

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This present study is on the "Teacher Support Groups for Professional Development: Teachers' Perceptions". This chapter consists of background, statement of problems, Rationale of the study, objectives of the study, Research questions, significance of the study, Delimitations of the study and operational definition of key terms.

1.1 Background

Profession is a job requiring special type of skill or knowledge. A professional activity involves systematic knowledge and proficiency, and requires some type of learning. Teachers are the persons like other professionals like doctors, pilots, engineers who require special skills to accomplish their particular job. So teaching is also regarded as one of the profession. Khaniya (2006, p.7) supports this view and states: "Teachers professors, doctors, engineers, lawyers etc. are regarded as professionals...professional is he who performs tasks involving not only skills and knowledge but also expertise". Similarly, Wallace (2010, p.5) lists five qualities of profession as:

-) A basic scientific knowledge
-) A sense of rigorous study which is formally assessed
-) A sense of public service
-) High standard of professional conduct and
-) The ability to perform some specified demanding and socially useful tasks in demonstrably competent manner.

From this, profession is someone's systematic and total involvement in particular task having specialized knowledge and skills with some sort of innovation and this is required in the field of teaching. Thus, teaching is also profession like other field and teachers are professionals.

Development means progressive change or advancement towards positive direction. It is the change of any individual personally and professionally. In this regard, Underhill (as cited in Head & Taylor, 1997, p.7) states:

Development means...keeping myself on the side of my learning fence as my students. This is the only way that I can keep alive a sense of challenge and adventure in my career and avoid getting in a rut. If I am in a rut, so is my teaching, and then so are my students, and learning from a rut is tedious, slow and uninspiring.

Teacher Professional Development (TPD) is an innovative concept in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal which is more than having sound knowledge and skills in the subject matter in the respected profession. Teacher Professional Development can be described as an endless process through which the teachers grow with the span of time. TPD is an evolving process in the field of teaching and learning. It is not taking something as granted but it is investigation of new idea. Professional learning involves not only the development and use of teaching activities in the classroom but also the personal view and conception underlying their practices. "Teacher Development (TD) is the process of becoming the best kind of teacher that I personally can be." (Underhill 1986 p.1, as cited in Head & Taylor, 1997. p.1)

According to Head & Taylor (1997, p.1):

Teacher development, as we understand it, draws on the teacher's own inner resource for change. It is centered on the personal awareness the possibilities for change, and of what influences the change process. It builds on the past, because recognizing how past experiences have or have not been developmental helps identify opportunities for change in

the present and future. It also draws on the present, in encouraging a fuller awareness of the kind of teacher you are now and of other people's responses to you. It is self-reflective process, because it is through questioning old habits that alternative ways of being and doing are able to emerge.

Teachers play a vital role in the education of students so their own education and quality become a matter of concern. In other words, the education of teachers is a main attribute of a profession. It is to acknowledge that informal learning as well as formal professional training on a continuous basis is necessary for becoming good teachers. Teachers' empowerment activities need to be incorporated in education to enhance teachers' personality and communication skills. These skills include classroom performances, school level performances, community related performances and so on and ultimately this is professionalism. For teachers to develop professionally, teaching demands various roles of teachers. It requires sound knowledge of children psychology, subject matter, teaching learning and also the rules and regulations of the particular institutions.

In order to enhance the professional development of school level English Language teachers, the government owned NCED, Educational Training Centers (ETCs), Leading Resource Centers (LRCs) and Resource Centers (RCs) have been arranging different teacher training activities. Apart from these institutions, there are privately owned institutions which provide similar sort of opportunities for the English Language Teachers. There are some non-governmental professional forums of English like Nepal English Language Teachers' Association, (NELTA). Such forums also encourage the teacher learning activities by encouraging them in collaborative learning such as engaging them in seminars, workshops, journal writing and so on. The government of Nepal (GON) has made the 7th amendment of Education Act in

2001, and made the provision of teacher's license. It is one of the indicators for the development of teacher professionalism.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Teacher support group is very much helpful to invite colleagues to meet for a general discussion about what kind of support group everyone would like. TSG can address a wide range of issues such as sharing and discussing experience of personal and professional development. Though there are various tools for teacher learning, most of them are not found in practice in our context. TSG is new and emerging concept in the context of Nepal. Most of the Nepalese teachers are unknown to the theoretical knowledge as well as its use in real classroom practice because of which it is problematic to implement TSG in grass root level for teachers' professional development. Though TSG plays crucial role in teacher development, it is not in practice formally in our context. Teachers feel isolated from their colleagues. There is also lack of collaborative learning environment. Lack of TSG teachers faces so many difficulties to run the class smoothly.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

Teacher support group plays major role in providing opportunities for teachers to share ideas, problems, experiences and information. They can validate their knowledge, boost up their confident and grow oneself. If the teachers join support group, they are to some extent empowered they support others and be supported from others so it should be in practice. Though, TSG has varieties of benefits, it is not in practice so it is important to know Nepali English language teachers' view on it. This study tries to find out the role of teacher support group for TPD from teachers' perspective. No researches have been carried out related to TSG so I am very much interested to carry out research on TSG.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- i. To find out the English language teachers' perceptions on teacher support groups. (TSGs)
- ii. To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.5 Research Questions

This study aims at revealing the perceptions of English language teachers on role of TSG for their professional development in the context of Nepal. This study focuses on in what degree the teachers are interested to involve and engage in collaborative learning like TSG. It also focuses on 'TSG' as one of the important tools for teachers' professional development. My research tries to find out the following questions:

- a. What is the role of TSG for TPD?
- b. How is TSG important for TPD?
- c. How does TSG help teachers to grow professionally?
- d. Why should TSG be in practice?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Teacher Support Group (TSG) is for the people who are in the field of education profession with the passion in their work and who want to be familiar with new technology in education, validate their knowledge and so on. TSG provides opportunities to share recent findings in teaching learning activities in effective ways to improve classroom practice, students' outcome and school environment. Though TSG has lots of benefits, it is not formally practice in our context so this study focuses on the perception of Nepali English language teachers on the role of teacher support group for their professional development. This study is beneficial for teachers who are using

new and different techniques to develop themselves professionally and for experienced and novice teachers who are working collaboratively. It is equally useful for the educational administrators, policy makers and the researcher who want to carry out researches in the area of teacher professional development and teacher education. It is significant to teacher educators as well as persons and organizations that launch teacher education programme. The findings of this work suggest some pedagogical implications in the field of teacher development. This research work is equally significant for those who want further study in this field in the future. All the persons who are directly or indirectly involved in the teaching profession will be benefited from this research work.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The proposed study had the following delimitations:

- i. The research was limited to teachers' perception on teacher support group for teachers' professional development.
- ii. The study was limited to only 40 secondary level English language teachers of 40 different schools in the Kathmandu valley.
- iii. It was limited to the questionnaire only as a tool to elicit the data.
- iv. The population was selected from the 40 non randomly selected schools of the Kathmandu valley.

1.8 Operational Definition of the Key Terms

Teacher Support Group: two or more teachers collaborate together to discuss and share the ideas and resource to make them professional development.

Professional Development: ongoing learning process in which learners emerge voluntarily to learn habit, to adjust their teaching, to the learning needs of their students.

Teacher Training: activities directly focused on a teachers present responsibilities.

Collaborative Learning: group of teachers meet together, help one another to improve their English.

Novice: the person who is new in the field of

Teacher Learning: the development of range of different skills and competencies, mastery of which underlies successful teaching

Self-directed Learning: a movement away from ‘outsider’ approaches to ‘insider’ ones.

Mentor: An experienced teacher acting as an advisor

Sample: Specified number of population which is used in the research.

Population: Particular number of population which is selected by the researcher for research work.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Review of Related Theoretical Literature

I studied different theories related to TSG, TPD and some related materials helpful to my study.

2.1.1 Teachers' Professional Development

Teachers Professional Development (TPD) is a bottom-up process in which teachers keep themselves engaged in learning and expanding their expertise. TPD is neither focused on specific areas of teaching nor has any immediate objectives. It is an ongoing lifelong process with long term goal which is based on personal and professional refinement of a teacher. When teachers can use the resources around them to advance themselves, then there is professional development. Ur (1996, p.318) says "Teacher development takes place when teachers working as individuals or in a group, consciously take advantage of such resources to forward their own professional learning." After gaining the experience and expertise for years in teaching systematically a teacher achieves professional development. So TPD is regarded as the process of developing professional excellence by learning, experiencing and practicing new challenges which are encountered in teaching learning activities.

Lieberman and Miller (as cited in Day,2004, p.105) express their view about teachers and teacher learning for their professional development in the following way:

Teaching and learning are interdependent, not separate function. In this view, teachers are primarily learners. They are problem posers and

problem solvers; they are researchers; they are intellectuals engaged in unraveling and learning process both for themselves and for young people in their change. Learning is not consumption; it is knowledge production; Teaching is not performance; it is facilitative leadership.

Teachers' professional development can be achieved by the regular worshipping of work i.e. they enter into the classroom, face difficulty and the emerging problems. TPD is an ongoing learning process in which the learners emerge voluntarily to learn habit, to adjust their teaching, to the learning needs of their students. Head and Taylor (1997) say, "Development means change and growth." The teacher development means to grow up as a better teacher. More specifically, "TD is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his/her teaching systematically." Glathron, 1995 (as cited in Joshi, 2010 p.8). Always teachers have to deal with new experiences, challenges and opportunities in their profession. For this, they keep alert and engaged in learning new knowledge, skills, information, techniques and other innovations in their profession. Thus, professional development involves all the activities aiming to achieve personal and professional growth of teachers.

Professional development starts when a novice teacher enters into classroom, i.e. setting where teacher faces mixed ability students from multi environment then teachers have to understand students, school environment, resource materials, language background, methods and overcome these difficulty which is resolution phase. In this phase, teacher adjusts in professional life. TPD is about dealing with the needs and wants of the individual. It relates new experiences, new challenges and the opportunities for teachers to burden their repertoire and take on new responsibilities and challenges. Bell and Gilbert (1996 p.15) define professional development as "a part of teacher development

that involves not only the use of different activities but also the development of beliefs and concepts underlying the activities".

The knowledge related to the field of language teaching and learning is never constant. It goes on changing together with the changes in the theories of language learning and emergence of new approaches and methods. So, there is a need of regular opportunities for the teachers to update their knowledge and skills in the field (Adhikari, 2009, p.10). TPD is regarded as an essential component in maintaining in advancing individual personal and professional activities. It is the key factor to being a positive effect on the educational products. Personal experiences, self-reflection and interaction with colleagues in the institutions are the major tools for TPD. Thus, in most schools and institutions today, language teachers are expected to keep up to date with development in the field, to regularly review and evaluate their teaching skills and to take on new teaching assignments according to the changing needs of the institutions for professional development of teachers. Emphasizing the need and important of updating oneself in the teaching profession, Khaniya (2006, p.9) states:

People who don't update themselves find it difficult to cope with the emerging situation because every discipline is prone to change and if changes are not kept abreast people working in that field will be left for behind. For this purpose, people involved in it should be allowed to work for its development, advancement and continuous improvement.

Similarly, Ur (1996) focuses on teachers' active role for the professional development of his/her own and Ur (2002) says that a teacher should be advance in professional expertise and knowledge throughout his/her career and such advances do not depend on formal course or external input. Thus, teachers need to see how idea connects across fields and to everyday life.

In summary, professional development focuses especially on how teachers construct their identities in ongoing interaction with learners, by reflecting on their action in the classroom and adopting them to meet the learners expressed or implicit learning needs. It is an extensive and collaborative process: upon completion, an evaluation of progress is usually performed. Thus, the professional development of teacher is a key factor in ensuring that reforms at any level are effective, successful, professional development opportunities for teachers who have a high positive effect on students' performance and learning.

2.1.2 Teacher Learning

Teacher education or learning is another crucial element in the teacher professional development. Teachers' development is the function of teacher education through formal and non-formal education from which they are developed as teacher and promoted from one state of teacher to another most probably in higher state in quality. With teacher development, it is considered that they develop or increase professionalism in their profession. In this regard, the quality of change brought in teachers depends upon the depth of internalizing the responsibilities by means of teacher education program. The knowledge and skills developed from training, workshop, seminar and conference change attitude of the teachers and they start behaving differently as a knowledgeable and skilled person do and finally it becomes habitual.

Teacher learning is a continuous and an essential process of teacher development. Teachers are not born, they are made by training. Everybody becomes teacher but becoming a professional teacher is time consuming, attitude developing and putting hard effort continually in the right direction with knowledge and skillful manner. Teacher professional development is the consequence of teacher learning and commitments and that teacher learning can be solitary as well as collaborative journey. About the teacher learning, Poudel (2011, p.7) writes "learning in any profession is a lifelong process." Similarly, Richards and Farrell (2010, p.6) write "a number of

conceptualization of teacher learning can be found underlying recent and less recent teacher education process and although such conceptualization sometimes overlap and may understood differently by different theoreticians, they can lead to different approaches to teacher education." Teacher leaning, by them, has been conceptualized as follows:

-) Teacher learning as skill learning
-) Teacher learning as a cognitive process
-) Teacher learning as reflective process

Teacher learning is regarded as an umbrella term which includes self-directed learning and collaborative learning which are as follows:

2.1.2.1 Self-directed Learning

ELT teachers should be able to satisfy the expectations of regularly increasing number of students by using up to date teaching methodology with full of dedication and enthusiasm. To achieve this purpose, they should be concerned with recent knowledge and comprehend many factors and variable that control and govern the learning and teaching in the classroom context. It is known as ELT teachers get involved in many professional development activities for ongoing professional development and build up their own self-development strategies either individually or collaboratively.

Self-directed learning (SDL) supports home schooling, experiential education, open schooling and lifelong learning. Keeping a journal, setting goals, planning and taking action are the key tools and self-improvement, personal development and the development of character are central theme of self-directed learning. In SDL, the individual takes the initiative and the responsibilities for what occurs. Individual select manage and assess their own learning activities, which can be pursued at any time, in any place, through any means, at any age. In schools, teachers can work toward SDL a stage at a time. Teaching emphasizes SDL skills processes and systems rather than content

coverage and tests. For the individual self-directed learning involves initiating personal challenge activities and developing the personal qualities to pursue them successfully.

Similarly, Richards and Farrell (2010, p.13) express their view about self-directed learning for their professional development in the following way:

An important direction in teacher development in recent years has been a movement away from 'outsider' approaches to 'insider' ones. The former are often based on expert knowledge as well as general theories and principles that teachers apply to their own situations; the latter are locally based approaches that encourage teachers to explore their own contexts; and understanding of what takes place in their classrooms.

According to them, the central processes to self-directed learning are as follows:

-) Inquiry
-) Self-appraisal Experience
-) Personal construction
-) Contextual learning
-) Planning and managing

So, the reasons for the shift toward self-directed approaches to teacher development are a move from an authoritarian organizational structure in schools towards more democratic and participatory forms of teacher development. It further recognizes the power of experimental and action based learning.

2.1.2.2 Collaborative Learning

Professional development is basically solitary journey; however almost all teachers need assistance and support during that journey from colleagues or seniors (supervisors or experts) to enhance their own situation. Collaborative learning to language education is not only limited to students' learning, it is one of the most valuable tools of professional development of the language teacher too. Collaboration is viewed as the process that facilitates teacher development, helps to generate knowledge and understanding and serves to develop collegiality. In collaborative learning process, to show its importance Richards and Farrell (2010,p. 12) opine

Although most teacher development can occur through teachers' own personal initiative, collaboration with others both enhances individual learning and serves the collective goals of institution. Most successful organizations depend on people working effectively together in team, but special effort often has to be made to develop team work in school because teaching is generally seen as an individual activity. The goals of collegial form of professional development are encouraged greater interaction between teachers' peer-based learning through mentoring and sharing skills, experience and solution to common problems.

Collaborative teacher development is the vital option in the professional development repertoire. If teachers collaborate they can share their success, failure, achievements and experiences concerned with their profession. Specially, for a language teacher collaborative learning is one of the convenient way of recharging in self. Collegiality is a basis for long term career learning which offer an enormous potential for professional growth. Head and Taylor (1997, p.96) focus this type of learning and opine, "Group of teachers have

found that by meeting together they can help each other to improve their English. By identifying their own agenda for self improvement, these teachers are engaging in teacher development." Thus, collaboration is the core process in teacher learning process.

2.1.3 Strategies for Teachers' Professional Development

The teachers involve in different activities for their professional betterment. There is not a way for professional development. There are different types of tools for them but utilization by them depends on their socio-cultural environment, availability of resource, technological advancement and so on. There are wide variety of methods, procedures and options adopted by teachers according to their convenience. Here, our concern is in-service teacher professional development. The rich variety of models indicates that teachers can keep on learning in many different ways. Richards and Farrell (2010) present the following activities for teacher development.

Table No.1
Activities for Teacher Development

Individual	One to one	Group based	Institutional
-self monitoring	-peer coaching	-case studies	-workshops
-journal writing	-peer observation	-action research	-action research
-critical incident	-critical friendship	-journal writing	-teacher support
-teaching	-action research	-teacher support	group
portfolios	-critical incident	group	
-action research	-team teaching		

These different activities can be planned and carried out by the teacher individually or by maintaining the collaborative relationship with the colleagues as directed and supported by the institution. Richards and Farrell

(2010) further mention eleven different strategies that facilitate English language teachers' professional development. They are workshops, self-monitoring, journal writing, and classroom observation, teaching portfolios, teacher support group, analyzing critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching and action research.

Collaborative learning as 'teacher support group' refers to collaboration of two or more teachers to achieve individual or collective goals which provides opportunities for teachers to validate their knowledge. Teacher support group is a good and safe place to collaborate on curriculum development, material development, planning lessons, reviewing researching and making classroom observation. In a support group, teachers get to know their colleagues better and begin to function as a community of professional rather than as individual working in isolation from each other.

2.1.3.1 Teacher Support Group

Teaching profession by nature demands hard work, investment of time in planning lesson, assessment, and making decision about curriculum and instruction. Teachers also need to face different critical situations like handling behavior of the students, classroom management work load, school norms and other professional demands. Due to these causes and lack of prior teaching experience, there is a great chance that novice teachers often feel isolated from there more experienced colleagues lack of qualified mentor in their school, struggle with the limited time that they are allotted and are frustrated by the lack of resources needed to run a class smoothly. In this circumstances teachers support groups prove to be a powerful instrument to prevent the teachers from the professional isolation and provide strong emotional as well as psychological support. When novice teachers are confused regarding their roles, responsibilities routines and costumes of their new school environment, the successful teachers support groups support their early career and encourage them to face various possible challenges to emerge in teaching with the

responsibilities and pressures that come with the profession. It involves a group of teachers meeting to discuss goals, concerns, problems and experiences.

A teacher support group refers to a group of teacher meeting together to discuss and share the ideas and resources to make their professional development. It offers a forum where teachers can discuss issues that are important to them, while at the same time getting support, advice and help from others in a non-threatening environment. Support groups are referred by other names such as study groups, teachers' network and learning cycles. 'A teacher support group can be defined as two or more teachers collaborating to achieve their individual or shared goals or both on the assumption that working with a group is usually more effective than working on one's own' (Richards and Farrell,2010). Further, according to them the group provides a safe place where teachers can take part in such activities as collaborating on curriculum and materials development, and review, plan, and carry out activities such as peer coaching, team teaching, action research, and classroom observation.

Teacher support group is a great way to grow professionally. As a teacher, an individual fulfills a number of roles for his/her students both intellectually and socially. In addition to learning about different teaching techniques, support group can help a teacher deal with the responsibilities and pressures that come with the profession.

(<http://www.all4ed.org/publications/Teacher Attrition.pdf>)

The group focuses entirely on learning teaching strategies through education, practice, feedback and coaching. The teacher support group responds to the professional needs and interests of teachers, by offering a range of person consultation services, customized training and professional development opportunities, and help with individual and joint research activities.

TSG helps teachers in engaging in problem solving around daily dilemmas that occur in their classrooms and then applying the new ideas and suggestions. Likewise, Liberman and Grolnick (1998) say teacher support group play a major role in providing opportunities to validate teacher knowledge and teacher inquiry (as cited in Richard and Farrell 2010, p.51). Teacher support group provides collaborative opportunities for critical inquiry. It creates learning communities in a safe and supportive environment. Teachers are encouraged to ask questions, identify issues, search out evidences, interpret and evaluate arguments, and come to the conclusions about their teaching practices. The new teachers are able to engage in critical self reflection in a non evaluative setting and tap the collective knowledge of their peers. It offers a rich pool of skill, knowledge and resources to the in-service teachers and they understand and adapt to the changing needs of them based on demands of new research, emerging technologies. Thus, teacher support group is safe and non-judgmental place for teachers to meet new teachers, engage in professional development, to share ideas about teaching and to discuss related to their practice and to learn new skills, strategies and coping mechanisms to use in the classroom. It also helps teachers in engaging in problem solving around daily dilemmas that occur in their classrooms and then applying the new ideas and suggestions provided by their colleagues to better meet the need of the students.

A support group is a voluntary activity and does not include all teachers, it is not appropriate forum to discuss or resolve matters that affect the whole school. However, a group might generate issues that could become the focus of staff meeting. In this regard, (Birchak et al., 1998 (as cited in Richards and Farrell, 2010) state "A support group, however, is not a staff meeting or an in-service activity such as a workshop. It should not become just another opportunity to discuss school problems and policies and personnel or administrative matters".

In a nutshell, teacher support group can help develop a culture of collaboration in an institution and enable teachers with different levels of training and experience to learn from one another and work together to explore issues and

resolve problems. It can be safe and supporting environment where dilemmas of teaching practices can be discussed and such an environment can help reduce their sense of isolation and provide an alternative or additional form of professional mentorship. By meeting as a group, teachers can support each other professionally. Support groups are motivating and allow teachers to reflect on their approach to teaching and take ideas back into the classroom.

2.1.3.2 Types of Teacher Support Groups

Teaching is a multifaceted career where teachers are responsible for creating education plans, delivering lessons to students, fulfilling local and federal educational requirements, achieving school administrator goals, communicating with parents and their own professional development. The great thing is that teachers do not just get one solution, s/he gets diversity and s/he can select which would work best for his/her classroom situation. In this situation colleagues usually working in the same geographical area meet together to discuss any issues and problems which may arise in the course of their teaching.

Many different types of groups are possible, depending on the goals and membership of the group. Teacher support groups can be formed in various ways. Birchak et al., (1998); Kirk and Walter, (1981), (as cited in Richards and Farrell, 2010) suggest some of them as follows

a. Topic-based groups

A group is formed to discuss a specific topic of interest, such as teaching intermediate ESL writing, teaching young learners, carrying out action research, or the group might be a response of current issues or concern in education such as the standard movements

b. School- based groups

School-based groups are composed of different kinds of educators from within a school, such as teachers, teaching assistants, librarians, multimedia lab technicians, and supervisors, and focus on concerns in which they all have a common interest.

c. Job-alike groups

A group is said to be a job-alike group which can be set up according to membership principles and the group meets to discuss issues related to the specific type of teaching that they do.

d. Reading group

Reading groups can be set up to read and discuss professional books and articles and to gain insights that can be applied in the group members' own classrooms.

e. Writing groups

A group can focus on preparing articles for teachers' magazines and professional publications. Basically, this group focuses on writing and preparing articles for the journals related to teacher and teaching learning process.

f. Research groups

Research groups consist of teachers who are researching topics of mutual interest. The group decides on an issue to investigate, collects data on the issue, and meets regularly to share and discuss findings.

g. Virtual groups

Virtual groups consist of language teachers who communicate and interact on the internet such as TESL-L, a discussion group for English as a second language or foreign language teachers.

Teacher support groups can function not only within the school but may encompass several schools or school districts as well as other organizations. The process of forming a teacher support group will depend on the goals of the group. Nevertheless, certain issues must be taken into consideration when planning a support group. These are group membership, group size, group organization, group goals, group time, group meeting place, and troubleshooting.

2.1.3.3 Benefits of Teacher Support Groups

One of the most important skills needed for new teachers is the ability to reflect upon their instructional strategies, practices and interaction with students and colleagues. Teacher reflection in a collaborative environment is helpful to enhance professional development and planning. Teachers gain insights from sharing their knowledge and experiences with one another. This process helps many teachers confirm and sharpen their practices. Teacher support group is about teachers coming together, sharing the problems that they experience in the classroom, carrying the ideas from one another and going back to implement or correct what they think they are not doing properly. It can happen within the schools and it benefits teachers a lot.

When teachers join a group they are to some extent empowered because, as an individual a teacher may be constrained by his/her rank within the institution's staff hierarchy. A teacher might feel uncomfortable raising difficulties encountered with a course that has been developed by a course co-coordinator. In a group, however, a nonhierarchical structure operates and rank is put aside. If the members of a group do not put aside their rank, the group cannot develop

as a whole and will not function effectively. James (1996, p.94 as cited in Richards and Farrell, 2010)."The person, using the group solidarity to support others and to be supported then becomes empowered to act productively elsewhere".

According to Richards and Farrell (2010, p.52), the following are the benefits that teachers get from the teacher support groups:

- i. Teachers can become more aware of the complex issues involved in language teaching by sharing what they have experienced with colleagues in a group
- ii. As a part of a group a teacher might become more motivated to participate in other professional development projects outside the support group such as making presentations and seminars and conferences.
- iii. Membership in a teacher support group can lead to more effective and innovative changes in teaching because of sharing and critiquing of various individual members' approaches and methods.
- iv. Often the group will focus on issues related to learners and learning, resulting in obvious benefits to learners.
- v. For the most part, teachers work alone in their classrooms participation in a teacher support group can help to overcome this isolation and foster sharing attitudes among teachers.
- vi. Teachers may find that they become more confident in themselves and their work as a result of belonging to a group.
- vii. Teacher support groups are for teachers and are managed by teachers. They draw on the expertise and experiencing of practicing teachers who want to share their experiences with their peers.

Thus, teacher support groups can help develop a culture of collaboration in an institution and enable teachers with different levels of training and experience

to learn from one another and work together to explore issues and resolve problems.

2.2 Review of the Empirical Literature

As a researcher, I observed the fundamental background of the related subject and other past studies. Some research studies and studies related to my research studies are reviewed as following:

Adhikari (2009) carried out research entitled "Attitudes of English Language Teachers towards Collaborative Learning for their Professional Development", in order to identify the attitudes of English Language Teachers towards collaborative learning and the environment available for them in learning and practicing collaboratively. Her population of the study was purposively selected and she provided them a set of questionnaire. She found out that most of teachers hold positive attitudes towards collaborative learning for their professional development but they are deprived of appropriate environment.

Bhatta (2009) carried out the research works entitled "Observation and Feedback for Teachers' Professional Development". The main objective of the study was to find out whether secondary level English language teachers in Nepal are involved in classroom observation and feedback to develop professionalism. He also used non-judgmental random sampling and he used observation as research tool. The finding showed a very few of the secondary level English teachers being involved in classroom observation. The reason for this was the fear of being criticize and commented negatively by having their weaknesses exposed.

Joshi (2010) carried out a research work entitled "Learning Strategies of English Language Teachers for their Professional Development" with an objective to find out the learning strategies of teacher teaching in the college of Kathmandu valley. Population of the study was randomly sampled from the forty college of Kathmandu valley. From the study, she found out that

strategies like self monitoring, workshops, seminar, conference and team teaching were more beneficial than the strategies like portfolios, reflective logs, refreshers and monitoring.

Richards and Farrell (2010) in their book entitled "Professional Development for Language Teachers", explore and lists the following eleven different strategies that can be used to facilitate teachers' professional development: workshop, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, keeping a teaching journal, peer observation, teaching portfolios, analyzing critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching and action research, along with the concept of teacher learning.

Dhakai (2012) carried out a research work entitled "Existence and Need of Mentoring for Professional Development of Teachers". The main objectives of her study were to identify the existence and need of mentoring for teachers' professional development. For this, she purposively selected teachers from forty schools of Morang district and she provided questionnaires and the finding showed that, though, there is no formal institution for mentoring, most of the teachers were aware of the effective role of mentoring in their profession.

Poudel (2012) carried out a research entitled "Practice of Seminars, Workshops and Conferences in Teacher Development". He purposively sampled the population from Kathmandu valley and provided questionnaires for forty teachers. The main objective of his study is to find out the English Language Teachers perceptions towards professional workshops, seminars and conferences. The finding showed that almost all the teachers had positive perception on workshops, seminars and conferences for both teacher professional development and improving classroom practice.

From the above mentioned reviewed researches, it can be concluded that the very effective teachers learning tools are not used in the context of Nepali

English language teacher development. Though a few researches have been conducted on teachers' professional development and teacher education in general, no research has been conducted on teacher support group in particular in the Department of English Education, T.U. I believe that TSG has crucial role in teacher learning and teachers' professional development in our context and I also believe that this study will be helpful for all the concerned people to get information on TSG for professional development.

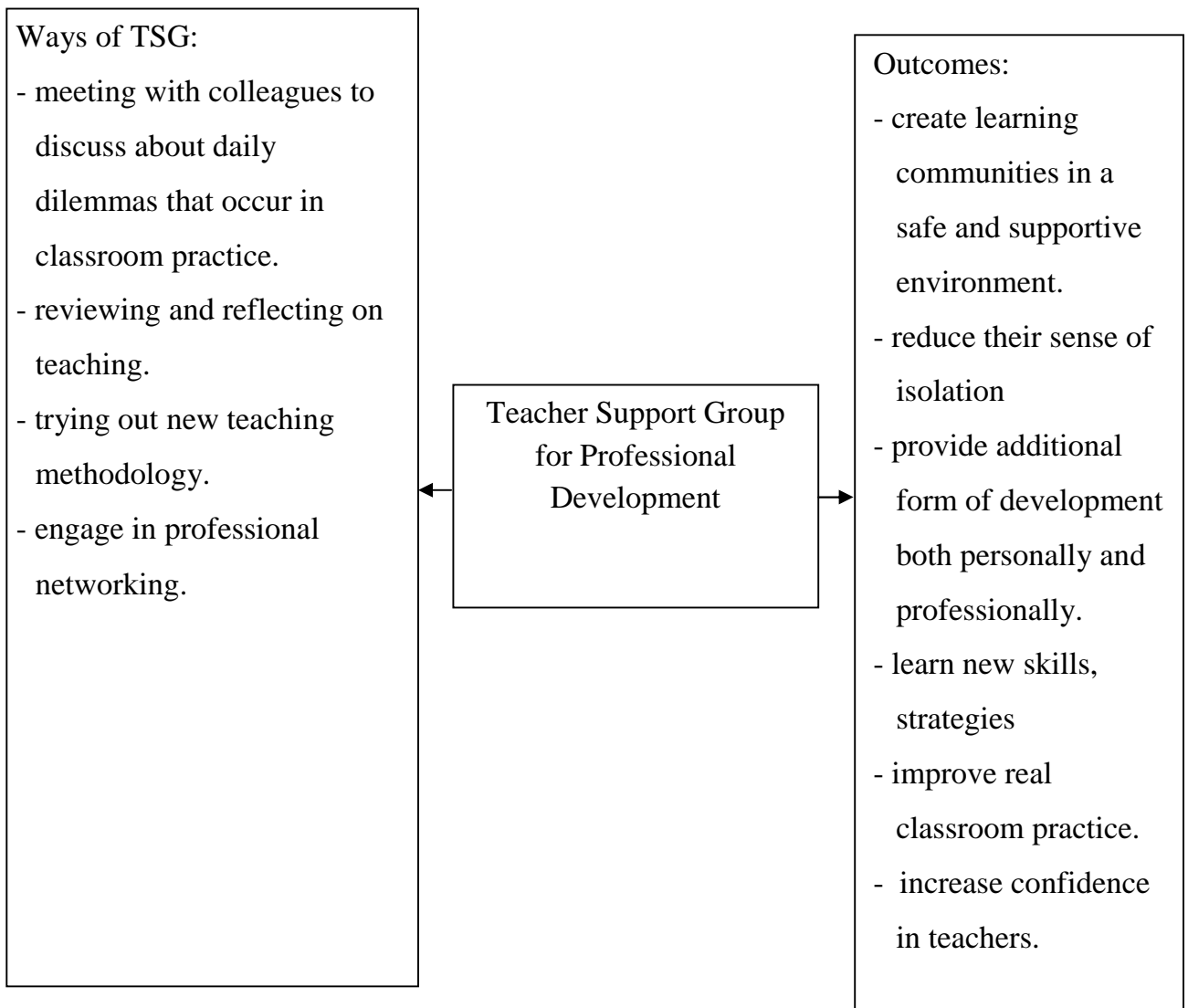
2.3 Implications of the Review for the Study

The practice of teacher professional development is quite new in Nepal. Only a few researches have been conducted under this area, but this is not true case in international scenario. My review works were very much helpful for my study. The reviewed works helped me to broaden the horizon of my knowledge of research problem. While reviewing the related literature we can get some genuine ideas and concepts on the basis of which we can develop a conceptual framework of research. Dealing with the past documents can enable us to contextualize our findings in relation to the existing body of our knowledge. They provided me with theoretical background for my study which helps to develop my theoretical ideas and to broaden my knowledge related to TSG, TPD, and so on. In a nutshell, they helped to form the foundation of my study with greater significance.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

This present study aims at revealing the perceptions of English language teachers on TSG for their professional development in the context of Nepal.

The conceptual framework of the study can be presented as follows:



CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

I adopted the following methodologies for this research work:

3.1 Design of the Study

Survey research is one of the most important areas of measurement in applied social research. The broad area of survey research encompasses any measurement procedures that involve asking questions of respondents. A 'survey' can be anything from paper-and-pencil feedback form to an intensive one-to-one in-depth interview. It can be carried out either by a group of researchers or by an individual. It mainly depends upon the nature of study. It is often used to assess thoughts, opinions and feelings. It can be specific and limited, or it can have more global, widespread goals.

A survey consists of pre-determined question that is given to a sample with a representative sample that is, one that is representative of the larger population of interest, one can describe the attitudes of the population from which the sample was drawn. Further, one can compare the attitudes of different populations as well as look for changes in attitudes over time. A good sample selection is key as it allows one to generalize the findings from the sample to the population, which is the whole purpose of survey research.

In survey research, the researcher selects sample of respondents from a population and administers a standardized questionnaire to them. The questionnaire can be a written document that is completed by the person being surveyed, an online questionnaire, a face to face interview, or a telephone interview. Using surveys, it is possible to collect data from large or small population. According to Nunan (2010, p.141), the following are the procedures of survey research:

- Step-1: Define Objective
- Step-2: Identify target population
- Step-3: Literature Review
- Step-4: Determine Sample
- Step-5: Identify Survey instruments
- Step-6: Design Survey Procedures
- Step-7: Identify Analytical Procedures
- Step-8: Determine reporting procedure

3.2 Population and Sample

All English language teachers of secondary level in the Kathmandu valley were the population of my study. Forty English language teachers from 40 different schools who were teaching in secondary level of the Kathmandu valley were the sample for the study.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

I used purposive sampling procedure i.e. non random judgmental sampling procedure. The total population was 40 secondary level English language teachers from 40 different schools of the Kathmandu valley.

3.4 Data Collection Tools

The main tool for data collection was a set of questionnaire. Both open-ended and close-ended questions were used to collect data for the study.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

In order to collect data for the research study, first I prepared the questionnaire then; I visited the purposively selected schools to seek permission from the authority to talk about my intention of visiting school. After that, I consulted English teachers and established rapport with them and I explained the purpose of my research study to them and what they were supposed to do. Finally, I

distributed the questionnaire to the teachers and requested them to answer the questions and return on time.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

The systematically collected data were discussed, analyzed, interpreted, and presented descriptively using appropriate statistical tools as percentage, mode with tables and illustrations. The detail analysis of the data and findings are presented in next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

On the basis of discussion of the data, the following results have been extracted which are presented below:

1. Majority of teachers (75%) had the concept of teachers' professional tools whereas they are not using effective teacher learning tools. Some of them (25%) had got confusion about teaching learning tools in the classroom and teachers' professional development tools.
2. Majority of teachers (87.5%) had the concept of teacher support group that they took it positively whereas some the teachers (12.5%) had got confusion in it.
3. Most of the teachers (85%) had positive perception on collaborative learning. Seventy five percent of them collaborate one another related to individual students, effective lesson planning, teaching materials and so on. Almost all (95%) experienced teachers help to their novice colleagues.
4. Although there is no formal system of TSG, majority of teachers (80%) shared ideas, problems, and experience to one another to run their class smoothly through regular meeting.
5. Majority of teachers (75%) perceived that TSG is important to every teacher to grow professionally because of its benefits, motivating in nature, engaging teachers in problem solving and so on.
6. Similarly, most of the teachers (52.5%) of them got opportunities to share their ideas, problems and experiences for their professional growth.

7. Regarding the learned skills from teacher education programme, the teachers had expressed that it is difficult to implement learned skills in classroom practice.
8. Similarly, regarding the teachers' view on problem of implementation of learned skills the teachers have provided several reasons like teachers' carelessness, the gap between programme setting and classroom setting, programmes not being need oriented, lack of institutional support, lack of materials and physical facilities, classroom complexities etc.
9. Although there is no formal system of teacher support group, most of the teachers (57.5%) learned from one another in collaborative environment through regular meeting. They shared problems and experience related to teaching learning activities and majority of teachers (42.5%) were keenly interested to meet new teachers, engage in professional networking. They also wanted to share ideas about teaching, discuss issues related to their classroom practice.

4.2 Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher mainly discusses the results of the data collected from the primary sources. The detailed analysis is presented along the following lines.

4.2.1 Teachers' Perception on Teacher Support Group (TSG)

Before analyzing the teachers' perception on TSG, The researcher has tried to obtain the information about teachers' views of teacher professional tools that Nepali English Teachers employ for their professional development.

The information about the teachers' perception on collaborative learning in teacher education has also been extracted from the teachers because collaboration is the foundation of Teacher Support Group.

4.2.2 Teachers' View on Teacher Development Tools

To obtain the information about teachers' professional development tools, the question, "In your view, what are the common tools that Nepali English language teachers use for their professional development?" was asked to the teachers. While analyzing the responses, most of the teachers had mentioned that only teachers training peer observation, NELTA conferences are mostly used tools. About this question, one of the respondents mentioned, "Many of them are out of access to any tools. Some of them simply ignore though they have access. Those who are aware they use journal, textbook, internet, teachers guide, training etc. to update themselves." Similarly, another participant mentioned "Generally, Nepali English language teachers run away from the programmes of their professional development. Only some teachers are aware of and interested in them. They use mainly training (pre-service and refreshment).A small number of them had the access in collaborative learning strategies such as seminar, conference, peer observation, action research etc."

From these two views of two different teachers, professional development practice of teachers by using effective tools cannot be satisfactory. It was also found that some of the teachers have got confusion on teaching learning tools in the classroom and teachers' professional development tools.

4.2.3 Teachers' View on Collaborative Learning

Collaborative Learning is one of the convenient ways of recharging oneself. It is the crucial option in the field of teachers' professional growth. If teachers collaborate they can share their success, failure, achievement and experience concerned with their profession. By understanding this fact, the agreement and disagreement of Secondary Level English language teachers have been extracted asking specifically (1, 23, 24, 25).The result is presented in the following table:

Table No. 2**Teachers' Views on Collaborative Learning**

S N	Statements	Responses							
		Strongly Agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1.	Working in groups rather than individual is more effective in teacher learning	12	30%	20	50%	8	20%	-	-
2.	Collaborative learning is one of the most valuable tools for teacher development	32	80%	6	15%	2	5%	-	-
3.	Collaboration is the core process in teacher learning	15	37.5%	21	52.5%	4	10%	-	-
4.	Collaborative learning is based on the principle "Two heads are always better than one"	29	72.5%	9	22.5%	2	5%	-	-

According to the above table, out of forty teachers none of them disagreed with the statement No.1 "working in groups rather than individual is more effective in teacher learning", thirty percent of them Agreed, fifty percent of them strongly agreed, and twenty percent of them partially agreed.

Summarizing the data found, it is clear that working in group can be one of the effective way of teacher learning.

Similarly, while analyzing the second statement, “Collaborative learning is one of the most valuable tools for professional development.” Most of the respondents (80%) strongly agreed; fifteen percent of them agreed, five percent of them partially agreed and none of them disagreed.

Likewise, while analyzing another statement, “Collaboration is the core process on teacher learning.” None of them disagreed to the statement, some of them (10%) partially agreed, most of them (52.5%) agreed and (37.5) % of them strongly agreed.

Similarly while analyzing the statement, “Collaborative learning is based on the principle ‘two heads are always better than one’”. (72.5) percent of the teachers were strongly agreed, and (22.5) percent of them agreed with the statement. Similarly, (5) percent of them were partially agreed whereas none of them disagreed with the statement.

These data showed that almost all teachers had positive views on collaborative learning for professional development as well as helpful for improving classroom practice.

Further to elicit the information about their views towards collaborative learning the question, “Are you interested in sharing problems with your colleagues? If yes, what sort of problems do you prefer to share?” was asked to them. In response to this question, all the teachers replied that they are keenly interested in sharing the problems with their colleagues. One of the respondents stated that, “Yes ,sometimes and some of them are related to the individual students, their cultural, behavioral psychology term etc.” similarly, another respondent mentioned, “yes, mainly about classroom management, effective lesson plans, teaching materials as well about the weak students.”

From the above mentioned two views of two participants, it can be said that the teachers are keenly interested to share the problems with their colleagues. They usually like to share the problems related to teaching learning activities,

effective lesson planning, use of instructional materials, weak students, and students' psychological and cultural effect in language learning and so on.

4.2.4 Teachers' Opinion on the Role of Teacher Support Group (TSG)

The responses are extracted about teachers' opinion on the role of TSG on the basis of three different statements.

Table No. 3

Teachers' Opinion on the Role of TSG

S.N.	Statements	Responses							
		Strongly agree		Agree		Partially Agree		Disagree	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	TSG can improve a number of different professional activities that are negotiated between colleagues.	25	62.5%	9	22.5%	6	15%	-	-
2	Teachers can learn from their colleagues.	17	42.5%	16	40%	5	12.5%	2	5%
3	TSG has an effective role in teachers' professional development	19	47.5%	15	37.5%	5	12.5%	1	2.5%
4	Teachers can learn from his own teaching experience.	-	-	4	10%	5	12.5%	31	77.5%

From the data presented in the above table, it is clear that none of the teachers disagreed and fifteen percent of them partially agreed with the statement, "TSG

can improve a number of different professional activities that are negotiated between colleagues.” In the same way, the majority of them (62.5%) Strongly agreed and (22.5) percent of them agreed.

Regarding the statement No. 2, 42.5 percent of them strongly agreed that teachers can learn from their colleagues. Similarly forty percent of them agreed and 12.5 percent of them partially agreed whereas five percent of them disagreed and none of them strongly disagreed.

Likewise, regarding statement No. 3, 47.5 percent of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that TSG has an effective role on TPD. Similarly, 37.5 percent of them agreed and 12.5 percent of them partially agreed with the statement. And only one (2.5%) of them disagreed and none of them strongly disagreed.

Regarding the statement No. 4, most of the teachers (77.5%) disagreed with the statement that teacher can learn from his/ her own teaching experience. 12.5 percent of them partially agreed and some of them agreed (10%) whereas none of them strongly agreed with the statement.

While analyzing responses about the above mentioned three contrasting statements, it can be said that having lots of benefits for teachers, TSG is very much useful for teachers for their personal and professional development.

Teachers’ opinion on the role of TSG has also been explored from the respondents. To elicit the information about it, the question, “Do the Nepalese English language teachers take TSG positively?” was asked to them. In response to this question most of the teachers (87.5%) replied that the teachers take TSG positively whereas some of the teachers (12.5%) have no idea about TSG. Further one of the respondent mentioned, “They must take it positively as it enhances their skills and makes them competent dynamic, resourceful, energetic and action oriented.” Similarly, another respondent mentioned, “yes they take TSG positively because it helps to develop their professional skill

more effectively and it updates them about new technologies of teaching and learning activities.”

Further the question’ “Do you think TSG is gateway to grow professionally? Why? Elaborate your view.” was asked to them. All of them agreed with the statement. Further, majority of them mentioned similar responses. One of the respondents mentioned, “I think we can solve various problems regarding course content, teaching techniques, and we can generate different noble ideas TSG so it can be effective to grow us professionally.” Similarly, another respondent mentioned, “Yes to large extent as it allows sharing of individual teaching related problems and mutual and collaborative solution to them and it provides exposure, etc.”

From the above mentioned two views of two participants, it can be said that the Nepalese English language teachers take TSG positively and it is a gateway to grow professionally because of its benefits .It is helpful to solve various types of teachers’ problems regarding course content, teaching techniques, evaluation system, and so on. It is also a place for sharing problems and ideas to one another to overcome the problems related to teaching and learning.

4.2.5 Teachers’ opinion on importance of TSG for TPD

TSG has an effective role for TPD so it is important for every professional teacher. The data has been presented on the basis of five contrasting statements.

Table No. 4

Importance of TSG for TPD

S.N	Statements	Responses							
		Strongly agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Many effective benefits can be derived from an effective TSG	13	32.5 %	22	55%	5	12.5 %	-	-
2.	TSG helps teachers in problem solving around daily dilemmas that occur in their classroom and then applying the new ideas and suggestions provided by their colleagues to better meet the need of the students.	9	22.5 %	26	63%	4	12%	1	2.5 %
3.	TSG is a gateway to grow professionally.	21	52.5 %	13	32.5 %	6	15%	-	-
4.	TSG are motivating and allow teachers to reflect on their approach to teaching and ideas back into the classroom.	10	25%	27	67.5 %	3	7.5 %	-	-
5.	TSG is needed for every teacher to develop personally and professionally.	25	62.5 %	13	32.5 %	2	5%		

According to the above table, out of forty teachers none of them disagreed with the statement No.1, 32.5 percent of them strongly agreed and 12.5 percent of them partially agreed. In the same way, the majority of them (55%) agreed with the statement that many benefits can be derived from an effective TSG.

Regarding the statement No.2 –22.5 percent of them strongly agreed that TSG helps teachers in engaging problem solving around daily dilemmas that occur in their classroom and then applying the ideas and suggestions provided by their colleagues to better meet the need of the students. Similarly 63 percent of them agreed and 12 percent of them partially agreed whereas one of the teachers (2.5%) disagreed.

Likewise, regarding statement No. 3, 52.5 percent of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that TSG is a gateway to grow professionally. Similarly, 32.5 percent of them agreed and fifteen percent of them partially agreed. And none of the teachers disagreed with the statement.

While analyzing the responses of statement No.4, most of the teachers (67.5%) agreed with the statement and twenty five percent of them strongly agreed with the view that TSGs are motivating and allow teachers to reflect on their approach to teaching and ideas back in to the classroom. Similarly 7.5 percent of them partially agreed and none of them disagreed.

Similarly, while analyzing the statement, “TSG is needed for every teacher to grow personally and professionally.” Only five percent of them partially agreed. Most of the teachers (62.5%) strongly agreed and (32.5%) agreed with the statement.

Teachers’ opinion on importance of TSG for TPD has also been explored from the respondents. To elicit the information about it, the question “Do you think TSG is necessary for professional development of teachers? Why? Elaborate your view” was asked to them. In response to this all of the teachers agreed to this question. Further one of the respondents mentioned that, “Yes teachers get

opportunities to share their problems related with their profession to their colleagues. Teachers develop the collaborative learning practice in groups.” Similarly, another respondent stated that, “I think so. As we know due to physical and cultural diversity, there are many academic problems, hearing resources and sources such as books, journal, newspapers, and libraries are lacking. Therefore provision of TSG can be proved/ justified.”

While analyzing the above mentioned data, it can be said that TSG plays crucial role in teachers’ professional development. Their needs and problems are collected and everybody involves in interaction to find practical solutions of the problems as well as they can generate innovation. It is also a procedure where participants get chance to reflect on their experience and problems.

4.2.6 Opportunity Gained by the Teachers to Develop them Professionally Through Collaborative Learning

The opportunity gained by the teachers to develop them professionally through collaborative learning has been presented on the basis of five contrasting statements.

Table No. 5**Opportunity Gained by the Teachers to Develop them Professionally**

S.N	Statements	Responses							
		Always		Frequently		Rarely		Never	
		No.	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Teachers are provided with sufficient time to plan and learn collaboratively to develop professionally.	12	30%	21	52.5%	7	17.5%	-	-
2	If there is any problem, I will consult with my colleagues.	16	40%	19	47.5%	5	12.5%	-	-
3	I have offered help when the novice teachers feel difficulties.	27	67.5%	5	12.5%	6	15%	2	5%
4	I am helped by the senior experienced colleagues of my institution when I feel difficult to deal with the problems.	25	62.5%	11	27.5%	4	10%	-	-

According to the above table, out of forty teachers none of them ever provided with sufficient time to plan and learn collaboratively in their institution to develop them professionally. Thirty percent of them had always provided with sufficient time to plan and learn collaboratively and 52.5 percent of them had frequently provided with sufficient time to plan and learn collaboratively whereas seven percent of them has rarely provided with sufficient time to plan and learn collaboratively.

Similarly, while analyzing second statement, forty percent of the teachers has always consult with their colleagues, 47.5 percent of them had frequently

consult with their colleagues and twelve percent of them has rarely consult with their colleagues.

Likewise, while analyzing the third statement, 'I have offered help when the novice teachers feel difficulties.' Only two of them (5%) have never offered help and fifteen percent of them have rarely offered help to their novice colleagues. Most of the teachers (67.5%) have always offered help to their novice colleagues and 12.5 percent of them have frequently offered help to their novice colleagues.

While analyzing the fourth statement 'I am helped by the senior experienced colleagues in my institution when you feel difficult to deal with the problems.' Most of them (62.5%) were always helped by their senior experienced colleagues; 27.5 percent of them were frequently helped; ten percent of them were rarely helped and none of them have never been helped by their senior experienced colleagues.

Opportunity gained by the teachers to develop them professionally has also been explored from the respondents. To elicit the information about it, the question, 'Does your institution encourage you in sharing ideas and learning with your colleagues? If yes, in what ways?' was asked to them. In response to the question, all the teachers replied that their institution encourage them to share ideas and learning with their colleagues. One of the respondents mentioned, "Yes my institution does. We do have HOD of English; if the problem arises we consult. We have arranged meeting every Friday. We share knowledge and experience among groups." Likewise another respondent mentioned, "Yes, the institution sometime suggest me to share ideas with colleagues through following ways: Subject teacher meeting Small-scale project work etc"

While analyzing the above mentioned data, it can be said that teachers got opportunities to share experience, problems and information, development of

self confidence, to grow oneself as professional teacher, opportunity to update etc. They gain insight from sharing their knowledge and experience with one another.

New teachers often feel isolated from their more experienced colleagues, lack of quality mentors in their schools, struggle with the limited planning time that they are allotted, and are frustrated by the lack of resources needed to run class smoothly. One of the most important skills needed for teachers is the ability to reflect upon their instructional strategies practices and interactions with students and colleagues. Teacher reflection in a collaborative environment is useful to enhance professional development and planning.

4.2.7 Practice of TSG in Nepalese Context

TSG is a safe, non-judgmental place to discuss issues related to classroom practice. Teachers can learn new skills, strategies and coping mechanisms to use in the classroom. Though there is no formal system of TSG , teachers are involved in teacher support group informally. They get help from their colleagues and help their colleagues through meeting together. To generate the idea about the practice of TSG among the participants the question, ‘Have you ever participated in TSGs? If yes how many times? If no are you interested to join TSGs? Why?’ was asked to them. The information about the teachers’ participation in TSG is presented below:

Table No. 6

Teachers’ Participation in TSGs

Responses	No. of Teachers	Percentage
Yes	23	57.5%
No	17	42.5%
Total	40	100

According to the above table, out of the forty teachers, 57.5 percent of them have participated in TSGs whereas 42.5 percent of them have not participated in TSGs. I also asked them how many times they had participated in TSGs. The information they provided is presented below:

Table No. 7

Times of Participation

Times	1	2	3	4	5	Many	Total
Number of Teachers	3	2	5	4	6	3	23

According to the above table, out of twenty three teachers three of them have participated in TSGs only one times. Similarly, two of them have participated in TSGs two times, five of them three times, four of them four times and six of them five times whereas, three of them have participated in TSGs many times.

While analyzing the above data, out of forty teachers twenty three of them have participated in TSGs. Those teachers who have not participated are keenly interested in joining the program. Further one of the respondents stated that he was interested to join TSGs because to obtain knowledge for the reflective teaching and teacher can improve quality of education by developing the skills as a reflective teacher and TSGs can enhance their capability and confidence in presenting, discussing, arguing and critiquing skills.

Further, the question, ‘Are there any institutions that formally or informally organize TSG in Nepal?’ was asked to them. Majority of the teachers were not aware of the program. Only some of the teachers were aware of this program.

From the above data we can say that though there are not any institutions that organize teacher support group, teachers informally collaborate one another and get help and advice from one another in their institution. They are encouraged to ask questions, identify issues, search out evidences, and come to

conclusions about their teaching practices. They mainly discuss on the daily dilemmas that arose in their teaching practices.

4.2.8 Implementation of Skills

Always the question of implementation is raised after educating the teachers by means of different education programs like TSGs and so on. There is not the value of attending in professional development events unless the teachers implement the knowledge and skills that they have obtained, in the real practice.

4.2.8.1 Problem of Implementation in the Classroom

There are various factors that hinder the implementation aspect of teacher education programme. In our context TSG is not in practice because of different problems. In spite of this fact, the data has been presented whether teachers face difficulty to implement the knowledge obtained from TSG if it is in practice. Regarding this, the teachers were given options to choose on the statement; ‘It is very difficult to implement the knowledge and skills gained in TSGs.’ the result obtained from the teachers has been presented in the following table:

Table No.8

Difficulty of TSGs in Implementation

Responses	No. of Teachers	Percentage
Strongly agree	12	30%
Agree	15	37.5%
Partially agree	9	22.5%
Disagree	4	10%
Total	40	100

Among the 40 respondents, the collected data revealed that thirty percent of them strongly agreed, 37.5 percent agreed and 22.5 percent of them partially agreed with the statement in the difficulty of implementation after participating the professional event whereas ten percent of the teachers disagreed with the statement. The data showed that, to some extent, most of them have expressed difficulty in implementation of knowledge and skill that is learnt in TSGs.

Why teachers feel difficulty in course of implementation? There are various reasons behind it according to the teachers who provided their responses for this study. First, they have made agreement and disagreement on two statements. Then, they have also mentioned other problems in their own words. The information presented in the following table shows the problems in implementation.

Table No. 9

Problems of Implementation

S.N	Statements	Responses							
		Strongly agree		Agree		Partially agree		Disagree	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Teacher carelessness and negligence.	-	-	4	10	20	50	16	40
2	Cultural differences between TSG setting and school setting.	5	12.5	23	57.5	11	27.5	1	2.5

While analyzing the responses of statement No. 1, ‘the problem of implementation is teachers’ carelessness and negligence’ it was found that none of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. But, ten percent of them agreed and fifty percent of them partially agreed with the statement. Similarly,

forty percent of them disagreed with the statement. This shows that most of the teachers have positive experience to some extent that teachers are not seen very much responsible to the implementation.

The above table displays that 12.5 percent of the teachers strongly agreed with the statement no. 2, 'the problems of implementation are cultural differences between TSG settings and school setting'. In the same way, 57.5 percent of them agreed and 27.5 percent of them partially agreed with the statement. But only one teacher (2.5%) disagreed with the statement. This means that there is cultural gap between TSG setting and school setting and that cause the problem in implementation.

The other problems of implementation have also been explored from the respondents. To elicit the information about it, the question, 'It is said that teachers are not interested in learning though they participate in different teacher education programmes. Why this happens?' was asked to them. In response to them, all the teachers replied that there are some reasons behind it. Before summarization of all the responses, I have quoted some notable responses.

One of the respondents mentioned, "The rate of learning is quite unsatisfactory due to various reasons. The initiation and devotion towards teaching profession is lacking. It is because of immature policy and plan of education, curriculum, book publication and infrastructure and lack of teaching learning materials in the school." Similarly another participant mentioned, "May be true to some extent. The reason might be low level of motivation, declining professional ethics, growing age, dissatisfaction to job, lack of professional growth, low paying, job insecurity, and above all negligence".

From the above mentioned two views of two participants, it can be said that the problems of implementation is seen on teachers' role and responsibility as well

as political influence on educational institutions. And it can also be said that the picture of not supportive condition from the authority inside the school.

The teachers have mentioned several problems that are responsible to implement the knowledge and skills obtained from professional development events. Their responses are summarized and presented below:

-) Not matching the real problems by the real programmes
-) Political influence in education system
-) Lack of teaching and learning materials
-) Not being supportive authority and administration
-) Carelessness of stake holders
-) Lack of physical facilities, infrastructure
-) Inappropriate government policy
-) Unfavorable school environment
-) Lack of interest on teachers and their negligence
-) Lack of reward and feedback
-) Bound to finish the course
-) Theory oriented teacher education programmes

On the basis of above responses, it becomes quite clear that the teachers have certainly faced a number of problems while implementing their learning from professional development events. Most of these problems have emerged due to physical facilities and lack of need analysis. To conclude this, one of the respondents has mentioned that there is no culture of implement the learning skill to the teaching and in the classroom environment. There is no praise who tries to implement the learning skill in their profession. It is due to the carelessness of teachers, educators and policy makers.

4.2.9 Teachers' Suggestions for Launching TSG

Respondents of this research have provided their several suggestions for launching teacher education programmes like TSGs in the context of Nepal so that the knowledge and skills provided by this can be helpful to improve teaching and learning activities in our context. Their suggestions (responses) are summarized below:

-) If there are teacher education programs like TSGs in our access it will be easier for us in our teaching career as well as for whole educational sector
-) TSGs should be organized so that teachers can share problems and ideas with their colleagues and improve teaching and learning
-) TSG can bring changes in actual teaching practices so it should be organized
-) Start well-planned support groups which may be helpful to lift teachers' needs
-) Create collaborative environment through TSG so teachers can get opportunity to share experience and information to each other
-) Organize TSG as soon as you can because teachers can work together to explore issues and resolve problems
-) Make it efficient and trustworthy and be the part of the nation to encourage all the teachers to achieve their goals
-) Reach out to the remote parts of Nepal where teachers are badly needed
-) Teachers should be autonomous

Gaining insight from the above suggestive measures, it can be concluded that to launch the teacher education programme i.e. Teacher Support Group in Nepal, aforementioned suggestions should brought in utilization.

Finally, all the teachers provided their valuable suggestions to the teachers to participate TSGs. The summary of their suggestions is:

As far as possible, attend the programmes like TSGs to be a professional teacher, to update yourself, to develop oneself, to catch the demand of time, to reflect, to be innovative, to share your ideas, to change yourself, to boost up your professional career and generate better ideas of teaching and learning. Let's join hands to improve quality of education in our country.

In a nutshell, it is found that TSG is very useful for teachers' professional development and growth. It is also fruitful for solving many problems that occurs in the field of teaching and the things that have close relationship with the classroom affairs.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

5.1 Summary

Teachers are those crucial persons who play direct and vital role to enhance the quality of education by means of teaching effective implementation of curriculum and achievement of goal determined by the curriculum are the personal duties of the a teacher. Teachers must continually reshape this knowledge of teaching and learning. Teacher should participate in different teacher education programme like TSG. TSG plays crucial role in teacher learning but it is not in practice in our context.

Though some of the teachers have confusion on TSG, most of the teachers have positive perception on it. They perceive as an important tool to grow professionally and also learn from one another in collaborative environment through regular meeting. They are keenly interested to engage in professional networking to share ideas about teaching, discuss issues related to their classroom practice.

This present research entitled, “Teacher Support Group for Professional Development: Teachers' Perceptions was carried out to identify the English language teachers’ perception towards teacher support group. I have used survey research as my research design which involves asking questions to respondents. The population of my study is forty secondary level English language teachers of forty different schools of the Kathmandu valley. I use purposive sampling procedure i.e. non random judgmental sampling procedure. I have used a set of questionnaire as my research tool.

Though TSG plays vital role for teachers’ professional development, it is not in practice in Nepalese context. From an effective TSG, teachers can learn new skills, strategies, and coping mechanisms to use in the classroom. Teachers are

facing challenges and difficulties in course of teaching. Most of the teachers (87.5%) have shown positive opinion on TSG and they are very much interested to join TSG for their professional development. Teachers interact with one another in their institution about their problems around daily dilemmas that occurred in their classroom practice.

5.2 Conclusion

A teacher himself/herself should be motivated and committed to the profession. No improvement can be made unless a teacher wants to change himself/herself. Participating teacher professional development activities like TSG is very fruitful to increase professional skills and competence on the part of teachers that help them to develop confidence and other various aspects of profession in ELT.

Teachers are not getting sufficient environment to learn collaboratively in their institution. They are facing different types problems related to their classroom practice. They want to get feedback, support and advice about common problems. New teachers often feel isolated from their senior colleagues in their institution. It is lack of quality mentors in their schools, struggle with limited planning time that they are allotted and are frustrated by the lack of resources needed to run their class smoothly.

From the findings, it can be said that Nepali English teachers want to get help from another teacher; they want advice for creative lessons, dealing with different daily dilemmas that occur in their classroom practice so that they could better evaluate their better teaching practices. Teachers are keenly interested to enhance their professional development by getting information on current teaching practices and strategies. They want safe place to discuss the daily challenges of their teaching practice in a non evaluative setting. The well-planned teacher support group changes in teaching practices and professional relationships with colleagues.

5.3 Implications

This part includes implication in policy level, practice level and further research.

5.3.1 Policy Level

- i. Because of the lack of effective teacher education programmes teachers are facing many difficulties in teaching and learning so effective TSG can be organized.
- ii. Teacher education programmes like TSG should be organized in regular interval maintaining appropriate time, so that the teachers plan, re-plan, think, re-think, and be reflective teacher to their profession. Similarly, the programme should not be limited to the Kathmandu valley and other few urban cities; instead they should be conducted in other rural part of country.
- iii. To make effective TSG and reality based, teacher educator programme should be launched by the concerned stakeholders.

5.3.2 Practice Level

- i. Teachers are change agents. Although there are some lacks in the teaching profession, they should not always blame others instead they should initiate changes from themselves. They should not be afraid of taking risk.
- ii. Teachers can initiate different programmes in their institution where they can interact with their colleagues to deal with the problems that occur in classroom practice.
- iii. Experienced teachers can help novice teachers in their difficulties and vice- versa.
- iv. Teachers can schedule monthly group meeting dates and they can discuss dilemmas, problems and confusion occurred in actual teaching practices.

- v. All the academic institutions have grand responsibility for their teachers' professional development and growth. Therefore, they should highly encourage their teachers to learn collaboratively. They should also take initiatives to conduct such programmes.

5.3.3 Further Research

The concept of professional development is quite new in the context of Nepal. Only some of the researches have been carried out on professional development. TSG is one of the most important tools for the teachers as it supports and provide safe environment to learn from one another. My research focuses only on the perception of English language teachers towards TSG. Further research can be carried out about perceptions and practices of other professional development tools such as critical incidents, teaching portfolios, critical friendship and so on. I have used questionnaire only as my research tool. Interview and observation can also be used as research tools. My research study is limited only forty secondary level English language teachers from the Kathmandu valley. This research may not be generalizable in all context due to its limited number of sample population. The population of further research can be English language teachers of different levels from different parts of the country.

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Appendix I

Questionnaire

Dear Sir/Madam

I have prepared this questionnaire to collect the information for my research entitled, "Teacher Support Group for the Professional Development: Teachers' Perceptions" under the guidance of Mr. Bhesh Raj Pokhrel, Lecturer, Department of English Education T.U. The correct information provided by you will be great help for completing my study. The information you have provided will be kept highly confidential and used only for research purpose. I would appreciate your honest opinions and assure that your response will be completely anonymous.

Researcher

Nisha Khulal

All the questions are based on professional development activity: Teacher Support groups

Name:.....

Qualification:.....

Experience:.....

Name of the institute:

Address:.....

Put a tick () to the alternatives that best indicate your response:

1. Working in groups rather than individual is more effective in teacher learning.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

2. Teacher can learn from his/her colleagues.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

3. Teacher can learn from his/her own teaching experiences.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

4. Teacher Support Group (TSG) can improve a number of different professional activities that are negotiated between colleagues.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

5. TSG has an effective role in teachers' professional development.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

6. Teachers are provided with sufficient time to plan and learn collaboratively in my institution to develop professionally.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially Agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

7. Have you ever participated in TSGs?

a. Yes b. No

If yes, how many times?

..... (1,2,3,4,.....many times)

If no, are you interested to join TSGs?

a. Yes b. No

Why?.....
.....
.....

8. There is a formal system of TSG in my institution.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

9. If there is any problem, I will consult with my colleagues.

a. Always b. Frequently c. Occasionally d. Rarely e. Never

10. I have offered help when the novice teachers feel difficulties.

a. Always b. Frequently c. Occasionally d. Rarely e. Never

11. I am helped by the seniors experienced colleagues of my institution when I feel difficult to deal with the problems.

a. Always b. Frequently c. Occasionally d. Rarely e. Never

12. I have participated in teacher networks with colleagues from other country.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

13. Though there is not formal system of TSG in my institution, the teachers are encouraged to get support, advice and help from their colleagues in their profession.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

14. TSG has an effective role in teachers' professional development.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

15. TSGs are motivating and allow teachers to reflect on their approach to teaching and ideas back into the classroom.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

16. Many different benefits can be derived from an effective TSG.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

17. TSG helps teachers in engaging in problem solving around daily dilemmas that occur in their classroom and then applying the new ideas and suggestions provided by their colleagues to better meet the need of the students.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

18. TSG is gate way to grow professionally.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

19. TSG is needed for every teacher to develop personally and professionally.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

20. It is very difficult to implement the knowledge and skills gained in TSG?

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

21. The problem of implementation is teachers' carelessness and negligence.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

22. The problems of implementation are the cultural differences between TSG setting and school setting.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

23. Collaborative learning is one of the most valuable tools for professional development.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

24. Collaboration is the core process in teacher learning process.

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

25. Collaborative learning is based on the principle "two heads are always better than one."

a. Strongly agree b. Agree c. Partially agree d. Disagree e. Strongly disagree

You are humbly requested to provide the responses in your own words.

1. Does your institution encourage you in sharing ideas and learning with your colleagues? If yes, in what ways?

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2. Are you interested in sharing any problems with your colleagues? If yes what sort of problems do you prefer to share?

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3. In your view, what are the common tools that Nepali English language teachers use for their professional development?

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4. Do you think TSG is gate way to grow professionally? why? Elaborate your view.

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5. It is said that teachers are not very much interested in learning though they participate in teacher education programme. If it is true, according to your view, why this happens?

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6. Are there any institutions that formally or informally organize TSG in Nepal?

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7. Do the Nepalese English Language Teachers take TSG positively?

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8. Do you think TSG is necessary for professional development of teachers? why? Elaborate your view.

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9. What is your suggestion to the teachers who have not participated in teacher education programme like TSGs?

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10. What is your suggestion to the persons and organizations that launch teacher education programmes like TSGs?

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Thank you for giving me your valuable time and information.