Nepal, bordered by the People's Republic of China in the North and India in the south, east and west, is one of the most diversified countries in the world when considering location and variation in altitude. The country is 885 kilometers from east to west, and its mean width is 193 Km, north to south. Nepal’s total area is 147,181 sq. km. Nepal's territory can be divided into three very different ecological regions: Mountains with their very cold climate in the north, the Hill region with its rivers in the middle and the fertile and tropical Terai (part of Indian plains) in the south. On the basis of ecology, the variation in altitude ranges from less than 100 meters in the Plains to more than 8848 meters in the high Himalayas (Central Bureau of Statistics, CBS, 2002). The capital city, Kathmandu, is located in the Hill region in Kathmandu Valley at the altitude of 1300 meters.

Nepal has immense ecological variations due to its altitudinal differences. Its elevations start from the level of Gangetic plains to Mount Everest, the highest peak in the world. This variation has an immense impact not only on physiographic characteristics but also on socioeconomic realities of the country. The ecological variations have also caused many changes in Nepal's climatic conditions from one place to another. The high degree of climatic variations has contributed to its vast biodiversity.

Of the total land of Nepal, forests constitute 38.1 per cent, grazing land 11.9 per cent, uncultivated area 6.7 per cent and land-shrubs 4.7 per cent (Gurung, 1998). About a half of the Terai area alone is covered with forests. Nepal is extremely rich in flora and fauna (Nepal National Education Planning Commission, NNEPC, 1956). These phenomena reveal Nepal’s biodiversity potentials. Biodiversity and linguistic diversity are correlated. Maffi (2000) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) see inextricable links and even causal connections between biodiversity and linguistic diversity.

The Mountains (The Himalayas)

The northern part of the country is the Mountain region. This comprises the Himalayas. The Mountain region makes up about 25 % of Nepal’s landmass, but has only 5.5 per cent of Nepal’s total population (Gurung, 1998). This region is between 4850 meters and 8848 meters above the sea level. Its
climatic conditions are cold and harsh. The mountain ranges are dissected by several north-south river systems (Eagle, 2000). This region is sparsely populated.

The road transport network is virtually non-existent. However, in some areas there are a few air links, which are the main means of connecting mountain people with the outside world. Yet, the planes cannot fly during the monsoon. Remote areas mostly get cut off for almost three months of the rainy season from June to August. The contact with the rest of Nepal during this time of the year is literally impossible because of heavy landslides and the rise of the water levels in the rivers. Also, the life of the mountain people remains almost standstill in winter, from November to February because of snowfalls and harsh weather conditions which leads to a considerable seasonal migration to the south of the country during the severe winter (Gurung, 1998). All these unfavourable conditions in the mountain region have tremendous effect on children’s learning and academic achievement in the schools.

Pack animals and humans travel through the stony footpaths, which connect the north with the south of the country. These paths are also a link between the Tibetan plateau and the Indian subcontinent. They are very old trade routes running through Nepal. These trade routes have been in use for more than 2000 years. The people living in this region speak mostly Nepali and Tibeto-Burman languages. The major Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in the Himalayan region are Sherpa, Limbu, Rai and Tamang. Contact with the people speaking different languages along the trade routes, multilingualism has become an inherent part of people’s life in the Himalayan region (Eagle, 2000).

The Hills

The Hill region lies between the high Himalayas and the Terai region. It occupies about 60% of Nepal's total landmass. It consists of Hills and the valleys. There are a number of fertile valleys in this region. Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal, is one of them, which is extremely fertile and densely populated. Its civilization and culture are more than three thousand years old (NNEPC, 1956). The major languages spoken in the Kathmandu valley are

The altitude of the Hill region is between 600 meters and 4850 meters. The upper Hills, beyond 2,500 meters, are sparsely populated because of the adverse living conditions. The lower Hills and valleys are more populated. These midlands are highly populated and have better living conditions in general. The Hill and valley climate is temperate. The lower Hills are terraced and intensively cultivated. Both rainfall farming and irrigated farming are practiced in the Hill region. The valleys and lowland areas within the Hill region are very fertile. They have great potentials for fruit and vegetable farming. The population in the Hills is about 44 % of the total population of the country (Eagle, 2000).

People living in the Hills and valleys have access to both road and air transport services. In these areas, there is greater participation of people in education. Most people in the Hill region and in the valleys speak Nepali. They have a greater influence over the policy decisions in the country. Nepal’s national politics has also been controlled by the people from the Hills and valleys. Although a substantial numbers of people in this region speak Tamang, Newar, Rai, Magar, Limbu, Gurung, Chepang, Thami and other languages (CBS, 2003), the inter-personal and inter-community communications take place in Nepali.

In the whole area of the far western Hill and mountain region of Nepal, people speak mainly the Pahadi language. Pahadi is the earlier form of Nepali. Pahadi is based on oral traditions and does not have its own writing system. The Population Census 2001 does not include Pahadi as a separate language (CBS, 2003).

The Terai

The Terai region comprises the southern plains. It occupies only 17 % of Nepal’s total landmass, but has over 50% of the population (Gurung, 1998). It goes almost parallel to the Hills. The Terai region starts from the foot Hills and spreads up to the borders with India. The outer-Terai extends to the Gangetic
plains of India. The Terai has tropical climate. Its low land areas are extremely hot in summer. About 50 per cent of the Terai is under forest (Gurung, 1998). The Inner-Terai lies between the Siwalik and the Mahabharat range. It has humid climate. Because of its flat topography, people have better access to essential services. People in the Terai have access to both air and surface transport services. The communication network and electric power supply systems have expanded. The water supply systems of the Terai have contributed to the growth of agricultural products. Because of the infrastructure, the Terai is growing as an industrial hub of the country; consequently, there are better market facilities and access to health services in the region. The number of schools is also increasing. There are more opportunities for education. Yet, the educational opportunities for the disadvantaged communities and for the female children are still limited in the Terai region (Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development, CERID, 1997).

Until the 1950s both the outer and inner Terai areas used to be affected by endemic malaria. After the eradication of malaria in Nepal, the population in the plains has increased (Gurung, 1998). As the plains are very fertile and have potentials for better living conditions, over the past, people from the mountains and Hills have migrated to the Terai. This trend still continues. The influx of the Nepali speaking people to the Terai has altered the demographic pattern of the country. The Hill and mountain population has been out-numbered by the population of the Terai. Now, more than 50% of the people in the country live in the Terai region alone. This shift in population has serious implication on the lives of indigenous peoples and their languages. The linguistic communities of the Terai region have been seriously affected by the influx of the Nepali speaking population. The indigenous people in the Terai speak mainly Indo-Aryan languages, which are close to Hindi (Gurung, 1997). Besides Nepali, the major languages spoken in the Terai region are Maithali, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Awadhi, Urdu, Hindi, Rajbanshi and Dhimal. Needless to say, inter-personal and inter-community communications take place both in Nepali and Hindi in the Terai (CBS, 2002).
Languages and Location

Nepal’s borders with both India and China have a significant impact on its languages and people’s linguistic behaviour. Nepal’s border with Tibet, for example, has contributed to trans-Himalayan communication through Tibeto-Burman languages. The cross-border contacts between people have enriched languages and cultures on both sides. The Tibeto-Burman languages entered Nepal through the ancient routes of Tibet. So, the influence of the Tibetan language is evident on the people living in the Himalayan range. (Eagle, 2000).

In the east, Nepal shares its border with West Bengal, which is a Bengali speaking state of India. In the south, Nepal has common borders with Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Bihar is primarily a Maithali and Awadhi speaking state, whereas Uttar Pradesh is predominantly Hindi speaking. The State of Uttaranchal is mainly a Kumaoni and Gadhwali speaking area. However, these languages are termed as ‘dialects’ of Hindi or called minor languages (Abbi, 2000). The language of the far western Hills and mountains of Nepal is Baitadeli and Doteli and to some extent similar Kumaoni and Gadhwali with some variations. These languages are widely spoken across the far western region.

Likewise, the bordering States of India have enormous influence on the languages of Nepal. Due to this, languages like Maithali, Hindi and Urdu have a broader support base in both India and Nepal (Eagle, 2000). English is also widely used. The effect of this multilingual setting on the Indian side of the border is evident on the people in Nepal.

Naturally, the people living near the borders have greater needs for knowing the languages on the other side of the border. Multilingualism for these people is a necessity and is a way of living. If we consider the language needs of these people, a linguistic repertoire of multiple languages becomes inevitable. This is also crucial because both Nepal and India have an open border system. People’s cultural and religious bonds are stronger than the political boundaries between the two states. Inter-country marriages are very common. Besides, Nepal’s trade and transit with India necessitates the use of multiple languages in Nepal.
Multilingualism in South Asia

Every South Asian Country is multilingual as two or more languages are in regular use in the government, politics, education and the military. According to Ferguson in Conventional Conventionalization (1996), mentions that in most urban centers and at the boundaries of language areas, large number of individuals are actively multilingual and there is widespread an official acceptance of the naturalness of multilingualism since third century.

Multilingualism in South Asia has been existing for generations, and was officially recognized in the third century. Ferguson in South Asia as a Sociolinguistic Area (1996) claims that no other region of the world has had such a long-continued pattern of socially accepted, governmentally institutionalized multilingualism; likewise, the tradition of literacy has been in continuous existence for over 2000 years. Owing to this, Nepal has a long-standing tradition of multi linguistic culture, and has placed a great deal of emphasis on the transmission of culture through language (Schiffman, 1996).

In this respect, Nepal is by and large a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic country. The census report of 2001 shows that there are 93 languages including one unknown category spoken in Nepal and more than 50% of the people speak languages other than Nepali (CBS, 2002). Nepali serves as the national language and the language of instruction in schools. In view of the linguistic diversity, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (MOLJ, 1990) made a provision in Article 18.1 “each community residing within the kingdom of Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script and culture”.

The Interim Constitution of Nepal (MOLPA, 2006) also reserves the right of each community to operate schools up to the primary level in its own mother tongue for imparting education to its children. It is important to note that the shaping of languages in Nepal attributes to covert policies embedded in the Nepalese linguistic culture.

According to Bista (1991), Nepal is a heterogeneous society with a complex ethnic mix linguistic diversity that has been the pedigree of the nation. In this context, Eagle (2000) highlights that Nepal is a meeting point of great
cultures of Asia. She argues that Nepal’s ethnic, racial and linguistic diversities are obvious because, by location, it is at the crossroads between India, Tibet and Indo-China. Considering Nepal’s geo-physical positioning, the multilingual realities are evident in the country. Thus linguistic diversity is a key characteristic of Nepal.

**Present Linguistic Profile of Nepal**

Nepal has four language families: Indo-European, Sino-Burman/Tibeto-Burman, Agney and Drabid. It is believed that the Tibeto-Burman languages filtered through the north and the Indo-European languages through the south and the west of the country. Agney and Drabid include languages such as Satar/Santhal and Jhagad/Dhagad respectively (CBS, 2003).

Minority language strongholds and pocket areas are concentrated in the southern plains, Hills, mountains and inner valleys. Yet, the linguistic minority groups are scattered and have very uneven distribution in different parts of the country according to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2003). Besides these, the people in the far western part of the country speak the Pahadi language, which is not included in the CBS report (2002).

Most languages in Nepal have the primacy of the oral tradition and retain a strong tradition of orality. Only a few languages that have written forms are Nepali, Newar Bhasa, Maithali, Limbu, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Hindi, Urdu, Bote (Lama/Tibetan) and English. Other languages such as Tharu, Tamang, Magar, Gurung, Sherpa, Thakali, Thulung, Bantawa, Chamling, Khaling and Kulung are in the process of developing their written systems, and are transforming from oral traditions (NLPRC, 1993).

Nepal's Population Census 2001 reveals that there are at least 92 languages in use in the country (CBS, 2002). Out of these 12 such languages are spoken by more than 1% of the total population as per census 2001 indicated in the table below:
According to CBS (2002), other languages with a population of speakers smaller than 1% of the total population of the country include Urdu, Rajbansi, Sherpa, Hindi, Chamling, Santhali, Chepang, Danuwar, Jhangar/ Dhangar, Sunuwar, Bangla, Marwari (Rajasthani), Manjhi, Thami, Kulung, Dhimal, Angika, Yakkha, Thulung, Sangpang, Bhujel/ Khawas, Darai, Khaling, Kumal, Thakali, Chhantyal/ Chhantel, Nepali sign language, Tibetan, Durni, Jirel, Wambule/ Umbule and Puma.

Likewise, other languages spoken in the country are Yholmo, Nachhiring, Dura, Meche, Pahari, Lepcha/Lapche, Bote, Bahing, Koi/Koyu, Raji, Hayu, Byabgshi, Yamphu/Yamphe, Ghale, Khariya, C'Hilling, Lohorung, Punjabi, Chinese, English, Mewahang, Sankrit, Kaise, Raute, Kisan, Churauti, Baram/ Maramu, Tilung, Jero/ Jerung, Dungmali, Oriya, Linkhim, Kusunda, Sidhi, Koche, Hariyanwi, Magahi, Sam, Kurmali, Kagate, Dzonkha, Kuki, Chintang, Mizo, Nagamese, Lhomi, Assamese and Sadhani. In addition, there

### Table: 1.1
Languages of Nepal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>2001 Population (In Million)</th>
<th>Percentage of Languages used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>11.05</td>
<td>48.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maithali</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>12.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bhojpuri</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>7.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tharu</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>5.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tamang</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>5.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Newar</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Magar</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Awadhi</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bantawa</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gurung</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Limbu</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bajjika</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CBS, 2002
are several unknown languages with a population of 168340 speakers (CBS, 2002).

The report on 2001 Census has 12 languages with more than 1% of Nepal’s total population, 48.61% of people in the country speak Nepali as their mother tongue, whereas the number of Nepali speaking population in the 1991 Census was 50.3%. The decline of the Nepali speaking population and the rise of the non-Nepali speakers in the country can be attributed to people’s growing awareness about their linguistic identity. Also, the Government’s liberal policy towards other languages than Nepali may have contributed to encouraging linguistic minorities to come forward and give information on their mother tongues. The 2001 Census also reveals that there are 8 languages with speakers less than 10 persons each. The Nepali sign language has also been recorded in the report. However, it does not recognize the local variations of the sign language (CBS, 2002).

According to the CBS (2002), languages such as Bantawa and Bajjika have appeared to be among the 12 major languages each having more than 1% of Nepal’s total population. However, the Rai language, which was spoken by 2.37% of the people of Nepal and was placed in the 7th position in the 1991 Census, has not been mentioned in the 2001 Census. However, the Rai language was used as an umbrella term in the 1991 Census (NLPRC, 1993).

Status of the Nepali Language in Nepal

Since the Gorkha conquest of the Kathmandu valley in 1769, Nepali has maintained the status of the official language in the country. Nepali has also succeeded in establishing itself as a link language, and as a language of mass communication (in state and public media) in the country. Yet, there are regional varieties and local dialects in use in Nepali.

Nepali is spoken in India, Bhutan, Burma and Thailand. Nepali is one of the scheduled languages in India (Abbi, 2001). Owing to the state support, the Nepali language has made great progress in developing writing system and producing materials over the past 50 years.
The literary works of Bhanu Bhakta, Lekhnath Paudel, Laxmi Prasad Devakota and other outstanding critics contributed to developing the Nepali language and shaping it as a national language. The Gorkha Bhasa Prakashini Samiti [Nepali Language Publication Committee] played a key role in raising the status of Nepali (Malla, 1979).

No language is superior or inferior in terms of communicating ideas. However, some languages play a dominant role in a particular society. In Nepal, Nepali is one of such languages as it is the national language. It has a significant place in Nepalese educational system. The Nepali language has been used as an official language since the Gorkha conquest in 1769. Nepali is the national language of literacy, popular public communication and mass media. It is learnt as a compulsory subject from primary to tertiary level. Many books, magazines, periodicals that are circulated in the country are in the Nepali language. It is being used as lingua franca.

In Nepal, the Nepali language is used for communication as well as it is considered a personality emancipator with promises of higher social status. Even today the general perception of the Nepalese society is that without the knowledge of the Nepali language it is impossible to get an economically gainful job.

Population and Literacy

The population of Nepal is 23,151,423 and the current estimated population growth rate is 2.3 percent per annum. The total fertility rate is 4.1 per woman. Nepal's infant mortality rate as of 2002 (estimated) is 64.1 per 1000 live births, and life expectancy at birth as of 2001 (estimated) is 59.7 years. The literacy rate in the country is 53.74 per cent. The female literacy rate is just 39.67 per cent (CBS, 2002). Considering Nepal's low level of social indicators, poverty and inadequate infrastructure, language planning and policy-making are critical issues (Eagle, 2000).

There is a high degree of gender discrimination in Nepal. Women literacy rate is very low, below 40 % (whereas male literacy rate is more than 60%. Women participation in education, particularly from disadvantaged communities is very low (CBS, 2003). According to the Department of
Education (DOE, 2006), the percentage of girl-students enrolled in primary schools is less than 45%. In schools, out of 97,879 teachers, the percentage of female teachers at the primary level is 25%.

**Education in Nepal**

Education is an important part of development. Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization and discipline; without these, all resources remain latent and untapped (Mathema and Bista, 2006).

The future of a nation is based on education and educated manpower. A well functioning education system is the primary requirement for the nation building of developing country such as Nepal. Like elsewhere in the world, the system of education in Nepal is divided into three levels: primary education, secondary education that comprises lower secondary and higher secondary and tertiary level.

**Structure of School Education in Nepal**

Primary schools in Nepal provide five years of formal universal education to all children and consist of five grades from 1-5 in addition to one year of Early Childhood Development (ECD) or Pre Primary Classes (PPCS). Lower secondary education consists of three years from grade 6 to 8. Secondary and Higher secondary classes comprise two years of each with grades 9-10 and grades 11-12 respectively.

In 2005, the number of ECD/ PPCs classes was introduced 4,069 in schools compared to 1,471 schools in 2003. Similarly, the total numbers of primary schools in 2005 was 28,026, which were 27,268 in 2003. Likewise, the number of lower secondary schools in 2003 was 8,249 and it increased to 8,471 in 2005 while secondary schools grew to 5,039 in 2005 from 4741 in 2003 (DOE, 2007).

**Types of Schools in Nepal**

There has been massive expansion of primary level students, teachers and schools in Nepal since 1951. Schools are categorized as public, private
and community schools. Public schools are funded and run by the government and are usually referred as government schools rather than public schools. The government schools receive funds for teachers’ salary for approved position, teacher training and free textbooks. Scholarships for girls, disabled and Dalit students are also provided (DOE, 2007).

Community schools cater to specific communities and are established, supported and managed by School Management Committee (SMC) and Village Development Committee (VDC) in the rural and urban areas.

The provision of teachers’ recruitment in public and community schools is such they are appointed by the government in public schools while in community schools they are appointed by the school management committee. The teachers of community schools hence are local and bilingual but in public schools, they are predominantly Nepali speaking. These schools do not receive regular government grants but receive fixed basic salary grants equivalent to two teachers’ positions for primary education along with earmarked and block grants for both primary and secondary schools (DOE, 2007).

Private schools depend on parental support and are independent of government funding. They are privately managed and owned by the individual or a private / public trust (DOE, 2007).

Language Learning

Language plays an important role in learning. Since language is the medium of instruction of communicating meaning in most learning activities. It is essential that a language that learners understand and speak is used in education.

Language comprises four skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing i.e. (LSRW). Listening and speaking skills are basic to language learning. The more the students listen and speak, the more they learn to communicate. Reading and writing are secondary skills, which are used to communicate and express the acquired knowledge. Thus, Language is such a skill through which children can communicate in order to survive in the society.
Learning of language not only facilitates communication but it is also a powerful medium of acquisition of knowledge and information; attitude and skills; values and beliefs.

In the process of socialization in multilingual society, many learners are multilingual in the sense that in addition to their first language i.e. mother tongue they also acquire some competence in more than one language at a time. They learn their mother tongue at home and another language in their neighbourhood surroundings. However, in linguistic minority strong hold areas, children acquire competence only in their mother tongue. They learn additional language when they go to school as per curricular requirements. Thus, children learn a second language simultaneously or successively as per their environment.

**Simultaneous Second Language Learning**

Learning of another language is prevalent in the socio linguistic environment at the same time as the learner acquires the first language or mother tongue. It is termed simultaneous second language learning. The two languages are learnt together because they fulfill significantly different, but complementary functions in the communication needs of the individual. Usually the learner needs both the languages from childhood to interact meaningfully with the surrounding environment (Mushi, 2002).

In the process of language learning the child acquires basic interpersonal communication skills in mother tongue and simultaneously learnt second language by the age of six.

**Successive Second Language Learning**

Another language available in the linguistic environment of the child after the first language has been acquired is termed as successive second language learning. The second language is learnt successively after the mother tongue is mastered.

The learning of second language successively depends on the interaction of the language be it in the neighborhood or in the school.
Krashen et al. (1979) claimed that studying a second language taught by teachers, using text book, taking formal classes, learning the rules, vocabulary, grammar and idioms of second language is an example of conscious learning. It is learnt when the children go to school.

In case of children who do not have an access of schooling, they may acquire working knowledge of successive second language through interaction and more so through media, radio and television.

In case of Nepal, learning of the Nepali language which is lingua franca is incidental as a successive second language.

**Importance of Learning Nepali as Simultaneous and Successive Second Language**

In Nepal, linguistic minority children learn Nepali as a compulsory subject. Children who are multilingual learn it as simultaneous second language and who are monolingual learn it as successive second language. Using Nepali as the medium of instruction slows down the learning of the successive second language learners. Simultaneous second language learners are exposed to their mother tongue and Nepali at the same time. They have basic speaking ability of Nepali language. Successive second language learners learn Nepali as a second language after going to school. Both the learners are taught the same subjects by the same teachers at the same time in the same schools.

Educational linguistic theorist (Cummins, 1981) suggested that successive second language learners are far behind than the simultaneous second language learners. Thus, in Nepal this issue is regularly raised by ethnic activists. Many researches have been carried out on the issues of Nepali speaking children and non Nepali speaking children. However, this issue has not been properly addressed within the same language background.

Quality education for all students has been a major goal in Nepal (DOE, 2008). According to the National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission (NLPRC, 1993) understanding of basic language skills makes it possible to learn basic concept of other content area that affects society to use
basic language skills and process of making personal decisions to share in the excitement of new knowledge and comprehension. Often, this understanding has proven to be very elusive for successive second language learners in Nepal. It has been stated by many commissions and researches that to neglect the language issues of students is to deprive them of basic education, handicap them for life and deprive the nation of talented workers and informed citizens. To neglect language issues for successive second language learners today appears to be most prevalent in the classroom of Nepal.

**Rationale of the Study**

To date, research studies have failed to clarify many of the issues pertaining to the effect of second language learning on academic achievement, rather the findings of various studies when taken into consideration seem to be contradictory.


However, the Nepali Education System is still following the same medium of instruction enforced by The New Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971 i.e. the Nepali language. So, there has been a debate among educationists, linguists and political activists. They are of the view that children’s academic achievement is highly affected by the medium of instruction.
The school level annual results bring about focus on the causes of poor performance of students of Public school especially students of rural public schools. The focus centers around two things. First, almost everybody criticizes poor achievement of rural schools, their teachers and students. Second, experts and policy makers start speculations about the possible causes of poor academic achievement. More often causes identified relate to poor teaching by teachers, poor background of students, lesser exposure to the Nepali language and lack of motivation among students.

Schools place the responsibility upon the children themselves, their families, and communities located in rural areas. Parents either criticize their teachers or their own children for the poor performance.

In recent years, faith of the public in the academic achievement of rural public schools seems to be eroding. There is general tendency to compare the performance between public and private, public and community and rural and urban schools. It is essential to know what makes rural schools under perform in comparison to urban schools.

Researchers over the world are engaged in a constant search for factors associated with academic achievement. Now that the importance of education has further heightened in the current information age, researchers are accelerating their search for the variables and factors that produce learning. The present research attempted to explore and studied the factors linked with the academic achievement of simultaneous (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2) of primary schools of Nepal.

It is in this background that the present study was conceived of and is entitled as “Effect of Simultaneous and Successive Second Language Learning on Academic Achievement of Primary School Children of Nepal in Relation to their Personal and Environmental Factors”.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement encompasses student's ability to perform. It is multidimensional; it is not related to single instance but occurs across time and levels throughout student life in school and later in working life.
Anand et al (2004) defines academic achievement as "the quality and quantity of a student's work".

Terry and Thomas (1977) in the International Dictionary of Education define academic achievement as the ability to perform well in academic courses.

Singh (1996) in the Dictionary of Education defines academic achievement as "the ability of an individual, which can be used for performing the task with essential knowledge".

**Operational Definition of Academic Achievement**

In literature there does not appear to be specific or universal definition of academic achievement. In the present study the term academic achievement refers to students' performance in class as well as in tests/ examinations. It is the outcome of teaching in school setting.

In the present study academic achievement, academic performance and learning outcomes or academic success were used interchangeably.

**Factors Affecting Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement is largely associated with many factors. Most of the students in schools are daily confronted with challenges coping with their poor school environment, home background, unmotivated teachers and their own personal interest, ability and language background. These factors definitely affect the academic performance of the learners.

Most studies on the determinants of student achievement have identified that there are a variety of school and non-school factors that potentially affect learning outcomes of students depending on the research tradition being followed. These are personal and environmental factors.

It is therefore, that the present study investigated the factors affecting academic achievement: personal and environmental factors.

**Personal Factors**

Personal factors consist of abilities to acquire knowledge. These include intelligence, linguistic ability, motivation, attitude and aptitude of the students.
towards their study and school. The literature suggests that most children begin their schooling with a desire to learn successfully.

It has been also revealed intelligence and motivation lead to a greater success. Students who are intelligent and have strong motivation have higher level of academic achievement than the students with weak motivation. Similarly, positive drive towards learning helps in increasing academic achievement. In the present study, from numerous personal factors only two following factors were studied:

- Intelligence of the learner
- Motivation of the learner

**Intelligence**

Intelligence is a growing phenomenon. So, it is defined as general cognitive problem solving skill and a mental ability involved in reasoning, perceiving relationship and analogies, calculating and learning quickly.

Paul and Don (1994) define intelligence as a general aptitude for learning characterized by the ability to learn and to deal with abstractions and to solve problems.

According to Brown (1993), intelligence is the linguistic and logical mathematical abilities. Success in any type of learning in life in general seems to be a correlate of intelligence.

**Operational Definition of Intelligence**

In the present study Raven's Progressive Coloured Matrices were used to measure intelligence of primary school children. Hence, the concept defined by J.C Raven was accepted as such the ability to observe objects and think clearly and recall of information is intelligence.

**Motivation**

There are a number of factors that affect academic achievement in school; one of the most influential is motivation because it is a force that energizes and directs behaviour toward a goal.
Motivation refers to cognitive emotional and behavioural indicators of students’ investment in and attachment to education (Turcker, 2002).

Motivation is the most frequently used term for explaining the success or failure of any complex task. The general process or force that energizes and directs behaviour is also known as motivation. Motivation is the attribute that "moves" us to do or not to do something (Gredler, 2001).

According to Brown (1993), motivation is commonly thought of as inner desire, impulse and emotion that move one to a particular action. According to him, it refers to the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect.

**Operational Definition of Motivation**

In the present study motivation was defined as the engagement of the learners in the tasks which brings about desirable change in students’ learning at school.

**Environmental Factors**

Environmental factors include home, community, and school. Environmental factors have a significant impact on children’s learning and academic achievement. For example, teacher’s competence and reactions towards children’s learning, praise and support from school and provision of basic physical facilities in school. Regular instructional activities and joyful teaching; friendly and loving environment; supportive teachers and friends; students’ access to instructional materials and incentives of scholarship also contribute to the high rate of academic achievement at primary level. In addition to these, parents’ interest in their children, schooling, parents’ educational and social background and provisions of facilities of basic necessities as textbooks, stationery, school uniform, parental visit to school, monitoring homework. All these factors help in resulting academic achievement at school (DOE, 2005).

In this study from among environmental factors, school and home factors were studied.
School Factor

Students' educational outcomes and academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school they attend. School factors include school structure, class size, funding, access to resources, teaching and learning environment, teachers' diversity, teachers' adequacy and quality and their attitude and reactions towards students' learning.

In this study from among many factors, teachers' reaction towards students' learning and classroom practices followed by them were selected.

Home Factor

Home factor, key to a student's life and outside of school, is the most important influence on student's learning. It includes socio-economic status, two parent versus single parent, parenting practices, aspirations, maternal characteristics, family size and neighbourhood (Majoribanks, 1996).

The environment at home is a primary socialization agent that influences child's interest in school and aspirations for the future. The socio-economic status (SES) of a child is most commonly determined by combining parents' educational level, occupational status and income level (Jeynes, 2002).

Supportive parenting practices are associated with increasing students' interest in learning. It is therefore; from among many factors socio-economic status and parental support were selected for this study.

The measures of socio-economic status were composite of parents' education, occupational status, income and family resources.

Statement of the Problem

Almost all the government and non-government studies conducted in Nepal indicated poor achievement in all the subjects in primary level due to the effect of medium of instruction. It is believed that poor achievement can be addressed if the medium of instruction is not made mandatory. It is widely observed that compulsory medium of instruction (Nepali) for all primary school children caused problem for them in learning in schools.
Research conducted in the schools reflects that children learn better if they are taught through their mother tongue.

Various researches have been carried out studying the effect of second language learning on academic achievement of linguistic minority children at international level. However, the issue of simultaneous (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2) has not been studied either at the national or at the international level.

It was in this context the present study was taken up as entitled below:

“Effect of Simultaneous and Successive Second Language Learning on Academic Achievement of Primary School Children of Nepal in Relation to their Personal and Environmental Factors”

Objectives of the Study
For clarity and better understanding the study was carried out with following primary and secondary objectives.

**Primary Objectives**

- To analyze the status of achievement, intelligence and motivation of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2) of primary schools in Nepal.
- To find out the relationship of intelligence and motivation with academic achievement of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2).
- To find out the relationship of intelligence with motivation of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2).
- To make comparisons of academic achievement, intelligence, motivation, socio-economic status (SES), and parental support of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2).
- To compare the achievement of public and community school students.
- To see the effect of personal factors i.e. intelligence and motivation on academic achievement of simultaneous second
language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2).

- To see the effect of environmental factors such as socio-economic status and parental support on academic achievement of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2).

Secondary Objectives

- To analyze the classroom practices followed by teachers to teach language and other subjects at primary schools.
- To conduct the case studies to analyze the status of public and community schools in respect of school environment, quality of teachers, motivation to learn and succeed, teaching learning environment and school leadership.

Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses for Primary Study:

The study was planned to test the following hypotheses for the primary study:

I) **Hypotheses Pertaining to Status of Intelligence, Motivation and Academic Achievement**

- The academic achievement of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2) falls above the 33% which is set as pass percentage in schools of Nepal.
- The intelligence and motivation of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2) exhibit the average level of intelligence and motivation.

II) **Hypotheses Pertaining to Relationship Among the Variables**

- There exists a positive and significant relationship between intelligence and academic achievement of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2).
• There is a positive and significant relationship between motivation and academic achievement of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2).

• There exists a positive relationship between intelligence and motivation of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2).

III) Hypotheses Pertaining to Various Comparisons
• Simultaneous second language learners (SL1) achieve academically better than the successive second language learners (SL2) in all the subjects and in all the classes at primary level of education.

• Simultaneous second language learners (SL1) exhibit higher level of intelligence and motivation than the successive second language learners (SL2).

• Socio-economic status of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) is higher than the successive second language learners (SL2).

• Parental support in case of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) is better than the successive second language learners (SL2).

• Community school students achieve academically better than the public school students.

IV) Hypotheses Pertaining to Effect of Independent Variables on Dependent Variable of Academic Achievement of Simultaneous Second Language Learners (SL1) and Successive Second Language Learners (SL2).
• Intelligence and motivation contribute significantly on academic achievement of simultaneous second language learners (SL1) and successive second language learners (SL2).

• Socio-economic status and parental support are the significant contributors to the academic achievement of the learners.

Hypothesis for Secondary Study:
Classroom practices followed by the teachers are not in accordance with prescribed practices.