qualified men. It can be found easily in the academic field in school settings in Nepal, as mentioned in my participant's story. Normally, women receive less compensation than men in our workplace, i.e., extra-duty pay and more allowances for the same work for male colleagues. They have assumed that women are the workforce, and men are policymakers.

I have been teaching at the same school as a secondary-level science teacher for 5 years, but till today, I have not participated in any decision-making process. We, all female teachers, will be informed later in the phase of implementation of the new policy or decision. My Experience

I am surprised that office rooms for male and female teachers in my school are also different. All of the male teachers sit in the office room along with the headteacher in their leisure periods, as well as before and after class time, although all the female teachers will sit in the staff room in their leisure as well as before and after class time. Mira

Most of the male teachers are taking 3-4 teaching periods, whereas female teachers are taking 5 periods per day in my school. The headteacher told me that all the male teachers are also helping with other school-related work. So, they are taking fewer teaching periods. Hira

These stories show that all my participants have experienced different forms of bias from their colleagues at the school. Our male colleagues, including the administration, do not want to involve females in any decision-making process. My participant, Mira, also mentioned that the headteacher has not scheduled a meeting at her school for the last 4 years, so she has not had a chance to learn about new rules, notices, and important news. As witnessed by me, the policies were formulated solely with the active involvement of male teachers, and female teachers were informed only later, during implementation, at my school. Also, not discussing and sharing internal administrative details in staff meetings indicates male-dominant practices in the workplace. Another surprising thing is that, in this postmodern era, schools in the Kathmandu Valley still have separate staff rooms for male and female teachers. This is the case at the school of my participant, Hira. Then, how can we set a good example of inclusiveness in school when male and female teachers are provided separate

rooms to sit? Likewise, male teachers will hold the vital posts in the school, even though equally qualified females are not provided any leadership positions, despite having more experience. These schools also practice a biased division of labor between male and female teachers. One can imagine the level of discrimination in school premises where females are getting more workload than male teachers in a similar setting. The narratives of all participants point to male supremacy. The male-dominated culture influences daily working practices, and evidence suggests that exclusion from networks limits career advancement opportunities (Howe et al., 2016). Some special incidents and painful moments can trigger us for a long time. It would be difficult for us to work efficiently with low mental status. Here, my participant Hira shared a vulnerable situation in her life.

After joining school, I was getting mentally and psychologically tortured by that guy who decided to quit from SMC. I was going into depression due to continuous threats and harassment, humiliation, and facing offensive jokes and comments. It was very hard to work there, so after completing the academic session, I quit that job and came back to Kathmandu.

After reading her story, we can see that an adult girl did not feel safe in her own society due to the people around her. She was afraid of that group of people, as they might resort to various forms of harassment in the days to come, creating hurdles in her life. It was becoming hard for her to cope with that situation. It is a big deal when a female teacher is going through physical and sexual threats in her own village. She felt unsafe day by day on the routine walk to and from school, returning home in the deserted early morning. Some people were stalking me, asking inappropriate questions, and misbehaving. She was scared that they could harm her, resulting in her being seen as low in the community. She was taking help from her own male grade 12 students to give her company and serve as a guardian while walking to and from school along the long, scary path. I felt safer walking with that brother. She was trying to come out of the situation and wanted to work in a new environment to give her best. This narrative also shows the irony of our society, where one female teacher has to take a small brother as her own guardian to go to and from school in her own village. In such a situation, how can we work efficiently while maintaining high morale? As a female teacher, I feel that we sometimes hesitate to make decisions out of fear of making mistakes, even though we need to strengthen our decision-making. Sometimes people around us might gossip, dragging us down, demotivating us, and

obstructing our careers, so we have to figure out what's going on and fix it, rather than be surrounded by those problems. We female teachers have to build our resilience on our own to grow and advance professionally and academically for a better life. Work-life balance practices advocate a healthy balance between an individual's work at the workplace and at home (Kodz et al., 2002). Navigating gender stereotyping in the educational landscape and re-gendering females is more essential in this era. Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by influencing perceived autonomy and competence. Intrinsic motivation refers to the engagement and activities rather than outcomes. If we are intrinsically motivated, we keep changing our behavior, actions, strategies, and satisfaction rather than focusing on personal tangible outcomes. In contrast, extrinsically motivated people are more concerned with performing actions driven by consequences. According to CET, autonomy is very important to make one feel self-direction, opposed to feeling controlled, and competence helps to make one feel effective (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Discussion

According to a research conducted by the Government of India, Ministry of Women, 2015, it is mentioned that there are various forms of sexual harassment occurring in the workplace for women. Finally, she decided not to continue her job in the village due to personal insecurities. If we are mentally fit and fine, our interest in our profession will increase day by day, and vice versa. Due to poor mental health, our motivation level towards our profession goes down slowly. Which led us to quit a currently having job to find a new one (Eastman, 2020). She was going through various things in her life, as she was not feeling safe or secure in her own village due to challenges in her professional life. It was also not easy for a young lady to quit her job and stay at home without earning. If a teacher has high self-esteem, they see a challenging job as an opportunity to stay motivated and receive self-encouragement, thereby increasing job satisfaction (Dey et al., 2024).

According to SDT theory, motivation is like a roadmap that leads to the destination (Ryan & Deci, 2000) Throughout the research, my participants also mentioned several hurdles, yet they remained highly resilient. Intrinsic motivational factors, i.e., self-directedness, satisfaction, and internalization of social and institutional norms, helped secondary-level female teachers achieve success in their careers. In the above-mentioned narrative, I discussed the mental trauma, the perspective of headteachers toward female co-workers, and weird behavior towards

female teachers on the basis of the lived experiences of all the participants. These narratives align with the findings of Habermasian critical theory, which encourages women to participate in public discourse on gender, race, culture, and sexual orientation that addresses social class and power differences (Benhabib, 1997). One of my participants was going through continuous threats, harassment, and mental torture from the school management committee member after the appointment. It was very hard to continue her job amid these challenges, so she decided to quit. I have also expressed my experiences of the headteacher's misbehavior and unnecessary pressure. Likewise, we female teachers expressed some violent and disruptive behavior by adult male students towards us. In relation to these themes, Habermasian critical theory, Mezirow has suggested raising consciousness on women who have gone through harassment, who thought that it was their personal problem, but in fact, sex stereotyping is a widely shared problem (Mezirow, 1991).

Essence of the Chapter

In this chapter, I discussed the upbringing of my participants, who are struggling females trying to fulfill their dreams. I explored the journey of my participants from struggling students to secondary-level science teachers. I mentioned the determination of participants, family support despite low income, problematic suffering at an early age, and career growth in harsh situations. Likewise, I discussed the gender bias faced in the workplace, unequal pay, assuming women as a workforce, and males as policy makers under the theme of institutional bias. In the next chapter, I will discuss the effort women put into balancing multiple roles with a day-to-day hustle schedule. I will invite all the readers to read the next chapter.

CHAPTER V
JUGGLING MULTIPLE ROLES: BLENDING WORK LIFE

This chapter answers my first subsidiary research question. This chapter is mainly focused on the multiple roles played by females, i.e., biological roles, personal roles, and professional roles, and how we are balancing our various roles. Not only this, but I also discussed various ways of balancing work-life relationships, compromises after marriage, experiences with gender bias, perceptions of the surroundings, narratives from the perspectives of housewives, paid and unpaid work, and ways to overcome a hectic schedule. I developed three themes: biological roles, domestic roles, and professional roles, and explored them as multiple roles of secondary-level female teachers.

I have written one poem related to this topic based on my own experience. Which is as follows.

आधा गृहणी

माइतीको पो धनी छोरी, घरकी त म सधैं ऋणी
 फुर्सद र काम दुवै नभएकी म परें आधा गृहणी
 विहानैको अलामको घण्टीले झस्किएर उठेपछि
 घरधन्दा चुल्हो चौका र जागीरमा दिनहुं जुटेपछि
 के फुर्सद के थकाइ के खुशी के रमझम भुलिसकें
 आधा उमेर नहुंदै कयौं पिडा र रोदनहरु बटुलिसकें
 घरकाले चित्त दुखाउलान भनेर भनेको सवै मान्नु पर्ने कर
 उता विद्यालयमा फेरि प्रशासनको डर अनि कामको भार
 एउटै कुवामा भएपनी रंगिन माछा जसरी पौडिरहें
 जिन्दगीमा केही त गर्नेपछि भनेर रातदिन दौडिरहें
 पछ्याउँदै आउंछे छोरी रातलाई जुनकीरीले जसरी
 सन्तान छोड्दै धानेको जागीर संगै पीडा कहुं कसरी

English translation of the poem Half housewife

I am a rich daughter of my parents, and as a daughter-in-law, I am always indebted to my family.

I have neither free time nor work, and I am a half-housewife.

After waking up with a startled wake-up call in the morning,

*Then, engaged the whole day in housework, cooking, and working
 I have forgotten what leisure, fatigue, happiness, or fun for me
 Before my half age, I have accumulated many sorrows and tears.
 Forcefully obey everything the family says so as to please them
 The fear of a school administration and workload is separate, and again,
 I kept swimming like a colorful fish, even though I was in the same well.
 I kept running day and night, thinking that I had to do something in life.
 My daughter is following me like a firefly follows the darkness.
 How can I explain the pain of the job I have been carrying by keeping my
 small children at home a whole day?*

Figure 3

Balancing Various Roles



In Figure 3, we see a woman working on a laptop. It seems that she is playing her professional role. At the same time, something is cooking in the pressure cooker on the gas stove, which is a domestic role. Likewise, she is caring for her daughter by keeping her in her lap, which is a biological role. This is the day-to-day life

experience of my participants and me. This figure clearly shows how female teachers balance multiple roles simultaneously. Besides these three roles, females also play other roles, but in this research study, I have mainly focused on these three.

While we play multiple roles in our daily lives, some are hidden within others. It is not easy to balance the domestic, biological, and professional roles simultaneously. We have to complete our home chores before and after school as part of our domestic role. Likewise, we have to give our full potential at work during the day. Similarly, we have to give our time to give birth to our children, provide proper care for them, and also care for the senior citizens of our family. I have briefly explained these roles on the next page. Throughout our lives, people judge us from the outside and label us as “imperfect housewife” or “incompetent teacher,” etc., despite our best efforts.

Domestic Role

From ancient times, women have been expected to do household affairs, and this has not changed yet. Female are having various responsibilities under domestic roles i.e., cleaning home, raising children and giving time to them and taking care of in-laws, senior citizen of the family, attending family function, welcoming and pleasing guest at home, preparing meal twice a day, following the cultural norms of the society, taking care of sick children by staying awake for whole night, meeting the expectation of family, fulfilling the criteria made by society for being in daughter in law. Sometimes we go through self-conflict while maintaining the social expectation, suffering through traditional gender roles, tackling others' different perceptions towards us, and facing difficulties in managing time.

We, both husband and wife, go to work. In the evening, I will come home directly from school without wasting time, but my husband always comes late. After coming home, I have to finish all the home chores, and help children to do homework, though my husband has enough time for whatever he wants.

Mira

Sometimes, if we are hurt inside and sick or do not feel good, then we also have no choice. We have to smile in public and welcome guests, prepare a plate of food at the table, spend time with them, complete all the home chores, and work to meet the expectations of our relatives. My Experience

The mentioned narrative shows that husbands can go out and spend time with their friends after office and come home late at night, but females cannot do that. It

shows that we have to take greater responsibility for child care and household chores than our male partners do. Coming home tired, finishing all the household chores, and helping with the children's homework were the only duties of my participants. Sometimes, when we are not feeling well physically, we also have to finish our daily work rather than taking a break. When guests come to our home and we don't welcome them with a smile, we get blamed for it. We all female workers have to finish our domestic activities at home before going to the office, such as cooking, cleaning, caring for children, and dropping them off. After doing all these activities, we feel tired when we get home. At the same time, our small children who have not enrolled in school start crying to go along with us during our office time. While writing this narrative, I remembered one conversation with my 2-year-old daughter.

On 1st December 2024, I was going to school at about 9:30 am, my small daughter told me, "Mamma, can you come earlier today"? Again, she said Are you coming home at your tiffin time? I replied to her, "Yes," though feeling blameworthy in my heart. However, I could not come earlier as I had a busy schedule that day. My Experience

I used to get up at 4 am every day, early morning, to cook food for my son. Then I used to leave my son at 5:00 am with her aunt, then go to school to take classes from early morning. After finishing class, I used to go to another school after 12 pm. Again, I used to teach in another school for 3-4 hours. Then I used to pick my child up from a relative's home in the evening, around 5 pm. Mira

That day, I felt very sad as I could not come home earlier and spend quality time with my daughter. She was looking my way for a whole day, but her mother was not there. I could not stay home by resigning from the job, and I could not go to school with a heavy heart. At an early age, my daughter learned to say "It's 4 o'clock" as she waited for me all day. After coming home from school, my daughter and I used to spend an hour together, with a tight hug.

When my participant was struggling at the beginning of my career, her husband was reading and jobless. She had to manage all the financial matters of her home, as they were staying separately, so she started working at both a private and a government school, though it was very challenging. After going back home, she again used to teach home tuition classes in the evening. At the end of the day, her regular duties included preparing food, caring for children, and going to bed. We can think

about the amount of work she does and the number of working hours per day. From the chunk of her busy schedule, we can assure that she never went back home from her work. While she was sharing her experiences, I just calculated her daily working hours. She used to teach school for about 10 hours a day, in addition to home tuition classes. This is the work she did in a day, though there were many unseen home chores. After reading her story, I remember one line from a poem related to this, written in the Kantipur daily.

“पुरुषहरु कामवाट घर फर्किन्छन्

तर महिलाहरु कामबाट काममा नै फर्किन्छन्”

English translation of the poem:

Male go back home from work

But females go back to work from work

As a female teacher, I partially agree with this poem. Normally, women have a greater domestic burden at home in comparison to men. We go to work from work, either in the morning or in the evening. We have to go to the office after finishing morning duty at home, and we have to do evening duty after coming home too. It does not mean that our partners do not work at home, though their duties as a homemaker are fewer and minor. They have other responsibilities also, rather than their professional work, so they cannot allocate enough time for domestic roles. We working women have to follow the same routine every day. After waking up early in the morning, we have to complete all the home chores first. Then we have to be ready for school. After going back to school, follow the same routine. We might go to work with a tired face and passive body, though we try to finish our working day with a smiley face. Besides that, we also have to take some extra classes in the morning and evening for secondary-level students. While following the same routine every day, we might get bored, though we remain motivated and work every day. I still remember the days after my marriage, when I shifted to my husband's home. I used to wake up early to finish all the work on time, then I had to leave before 9 am for school and reach home by 5:30 pm. Besides school, I was also continuing my academic journey. I had to give time to home chores in the evening too. After 2 years, I got pregnant, and it became harder for me to manage time to play various roles. My participant, Hira, also agreed on that, we have to manage a double burden of paid work and unpaid domestic work at home. She added that we, as females, have to take greater

responsibility for child care than our male partners do. Hira and her husband both go to work. In the evening, Hira will come home directly from school without wasting time, but her husband always comes late. After coming home, she has to finish the home chores, cooking, and feeding, as home duties never will be finished, though her husband has enough time for whatever he wants.

One evening, on my way home on a scooter, I was stuck in traffic for about 30 minutes. At that time, I saw an incident, and everyone nearby was looking at another woman on her scooter. She might have returned from her office, and she was busy with her own work during that traffic signal, too. She was taking vegetables out of her bag and cutting them for the evening. At that time again, that poem came to my mind, so I totally agree with this poem. Can you imagine how energized we feel after meeting with children and talking with them? I think it is possible, driven by determination and passion for our profession. This is the one factor that keeps us motivated. Mira shared her experience in related to dropping her son at kindergarten at early age.

While coming back home after school, our small children are also waiting for us with empty stomachs and full of hope to spend quality time with their mother. Despite this, we still have to prepare for the evening meal and many other things. We can only go to bed at 10 pm after finishing all the work in the kitchen, like washing dishes and cleaning the floor.

After going through my participants' experiences, we obviously feel tired after a whole day's work upon arriving home. We all women go to work, either in the morning or in the evening. We have to go to the office after finishing morning duty at home, and we have to do evening duty after coming home too. We working women have to follow the same routine every day. After waking up early in the morning, we have to complete all the home chores first. Then we have to be ready for school. After going back to school, follow the same routine. We might go to work with a tired face and passive body, though we try to finish our working day with a smiley face. Besides that, we also have to take some extra classes in the morning and evening for secondary-level students. While following the same routine every day, we might get bored sometimes. Though we are keeping motivated and working every day. Can you imagine how energized we feel after meeting with children and talking with them? I think it is possible, driven by determination and passion for our profession. This is the one factor that keeps us motivated.

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However, we have another duty to finish after reaching home. Our kitchen dishes and some dirty clothes are waiting for us to be washed. Twenty-four-seven duty, childbirth, motherhood, and the multiple roles of females take longer to reach the top of the profession. Not only this, it would be difficult to cope with different forms of harassment as well as bias at home and at the workplace. Causality Orientation Theory (COT) is a key part of self-determination theory, and it influences individuals' understanding of their actions in three ways: autonomy, control, and impersonality. An autonomous individual chooses a challenging task in their life as they enjoy working along with challenges (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Females who have to play multiple roles while balancing work and life should also be autonomous individuals capable of managing all the roles and responsibilities. Likewise, we have to act as control-oriented people to avoid missing deadlines in our work. Such controlled individuals are dedicated to their work. Who can give extra time in their work before and after office hours? They try hard to give the best performance in their work. On the other hand, impersonal-oriented individuals do not express their feelings regarding the situations. While we are trying to manage various roles, something will be missing throughout our day-to-day performance: personal care, social responsibility, and professional efficiency. People around us are always concerned with finding our weaknesses rather than our strengths. When we could not balance the various roles, our neighbors started gossiping to portray us as poor housewives. After marriage, some women think their careers have ended, but my participants and I

worked hard to continue our academic and professional journeys. Time never becomes perfect for starting anything new; we have to make time perfect by starting or continuing new things, along with the challenges they bring. Teachers who have to spend extra time at home preparing the next day's lesson. As a result, it would be more difficult for science teachers to plan hands-on activities and engaging lessons. I have also faced various difficulties and hustles while playing multiple roles in different ways.

Biological Role

After getting married, women have to give birth to their child to continue the generation. People around us start to ask for babies after one year of marriage, whether we are ready or not. If we are continuing our study, then our family members also do not think about our study and career. They only think about new generations to expand their family. No one thinks about our economic status, mental status, physical status, and psychological perspective, and further plans.

I have a bitter experience of this, one of my relatives forced me to do a further checkup for not having babies after one year of marriage, though we had no family planning. My Experience

My family members have already started to put pressure on me for a baby. I had some health issues in conceiving a baby. I had to visit the doctor frequently for the check-up. It was very difficult to manage time. Finally, I conceived the baby and the doctor suggested that I take bed rest. Which was not possible for me, so I continued school after a few days. After three months, I had miscarried. How hard it is to forget that moment. Hira

If I were not married, I would have had a PhD in 2004. As my professor has recommended me for Phd. But after marriage, a child came. Now, finally, after about 19 years of marriage, I am doing a PhD. It took about two decades to complete my dream. Hira

According to all the participants, all the family members want babies first to expand their family. After going through the experience of all, we can say that after marriage, no one thinks about their career and professional growth. After marriage, if we keep focus on our career, then our family members start to put extra pressure on us. While delving into my participant Hira's story, she was also excited about the baby and consulting with the doctor, but she was having some difficulty conceiving. The family started to put pressure without understanding her health. Later on, she had

to face miscarriage, which is the most painful situation of her life. In such a vulnerable situation, she returned to work after a few days' leave. Not only this, but females also have to suffer from unbearable pain during menstruation, pregnancy, and delivery, which also makes them weaker physically as well as emotionally.

Sometimes we feel awkward attending meetings, trainings, seminars, and among the masses of people during menstruation and pregnancy. So, high flow of bleeding during the menstrual period and fatigue during pregnancy are other stress factors for us. In the case of my participants, husbands and wives are staying here, and both of them have to go to the office, so who cares for their baby? One of my participants is worried about her baby from now on without giving birth. She said that if we had a very good income, we might hire a caretaker, but how could our baby stay with one for a whole day? They will get only 98 days of maternity leave, after which they must return to work. Another participant mentioned that she has left her two-year-old baby with others for more than 12 hours a day. It is very painful for all the mothers, though we are doing this for our babies and a better future. Likewise, standing the whole day in classes for teaching during pregnancy causes muscle cramping and body pain. Various hormones produced during pregnancy also create mood swings. Sometimes, such restless and stressful days keep us awake for the whole night due to the harsh pain. After giving birth, we also have to return to work within a few months. We are deprived of enjoying motherhood and of spending quality time with the baby. I have shared my experience in related to this.

After finishing my delivery leave, one day, when I was going to school, my baby started to cry. Instantly, one of my family members told my daughter that you were asking for milk, even though your mother was going to earn money. I was compelled to go to work for my family.

I got an unbearable breast pain issue after one year of having a baby. Later, after consulting the doctor, I learned that it was due to storing milk for too long. We could not breastfeed our babies for a whole day.

After finishing my master's degree, I wanted to continue my further study at the same time we were planning to have a baby. When I was 6/7 months pregnant, I decided to join the MPhil course. During my MPhil course, I gave birth to my daughter. I joined the class after a one-month break. It was not easy to attend class while managing self-care and caring for a newborn. After giving birth to my daughter, I took a one-month break from my studies and continued the classes. I used to do

assignments at night, and my one-month-old daughter used to cry without sleeping. I had to take her in my lap and finish the assignment at night. It was very difficult for me to handle these situations. It really bothered me the whole day after learning a family member's perspective on working women. Every mother wants to provide breastfeeding for their babies and enjoy motherhood by staying at home. It is hard for every female to quit their job after giving birth to their babies, as it would be hard to get a job later on. We do not have any other option but to continue our permanent jobs for career development, but some of our relatives think we are just going to work to earn money. All the participants were fully committed to their careers, so we made it happen despite the various challenges. However, other women might not continue their journey. There is a reduction in working hours or total job loss after having babies (Rake, 2001). Only a mother can feel the pain of pumping breast milk and throwing up in the bathroom during free time at school, where my own daughter has to use bottle feeding at home. Still, I can remember how uncomfortable it was for me to go to work with a pad on my breast to hide the flow of undesired waste discharged from my breast during the postpartum period. Our government policy also seems contradictory here. The Ministry of Health and Population encourages every woman to breastfeed their child for six months exclusively (Lactation Management Center Guideline, GON), though the Education Act prepared by the law commission has given only 98 days for maternity leave for government teachers (NLC, 1971). When we have to go to work, it is not possible to continue exclusive breastfeeding till six months. In my case, I could not supply breastmilk only for my daughter as I had to go to school by leaving my baby at home. My school was far from my home, and I couldn't come during school hours. I used to leave my daughter for the whole day and feed her milk only in the evening. After a few months, I started to have some major problems in my breast. I thought I was having symptoms of cancer in my breast, and worried about that, and visited more than three hospitals for the treatment of that problem. Later, the doctor told me it was due to storing milk for a whole day. The pain is caused by storing milk for a long period of time. During that time, the doctor told me that it may cause other problems in my body. After using medicine for a long time, the problem was simultaneously healed after stopping breastfeeding for my daughter. Then, I realized that female has to face lots of problems due to their hormonal change in their body after giving birth to their babies.

In the near future, we plan to have a baby, but I cannot imagine my life after having one. Without my husband's support, how can I manage babies, school, and home chores? Hira

My relatives used to tell me that after giving birth to your child, you can go to work, as you can leave your babies with us. After one year, they started to feel bored taking care of my child, so I enrolled him in a baby care center at an early age. Mira

My baby used to cry badly at the beginning of enrollment in Montessori, though I had no options. I used to go back to school with a heavy heart and an eye full of tears after dropping him at school. After the separation of 8 hours, I used to go to pick up my one and half year little child at 4 pm. Mira

One of my participants mentioned that she used to drop her child off at the daycare center from the age of 1.5. She used to drop him off early in the morning and pick him up only in the evening. The baby care center was nearby room but away from her school. She shared her experience with tears in her eyes. At first, my relatives frequently told me they would take care of my baby, but later they grew bored of taking care of my son. After realizing others' perceptions and expectations, she took on all the responsibility herself, despite various challenges. She also mentioned that it was difficult to manage family expenses in Kathmandu on the earnings of one person's job. Her husband was also pursuing a Master's degree at that time and was not working. That's why she was taking extra classes after school to meet the family's needs as it grew. It is very hustle and hectic to complete all the seen and unseen assigned work in the same day. Likewise, research conducted by Cifre et al. (2015) found that environmental variables improve occupational outcomes and prevent gender discrimination, thereby promoting equality. It is a bit frustrating to do the same work every day, though we have to finish it on time. Likewise, the story of another participant made me think that she was worried about her children before giving birth. Both of them have the same working hours at the office, but after coming back, her husband feels tired and sits on the sofa watching his mobile phone, and does not support her with any work at home. This story shows that a husband's duty is not just going to the office and working during office hours; my participant is also doing her domestic work after office hours. Her work has not been minimized. So, she is worried about giving birth and caring for the baby. According to Personality System

Interaction (PSI) theory, when we internalize society's norms, expectations, and perceptions, we can better understand our own potential. Knowing our strengths and weaknesses helps us perform accordingly; likewise, it motivates us to do our best in our profession and in day-to-day activities. Not only this, but it also helps us to improve ourselves and keep motivated. Internalization is facilitated by regulation through social support or self-regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2000)

One day, I had to go to an interview for a job, but there was no one to see my baby at home, so I took my baby. I have carried my child on my lap even while giving an interview. Not only this, I had to provide breastmilk to my baby during the interview to keep my baby silent. -Mira

Besides my profession, I was continuing my academic journey as well. At the same time, as a daughter-in-law, I had to set aside time for household chores. After 2 years of marriage, I got pregnant, and it became tougher for me to manage time for playing various roles. My Experience

The narratives mentioned are only a small part of the stories of my participants' lived experiences as working women who face such situations every day. It is not everyone's cup of tea to manage the various personal, professional, family, academic, and social responsibilities at once. We have to give equal focus to all sides to achieve the best in our lives; otherwise, we will face harsh situations. We can imagine how hard and uncomfortable it was for my participants to take a baby in their lap and supply breastmilk in front of the interviewer while attending an interview. Likewise, it was not easy for me to manage my profession, academic career, the journey of motherhood, and household work. Another participant also shared that she suppressed her inner feelings after the miscarriage of a baby, as she had conceived that baby after the continuous doctor's visits and consultations for two years. She started following a regular schedule for her profession and home chores only after a few days' leave, as there was no one to support her at home. This type of burden for women could not result in any reward or anything else. Regarding myself, I have family support to pursue my career, so it is a little easier for me to balance various roles at the same time. Research by Cifre et al. (2015) found that promoting work-family practices could help prevent workplace aggression and microaggressions. If those practices are oriented towards men, then men can also be responsible for family chores. Otherwise, it is very hard to balance professional, personal, and biological roles simultaneously.

Professional Role

As we know, teaching is a very stressful job, and dealing with diverse students in a high student-teacher ratio is not easy. According to Kingsley (2005), women are equally satisfied with their jobs as men are. Although women are less satisfied with longer working hours, we have to be more involved with children than men do. Not only do we have to deal with various types of bias at our workplace from male colleagues, but also from other education stakeholders. Hira shared her experience related to parents meeting at her school.

When parents come to visit the school for the parents' meeting or to submit their child's results. Parents of secondary-level students prefer talking with male teachers at school rather than female teachers. I call my parents as a class teacher of class 10. After coming to school, they ask me where the "sir" or "madam" is. They want to discuss each and every detail about their child with male colleagues. Not only this, most of the parents show respect and greet the male teacher very well.

From the narratives of my participants, we can see how female teachers are facing and tackling an unsupportive environment and gender bias in their workplace. Likewise, parents are not showing good behavior and are not talking properly to their female teachers. Not only this, but my male colleagues always want to take credit for everything, despite our contributions and engagement. Sometimes, as a female educator, I feel biased after meeting with our parents in a similar situation. Not only this, I have felt many times that female teacher is dominated by male teachers in the job. As a female teacher, I feel uncomfortable at my workplace because of the behavior of my male colleagues. They assume females have less knowledge than males, females don't have 21st-century skills, focus more on personal factors, and laugh at a senseless thing. Research conducted by Paudyal (2015) explored those various aspects, such as biological, socio-cultural, stereotype, gender roles, and patriarchy, that influence the professional life of the majority of women in Nepal. Not only this, but also excluding women from various professional development opportunities, such as participation in teacher training and taking on responsibilities in vital posts (headteacher, head of subject committee, coordinator, and head of the department). Mira shared her experience of 1st day at her school.

On the first day, after visiting the school, I was surprised that the office rooms for male and female teachers in my school were also different. All the male

teachers sit in the office room with the headteacher during their leisure period, as well as before and after class time, whereas all the female teachers sit in the staff room during their leisure time, as well as before and after class time. Another surprising thing is that my school rarely organizes staff meetings. In 10 years of working experience, I have attended only 2 or 3 meetings at my school.

Another surprising thing is that, in recent times, the school administration has also provided separate office rooms for male and female teachers. Moreover, not holding a staff meeting for a whole year is also surprising. It shows that the school administration is not fostering a democratic environment among the teachers. Working with unsupportive colleagues who keep on dragging us down to demotivate us towards our profession, suppressing the voice of females by the so-called masculine society, opportunities frequently given to males, more interference in personal matters, torture by picking non-relevant discussions, going through homophobic harassment among staff, etc., are sources of hindrance for females. In our context, first, all opportunities are given to male teachers because SMCs and other stakeholders have come to believe that male teachers have superior leadership capacity compared to female teachers. Despite good performance and expertise, the malpractice of treating women as second-class citizens has deep roots in our educational landscape. Research conducted by Channar et al. (2011) shows that females have gone through vulnerable situations due to gender discrimination in their workplace. Due to the demeaning behavior and discrimination, women could not give full attention and commitment to their jobs. It also noted that gender bias is more prevalent in public than in private organizations. I have mentioned my experience related to my school

"In my school, our head teacher kept a projector in his cupboard. One day I asked the headteacher, I need a projector for the presentation in my class today. Can you take that out? He told me that, wait for a while, another male teacher is coming, he will come and fit. I answered him, "No need to worry, sir. I can do that myself, as I have done it before." Again, he said that no need to do. He will do it later on by himself. Then I was so surprised, does a projector have any gender?"

These narratives show that the headteacher is not granting the female teacher access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools. It shows the level

of discrimination in their own workplace. This is a technocentric era where we cannot separate learners from technology. As science and technology teachers, we have to ignite learners' use of technology. As teachers, we also need to be updated on the use of ICT in the classroom, but we are not getting opportunities to use the available equipment. Choosing appropriate methods and incorporating innovative techniques to make the classroom a better place for learning, creating familial relationships at school to produce global learners, are other challenging factors for us in this globalized era. We, female science teachers get additional hurdles while dealing with unnecessary pressure from school related factors, i.e., massive load of curriculum, work preparation at home, crowded classrooms, insufficient teaching material, status of science laboratory, working for long hours, competitive pressure, non-uniform policy of local level government, lack of professional growth, and promotion in comparison with other profession. Besides the low academic achievement of students and the blame for poor results, it is equally challenging for us. Finally, battling with unconscious biases, poor interpersonal relationships, unsupportive and stubborn administration, and toxic leadership are also sources of stress for us. Research conducted by Mart (2018) mentioned that determined and Committed teachers have the capacity to perform various roles effectively, which helps to establish professional values, i.e., a good teacher-student relationship. Not only this, but it also helps make better teacher-teacher relationships and the parent-to-teacher relationship required for the profession. Mira shared her feelings related to the language issue.

At my school, students come from diverse communities. Some of them are from India, and it is hard for them to understand Nepali. I see myself in them. If my students don't know the language, then what will they know? They say, "We don't know anything," then I give them my example.

My participant, Mira, added that, *and* I have also read in similar situations, "If you have a will, there is a way." If you have a reason to do something, you will do it anyway. Finally, effort is all that matters. As a female science teacher, I encourage and motivate our students to learn rather than humiliate and embarrass them for their weaknesses. Passionate teachers who are strongly dedicated to their work can make a huge positive difference in students' lives and academic progress. A passionate teacher always works seriously with young generation students. A passionate teacher also creates an effective learning environment by sharing their own experiences, suggesting innovative ideas to motivate learners (Serin, 2017). Not only this, but it is

also mentioned that women get fewer promotions and opportunities than men. It is a major factor in women's lives that leads to the lifecycle of inequality (Marks & Houston, 2002). However, in my view, women possess a range of soft skills, including strong communication, professionalism, leadership, effective collaboration, adaptability to new environments, problem-solving, and time management. Not only is this woman a rich source of feelings, but we are also more emotional towards our learners and others. Although research by Rake (2001) found that women earn less than men over a lifetime, as they face difficulty balancing work and motherhood. The teaching process is an art and science, both, though we are more into science than art. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivations play a major role in making our teaching-learning process more effective and more artistic. Some of the extrinsic motivation in our profession are provision of reward and punish, continuous supervision, few words of appreciation from education stakeholders for what we are doing, constructive feedback from school management committee, good relationship, support from family members and colleagues, positive and unbiased working environment, and respect of self as well as work are vital weapons to keep us motivated. If women are highly motivated, they can perform very well in their profession, though balancing their personal lives, families, and work lives is a crucial factor. Thus, women's empowerment is essential, as higher motivation is associated with lower stress. We have to be intrinsically motivated for resilience and to balance various roles and responsibilities through self-gratification and pleasure (Ryan & Deci, 2000). I have shared my experience regarding this

I smile at them when people around me keep on saying that you have a very good life, as your job is at the center of Kathmandu, and it's near your home. I do not have a single penny of 'me time' in a whole day. My small daughter says, "Mamma, no school today," by crying and frequently asking for holidays.

The narrative mentioned here is the story of all the participants. They added that in the morning, while we are leaving for school, babies start to cry, either stay at home together or take me to your school, but we cannot follow both options. We have to go to school by leaving them at home. After going to school, we will also remember that my baby was crying at home. It hurts all the mothers a lot from inside, though. How can we make a little child understand the importance of this job in our

lives? Surrounded people think we are very lucky because we have a job in Kathmandu and are staying with our family, but no one thinks about us from our side.

Discussion

In this chapter, I developed three themes: personal, professional, and domestic roles. Under these themes, I explored the paid vs. unpaid work, juggling multiple roles, work-life balance, and following the same hectic schedule every day. While sharing the stories, my participants mentioned that female teachers perform paid reproductive labor all day at school, then go home to perform unpaid reproductive labor for their family, like child care, cooking, and cleaning. Besides that, we are performing some other activities in our daily life, like parenting, managing family schedules, and relationships, playing multiple roles at once, ways of going to work, and work performed by women, which are not valued as they do not make money from such activities. All these devalued works are addressed by social reproduction theory as it focuses on “wages for housework, emotional labor, and care work provided for the family. This theory also argues that life is the sphere of social reproduction – the unpaid work that regenerates workers (Federici, 2019). Work-life balance can be defined as the ideal balance between career and work goals and family (Rawal, 2023). As a researcher and female teacher, I totally agree with Rawal (2023) as we all working female teachers are trying to balance various roles at the same time. However, it is not easy for working women to balance various roles.

Female teachers maintain their work-life balance with a high tolerance for the exploitation faced in the workplace and at home. It shows the interconnected struggle among an individual's multiple roles. Nowadays, after receiving a quality education, women are also participating equally in the workforce to be independent, in addition to fulfilling various roles and responsibilities. As working women, it is challenging to balance work, personal life, and domestic responsibilities; however, we must carefully balance these roles to succeed in the future. Regarding the work-life balance, my participants also mentioned various personal roles that are making career, self-identity, and domestic roles are unpaid labor, and devalued work at home. Likewise, engaging in professional roles is a real struggle for female teachers in the classroom, due to the workload, the busy schedules of females, and the task of reproducing a new generation. Arriving at this stage, I realized that if we could incorporate technology and modern techniques into our day-to-day lives, it would be a bit easier to balance all the roles and responsibilities. In our society, people are recognized according to the

hierarchy of paid work and professionalism. Most of the women's work happens inside the home, but this will not be counted as working hours. Likewise, any work that is done in and around our home, society, and surroundings is not recognized as work. So, it is important to develop a gender understanding of work in our context (Rajan, 2010). In our society, the work that should be done by men and women is divided along gender lines. Men are seen as breadwinners after working for less than 10 hours, whereas a woman's work is not recognized after 18 hours. So, household work should also be included in the workforce index.

Self-determination theory (SDT) mainly focuses on three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This is necessary for optimal human functioning and motivation, as this theory posits. The social environment also plays a vital role in supporting these psychological needs, motivation, and well-being. Organismic Integration Theory (OIT), as proposed by Ryan & Deci (2000), primarily focuses on non-interesting behavior. Such behavior is not intrinsically motivated; sometimes we perform these behaviors in response to the demands of social life. People learn new things from their own experiences and integrate them into their own lives by internalizing the values and behaviors of their own surroundings. We can learn various things from different situations in our lives. When we are extrinsically motivated, we draw on our skills, knowledge, abilities, and ongoing experience. It assumes that the higher the internalization of self-behavior, the more the integration in the self. SDT is necessary across various domains of our lives, such as education, parenting, motivation, and human well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-autonomy helps us feel free from constraints in life, as it encourages us to achieve our goals by following our own self-direction. Likewise, competence helps us make our actions effective and masterful, achieving our outcome. Relatedness is also equally important in personal life, as it helps people connect closely with others to grow and flourish together (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to Social reproduction theory (SRT), until females contribute to unpaid care and balance professional work with mental, physical, and emotional support, families sustain themselves (Brenner & Laslett, 1991). This balance helps produce a healthy workforce and a strong family relationship. Though in recent times, such contributions of females are taken for granted. The findings of the social production theory are similar and more extensive than the findings stated by SDT.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the domestic, professional, and biological roles played by female teachers, how they balance these roles, and how they overcome them. I also mentioned the expectations and perceptions of family, society, and relatives regarding a working woman, the home environment, and family support in juggling multiple roles. I also discussed the gender bias towards a female teacher in school premises, the dominative nature of male colleagues towards females. In the next chapter, I will discuss the challenges overcome despite the various roles of females and the effort they put into balancing multiple roles with a day-to-day hustle schedule. I will invite all the readers to read the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

EMPOWERING AND INSPIRATIONAL JOURNEY OF FEMALE SCIENCE TEACHERS

This chapter answers my second subsidiary research question. This is mainly focused on the factors that help continue a professional journey despite various challenges. In chapter four, under the title structural inequity, I explored the various challenges such as the headteacher's perception towards female teachers, biased behavior shown by students to their female teacher, unequal pay, massive workload, females are treated as a workforce, gender bias, and body shaming in school premises faced by female science teachers in their professional journey as secondary-level teachers. Among them, the challenges include gender bias, unequal pay, perceptions of male colleagues, and how females are treated in the workforce. Based on these challenges, I probed some factors, namely personal identity for self-respect, to build professional competency and achieve independent status for freedom, which motivate them to continue their professional journey despite various challenges, to answer my second research question.

Factors to Continue Professional Journey Despite Different Challenges

We are facing various challenges in our fields in our workplace. As a secondary-level female science teacher, I play multiple roles at once, including biological, personal, and professional. We continue our work by facing these challenges in our daily lives. Female secondary-level science teachers face many challenges, as we all play multiple roles at once. Likewise, we are facing multiple challenges in both our personal and professional lives. Not only this, but also work-life balance is another challenging task for us. In this section, I have outlined some challenges female teachers face in the workplace. Here, I have mentioned some reasons to continue the professional journey despite different challenges.

Professional Competency: Room for Self

After gaining a higher qualification, everyone wants to create their own identity. We want to apply our learning to build our own careers. At the end of the day, we all need space for ourselves, self-care, and a better life. Our professional life helps make our lives better by building a good name and fame.

We join our job for self-recognition and identity. After joining a job, we try to become more professional and experts in our field to advance our careers. As a result, we can have some space for self-care, well-being, and self-reflection and realization. My Experience

After resigning from the temporary job, I came to Kathmandu and prepared for the teacher service commission examination, and passed the examination. Later, people who had previously spoken negatively about me also began praising my talent and competence. They started to take me as a role model in society due to my professional achievements. Hira

After listening to my participants, they mentioned that our job will provide self-identity and recognition in our lives. We can invest in ourselves for our well-being after becoming independent. Likewise, we can reflect on our own decisions and experiences from multiple perspectives for effective professionalism. Hira also mentioned that no one believed in her before she was successful in her career, but later, people around her began to see her as a role model after she made progress. Those people were negative at the beginning of her career development, but later they started praising her. It applies to all working women in our society. After completing a certain degree, we want to show/ perform our knowledge, skills, and abilities in our respective fields. Our professional competencies encourage us to develop soft, problem-solving, and 21st-century skills rather than focusing solely on technical expertise. Our professional career ignites in us crucial skills such as critical thinking, decision-making, collaboration, and inquiry-based learning. These skills help us stay up to date. It also helps to meet the standard of our profession. We need a platform to enrich our professional careers, foster self-autonomy, build expertise, and demonstrate commitment to work. It builds professional networks and supports career growth, helping build trust and reliability among colleagues and friends. It helps us remain continuous learners and encourages us to conduct further research and innovation that enhances the quality of the profession. Teachers' ability to manage the learning environment, the classroom, and their pedagogical practices fosters the development of professional competencies. Our personal growth and development will come after we succeed in our professional careers. We need a room/space for ourselves to nurture our individuality and develop a sense of worth. We can reflect on ourselves after taking some time and space to make improvements and achieve better results in the future. We can explore various resources for well-being and self-care after focusing

on the self. Likewise, goal-centric theory focuses on a person's values and aspirations. Intrinsic motivation includes close relationships, personal growth, and community relations (Legault, 2017). In contrast, extrinsic motivation focuses on validation of self-esteem rather than on financial success, reputation, and appearance.

Independent Status: Children's Better Future

Our profession helps us become economically strong as a reward for our hard work. Once we reach a certain stage, it would be difficult to sustain our lives without self-employment, as everyone needs money for a better livelihood. Women are too busy to do housework, even though their work is not regarded as economic labor. As a result, they have to depend upon their husband or family. My participant Hira, shared her experiences regarding the family's economic condition.

It is difficult to run our family on the income of only one person. When both husband and wife go to work and earn money, it would be easier to give our children a better life. I have experienced that our nearest relatives also behave differently towards earning and non-earning people. Sometimes, we cannot join a job after getting a better qualification, though the people in our surroundings do not understand that.

In recent times, everyone wants to be independent, as no one wants to be controlled or be part of a joint family. Our independent status empowers us and gives us the autonomy we need. As a result, the nuclear family is viewed as a modern unit of social structure and economic perspective. It gives progress and time to empower women within their own identity. Everyone wants to earn money independently to improve their livelihood. The job provides a regular income for a woman, which promotes informed choices and decisions, such as effective family planning, structuring a nuclear family, investing in childcare, and career choices that help manage the household more effectively. As we know, no one will respect the workload, pressure, and labor of a housewife in our family and society. Thus, every woman wants to exchange their labor with good salary. If women receive support from family members, they flourish in their careers and earn well. Relationship Motivation Theory (RMT) concerns close relationships, focusing on the mutual ties among partners and family members (Legault, 2017). It believes that we benefit not only from receiving support from partners but also from giving support to partners. Everyone wants to feel authentic in their relationship, to know how others value and understand their core self.

Personal Identity: Social Respect

Everyone wants to make their personal identity by contributing to their own field. As we all know, people are respected in our surroundings based on their work, capacity, and performance. My participant Mira, shared her experiences regarding the journey of self-identity in her professional journey.

It was harsh for me to make self-identity and recognition when I was struggling as a beginner. People began to value and take my knowledge and capacity seriously after I was appointed as a permanent teacher. Now, people recognize me as a good book writer, trainer, and educator after spending about three decades in the education field. Now I feel more satisfied and respected in my professional career.

According to my participants, they get social respect and a stable income from their profession, which helps to run their families smoothly. Self-respect is guided by four factors: epistemological self-trust, pedagogical self-efficacy, institutional self-advocacy, and intersectional self-awareness (Robertson, 2012). It enables them to reshape science education through their continuous practice when all these are integrated into a profession. From an early career of proving oneself to leaving a legacy in institutional stories, writing books, or becoming an expert teacher. In daily practice, competence is demonstrated through their students' success, their scientific research, and their ability to compete with male colleagues.

In our society, most housewives do all the household chores, such as cooking, cleaning, and washing. On the contrary, males do the same work as chefs, housekeepers, or cleaners professionally. It shows that men do that work to earn money, but they do not do the same work at home because it does not earn money. It will be easier for people to build an identity from their professional lives, but it is very rare to build an identity solely as a housewife. It is human nature for everyone to want to be respected, and it is easier to earn respect through professional work. Besides the various challenges, women go to work for self-respect and personal identity. We can define our personal identity as a doctor, professor, engineer, artist, chef, or educator. People in our surroundings show respect based on the level of the job. i.e., white colored job and black colored job.

Sharing Experiences: Encouraging Other Females in the Teaching Learning Process

When women share their experiences, they inspire other women to the same profession. It helps to increase female involvement in the academic field. Female educators empower the new generation by bringing change in their field through transformational learning theory. Such experiences encourage other young female teachers who want to dive into this profession. Female science teachers are assigned different roles, which gives them high value and recognition in society as role models in the education field. In regard to this, I have shared my experience.

There were no female teachers when I used to go to school in my childhood. At this time, the participation of female science teachers at the secondary level is increasing steadily. If we are aware of the pros and cons of our profession, then we can easily overcome the challenges encountered in our journey.

My participants suggested that we share our lived experiences with others who want to build careers in the same field. It encourages them to continue their journey by challenging every hurdle in their life. Newcomers in the education field learn to ask questions regarding the balance between multiple roles. Moreover, they learn to acknowledge and understand the exhaustion and the multiple roles that female science teachers play. They will be interested in pursuing similar careers after watching the success of female science teachers as curriculum developers, trainers, and subject experts. Not only this, but other female teachers will confront the challenges and opportunities in their personal and professional journeys, and ways to overcome them. Mate et al. (2019) noted potential barriers to women's career development, including a lack of career planning, discriminatory selection practices, macho behavior by male colleagues, and other invisible barriers and biases, which are major reasons hindering women's career advancement.

Discussion

In this section, I discussed the reasons to continue the professional journey despite various challenges. As we know, everyone will be recognized based on their performance and capacities. Despite various challenges, female teachers are trying to find an ideal balance between their professional and academic journeys, personal lives, and domestic lives. After completing higher education, we want to pursue careers in our respective fields. Under the theme, self-identification and recognition, I discussed the work performed by female teachers in the form of social capital,

economic capital, and cultural capital by maintaining the existing social hierarchy. Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) also asserts that the hindrances in career choices as women have to work a double standard, one is paid work, and the other is reproductive work for their family. Research by Mezzadri (2019) found that SRT theory recognizes both productive and reproductive labor performed by female teachers; however, in our day-to-day practices, the work performed within the biological role is taken for granted and not considered productive. Whereas feminist theory (Walby, 2011) advocates equal access for women in social, legal, political, and economic institutions. It highlights the gap between the findings of social reproduction theory and those of feminist theory.

A study by Pokharel (2024) found that participation in professional development equips teachers with the skills and knowledge needed for promotion and leadership roles. Likewise, my participants mentioned that, despite various challenges, they remain committed to their jobs to enhance their pedagogical competence and professional confidence. They continued their work to gain recognition, increase their competence, and enhance social integration. Feminist theory, as presented by Walby (2011), is primarily focused on freeing women from certain constraints by reducing gender inequality. As a female educator and researcher, I fully agree with feminist theory's findings. From the above findings, we can conclude that, through professional development, female teachers will be encouraged to overcome gendered barriers in their journey through collaboration within their networks. My participant, Hira, also shared her experience regarding the family's income. She added that female teachers can earn a reliable income from teaching. We, females, have to go to work with high mental and physical stress to maintain the increased living costs of our families. It also helps to invest in our children's education to a higher level, making their future brighter and more secure. In addition, Pool et al. (2016) noted that specific reasons for continuing professional development include enhancing career development, increasing self-esteem, building a professional network, and supplementing prior knowledge. Moreover, research by Billett (2006) shows that, despite various challenges, nurses engaged in other learning activities to improve competency and stay up to date, as the workplace cannot be considered solely an informal learning environment.

In answering the research question, the findings showed that female teachers are more ambitious about achieving a high quality of life. which is similar to the HCT

theory, in which a female teacher who has adopted an emancipatory potential approach can move beyond the existing system and actively participate to create an equitable educational environment. From the lens of Self-determination theory, female science teachers perceived these activities as a means to improve their competence and to integrate these external regulations into their own values. The undervalued work performed by female teachers should be counted to provide equal opportunities to promote the concept of male allies in our day-to-day practice (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Despite various challenges, female science teachers continued their job due to intrinsic motivation and high social respect.

Essence of the Chapter

This chapter was created based on the second research question. In this chapter, I discussed the reasons my participants continued in their professional roles, as well as the challenges and hurdles they encountered in their professional and personal journeys. Similarly, I mentioned the effort my participants and I put into overcoming the challenges to improve our professional careers. All the effort helped with personal and professional growth and development for creating an equitable learning environment at school and home. Drawing on participants' and my own stories, I discussed ways to encourage female teachers to achieve the common goal of becoming effective secondary-level teachers with an impactful leadership role. In the next chapter, I will discuss the insights, reflections, implications, and conclusions of this research study.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION, REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides the view related to the research study. I tried to highlight the multiple factors that affect female teachers' ability to achieve their goals. I mentioned the various factors hindering women from achieving their goals, invisible biases in equal opportunities for all staff, and challenges in balancing various roles in their lives. I tried to connect these various factors with the existing theories in the discussion section. Similarly, I have mentioned my own experience as a secondary-level female science teacher. Further, this chapter presents the implications of my research study, reflections on the dissertation-writing process, and insights derived from my participants' lived experiences. This chapter also provides the study's conclusion.

Conclusion of the Study

This study tried to investigate the lived experiences of female science teachers working in Nepalese government schools through a collaborative autoethnographic study. The participants shared their lived experiences, the challenges they faced in their professional careers, and the key reasons they continued their professional journeys despite these challenges. This study provides some evidence that there is still many gender-biased behaviors in our school setting.

In this research, the qualitative method, interpretive and criticalism paradigm is used to analyze the lived experience of female science teachers. This study reveals some challenges, such as unequal pay for males and females for the same work, negative perceptions of male colleagues and the head teacher towards female teachers. Despite legal protection against discrimination and equality, women still face barriers in invisible factors like leadership roles, advancement in their job, participation in policy making, having a massive workload in comparison to male teachers, and difficulties in participating in training and seminars, which can hinder female teachers' professional capacity and demotivate them towards their own profession. This study also highlights the low participation of female teachers at the secondary level. This research study also enlightened the personal, domestic, and professional roles of female teachers. Due to this role dilemma, female teachers face many pressures and challenges in balancing their multiple roles. As a result, career

development and well-being are negatively impacted. This study shows that female teachers face a range of challenges in their real lives, work-life balance, home responsibilities, and social burdens. Inadequate support from institutions, families, and male counterparts is a leading cause of slowed career growth and limited opportunities for leadership roles. The findings suggest eliminating gender inequality. Systematic and thoughtful steps must be taken to eliminate obstacles to women's participation in teaching and learning and in leadership roles, and female teachers should also be recognized equally with male teachers in the school setting.

I concluded that balancing work-life with academics is more complex for women than we realize because they have to balance all their roles at once. If female teachers find an ideal balance between personal, professional, and domestic roles, then secondary-level science teachers can achieve their professional growth and flourish their careers. A woman is a human being who knows her boundaries, priorities, and challenges, though she chooses the battle of life by resigning her own peace.

Likewise, male allies, flexible policies for systemic change, and family support also encourage continuing a career journey with a work-life balance. Not only this, but an inclusive environment, the collective effort of education stakeholders, government policy, and a wide female network could help female science teachers sustain careers and manage work-life balance more effectively. Moreover, the findings showed that female resilience empowers them to flourish in their careers by balancing their various roles.

The findings showed that professional competency: Room for self, Independent status: Children's better future, and personal identity: Social respect are some key reasons to continue the profession of female teacher despite various challenges. Despite the patriarchal framework and traditional mindset, and various challenges, females are rapidly growing in several fields and even succeeding in breaking them down. Similarly, changing the mindset of males, engaging females in the decision-making process, bringing change in leadership, developing power-sharing, and distributing culture and awareness about allyship in the workplace, minimizes home responsibilities and the burden on female science teachers, and motivates them in their profession. Equality and equity begin at home, so equal access in social, legal, political, and economic spheres leads to inclusive workplaces and flourishing, healthy, wealthy, and happy families.

Implications of the Study

I believe this study has significant implications for many education stakeholders, particularly for female science teachers and for females balancing work and life with multiple roles, along with the challenges. Not only this, but it is helpful for female teachers who want to take on leadership roles, as it explores biased behavior at their school, among policymakers, and among future researchers.

Implications for Science Teachers

Based on the study's findings, if female teachers become role models in their careers, they inspire other female teachers in their professional careers and leadership positions. It helps increase women's participation in academia. In this research, we discussed three roles that are personal, professional, and biological of female teachers and work-life balance in the educational setting.

Implications for Future Secondary-Level Female Science Teachers

Young women who dream of pursuing this profession and becoming leaders in academia find research beneficial. Likewise, this study is helpful to female administrators in understanding and overcoming the challenges they face along their life journey. This research also inspires upcoming female headteachers to create a positive impact in the education sector. There should be policies that support families and flexible working hours to encourage future female science teachers to enter the profession.

Implications for Educational Policy Makers

The existing policies in an academic field encourage the inclusion of females; as a result, some females are getting benefits. However, the policies are insufficient to ensure meaningful involvement of women in the academic field. Not only this, but the existing policies are also lacking in some areas and create a gap between policy provision and day-to-day practices, such as the provision of inclusive breastfeeding for six months for infants, though giving 98 days of maternity leave, and policies related to recruiting women teachers. While creating various policies, policymakers can review policies, plans, programs, and the knowledge gathered from this research. The GON must take initiatives to encourage and empower women to increase female participation in academia and close the gap between provisions and practices.

Implication for Leadership Development

This study supports aspiring school leaders in becoming successful headteachers who can make a positive impact in the educational sector. Females

might assume and develop their leadership roles after analyzing and balancing the various roles and responsibilities. This research study will help future teachers better understand teachers' transformational leadership traits. The female empowerment program should be made more accessible to enhance professional careers without compromising personal roles and responsibilities.

Implications for Future Researchers

This research may serve as a starting point for future researchers interested in the lived experiences of female teachers, work-life balance, and workplace challenges. Furthermore, it helps to provide an in-depth understanding of seen and unseen gender discrimination in the workplace, as well as gender inequality in leadership roles at their institution. My research study also supports self-determination theory, which has three major components: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These components are highly useful in our profession for motivation.

Limitations of the Study

My research is narrowed, as it focuses on the lived experiences of only three participants who share commonalities in similar geographical settings. Likewise, it depicts the stories of participants working in similar community school ecology. The researcher and participants were more engaged in personal narratives, making data interpretation more challenging. Researchers might be judgmental or stressed while listening to the painful, emotional stories. Likewise, readers might find this research study similar to their own, so transferability will be given greater emphasis than generalizability. The sequential CAE model cannot be used by researchers due to time constraints on participants. Participants had the opportunity to serve as co-researchers in the study, though none were interested.

Reflections

As a researcher, I observed the factors affecting female teachers' professional journeys, the multiple roles of females, and work-life balance at the macro level. The factors I mentioned in my research are not sufficient to affect females' hardship. There is other factor also such as parental education, family background, political influences, impacts of male dominant society, hereditary characteristics, deeply rooted existing gender bias issues and many more are some other factors.

In our society, most parents still think that girls should get married at an early age to be settled in their lives. Later on, it would be challenging for women to start their careers after getting married and having children. As a result, many capable

women stay at home to take care of their children and families, depending on their husbands. As a result, the ratio of working females is lower than that of males. If the parents recognized the importance of education, they could give their daughters the opportunity to pursue higher education. In the family, if the senior one has set an example in their society, then other young ones will be inspired to enhance their peer group effect. In our community, we can see that deeply rooted existing gender bias issues are also influencing females in their professional careers, such as females cannot read technical subjects like science and mathematics. Likewise, most people in our society still think that women must be engaged in cooking, cleaning, and various household chores for their future. Due to various reasons, parents still hesitate to allow their female child to stay away from home for their professional career. Due to the various malpractices of society, capable females are being marginalized these days. The patriarchal concept of society still discourages females from having any leadership role, from being involved in decision-making. In most homes, men are the head of the family, and women have to ask their husbands for permission for small things. After observing all these situations, we can conclude that females feel backward for various reasons.

As a researcher and an educator, I claim that the teaching profession is an important tool to sustain our lives in a better way, but it will remain for only a few years in our lives. We have to maintain a work-life balance throughout. Likewise, in my experience, we have to be professional at work by giving 100% to fulfill our professional roles. Then, when we leave the workplace, we have to forget our professional journey and give 100% to our family in fulfilling domestic roles. Besides that, we have to fulfill our biological roles too, to balance our multiple roles and achieve a better work-life balance.

After reviewing my participants' stories, I gained insights into how hard they worked to overcome the obstacles. So, female teachers can achieve their goals and feel proud of their success today. It is all possible due to strong determination and confidence. At the beginning of their career, they were unsure about their professional journey, but now they are doing excellently. I would like to share my reflections on the leadership role. One year ago, the vice principal post at my school was vacant. I expressed my interest in becoming a vice principal. At that time, I was doing my M. Phil., and I could have contributed more to the school's teaching and learning process by incorporating various innovative student-centered pedagogies, but the headteacher

did not support me on that journey. He chose another teacher at the lower secondary level, who had only a bachelor's qualification. Who is going to retire within the next 2 years? The headteacher and I were at the same secondary level, and he might feel insecure about his position because of me. So, he decided not to appoint me as a vice principal. Not only this, he used to create obstacles to my professional career by preventing me from attending training and conferences. Then, I realized that no one wants to encourage young female teacher in their professional career.

After spending about a decade in the teaching field, I observed various incidents of visible and invisible discrimination in the workplace. In my experience, most of them in our surroundings assume that male teachers have a magic rod to run the administration, and they are more capable of dealing with disciplinary matters despite having equal qualifications and experience in the teaching and learning field. After crossing all these situations, I found the huge influence of gender disparity, patriarchal thought, favoritism, and nepotism in a governmental school, also.

Upon arriving at this stage, I can visualize a clear image of gender bias at school despite legal protection against discrimination for equality. Due to the multiple roles of female teachers, female teachers are mostly engaged in home-school communication. As daughters and daughters-in-law, we experience more dissatisfaction with our parents than with male teachers. Our male colleagues assume that married women are more focused on family and home chores, despite their best efforts in the workplace. On the contrary, our family member frequently mentions that our daughter-in-law cannot give her best in household work as she is a working woman. After going through this experience, I concluded that we working females can be perfect in our workplaces, but we cannot be perfect at home from others' feet, despite giving our best in professional and personal work. Not only this, Xu (2024) noted that female teachers are targets of criticism in home-school conflicts. So, female teachers face enormous pressure from home and school. These multiple roles of female teachers are the reason for their low participation in leadership positions. If we implement and incorporate the statements of Habermasian critical theory and structuration theory, educators will be encouraged to reflect on the existing challenges and norms on school premises and increase the number of female teachers in the education sector by encouraging females to take leadership positions.

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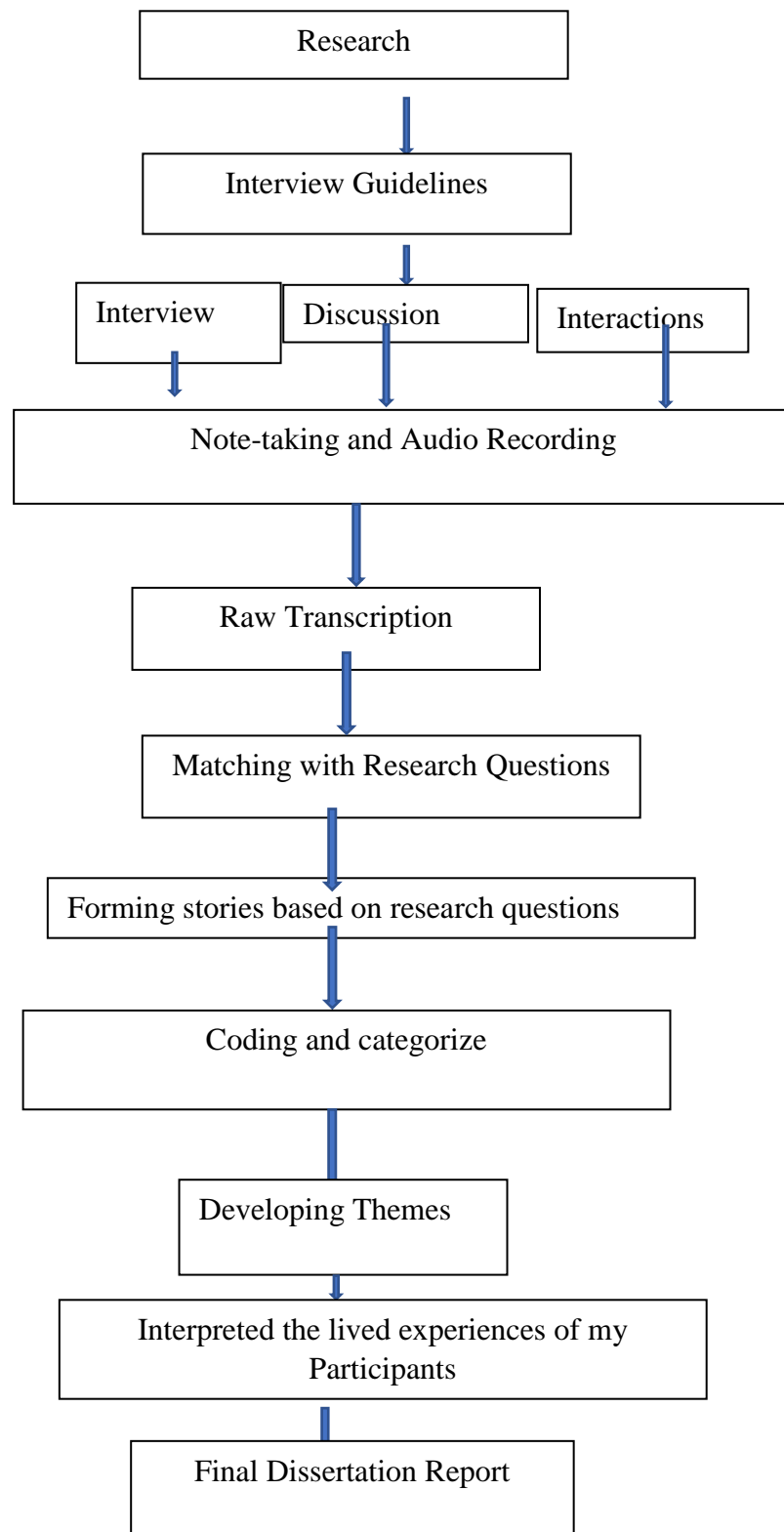
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ANNEXES

Process of the Study

Interview Guidelines

Research Topic

Lived Experiences of Secondary Level Female Science Teachers: A Collaborative Autoethnographic Inquiry

Purpose of The Study

explore the lived experience of secondary-level female science teachers in teaching and learning, and identify the problems and difficulties female teachers face in classrooms, schools, and society.

Research Questions

2. What are the lived experiences of secondary-level female science teachers?

Subsidiary Research Questions

3. How do female science teachers balance different roles in their lives?
4. Despite different challenges, why do female science teachers continue their journey?

Interview Guiding Questions Based on Research Questions

These guiding questions encourage exploring the lived experiences and multiple roles of the female science teachers

1. Will you provide your introduction in brief?
2. What inspired you to make your career in the education field?
3. How do you remember your success story to become secondary level science teacher?
4. Would you please share the lived experience as a secondary-level science teacher?
5. Have you ever experienced any type of challenges? If yes, what type of challenges did you face as a secondary-level science teacher?
6. Besides the various challenges, why do you continue your professional journey?
7. While continuing your professional journey, what types of other roles are you playing as a female science teacher?
8. Have you ever experienced a biological barrier in your professional journey?
9. How do you balance the multiple roles in your life?
10. In our context, have you ever encountered disparity based on gender in your workplace? How did you overcome this?

11. As per your experiences, what differences did you find between male and female teachers regarding their personal and professional responsibilities?
12. What about your family support to balance all the roles at this stage?
13. What would be your suggestion to the other working females for the work-life balance?
14. How do you motivate future female educators in this field?
15. What type of school do you imagine is led by female educators?
16. What might be the reasons behind the low participation of female teachers in leadership roles or positions?

Informed Consent

Date 3/8/2023

Informed consent for oral or written data

The nature and purpose, expected duration, and my role as a research participant for the collaborative research study has been explained to me in the language that I understand. I have had the opportunity to ask queries, which have been clarified to my satisfaction. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving reasons. I also understand that information collected will be kept confidential and anonymized, unless I give permission to release my name.

Please check all that applies:

I hereby give my consent willingly to participate in this research study and have been given a copy of this form.

I give permission for my interview to be recorded.

Informed consent and media release form for photography and video/audio recording data

I understand that recording materials will be used for research purposes only. I also understand that such materials may be used in diverse educational settings within an unrestricted geographic area. Please check all that applies:

I also give permission to use data recordings produced for media production of educational materials.

I give permission for the following information to be included in the educational materials:

Use of my Pseudo name

Use of my designation

Full name of study participant _____

Designation of study participant Secondary Level Science Teacher

Organization of study participant _____

Email _____

Mobile number _____