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# **Education and Change: A Historical Perspective on Schooling, Development and the Nepali Nation-State<sup>1</sup>**

**Martha Caddell**

*By making a unified Nepal, the farsighted King Prithvi Narayan Shah made the nation very strong and laid the foundations for a strong sense of national pride. No one can take this away. We are all – people from the mountains, plains and hills – able to say we are Nepali (Mero Desh, Book 5, Lesson 10, translated from the Nepali).*

## **Introduction**

In contemporary Nepal schools are being utilised by a variety of groups as key sites for both promoting and challenging visions of national identity and the Nepali state. School assemblies, textbooks and examinations promote a view of national identity and development based on a selective incorporation of social diversity, with Hinduism, the monarchy and engagement in processes of modernisation key elements of the picture promoted. Social studies textbooks, as the introductory extract highlights, attempt to create a sense of unity among students with reference to the deeds of ‘national heroes’ and a shared history. Similarly, emphasis is placed on participation in national development efforts and the need to promote change at both an individual and countrywide level. Such discussions also serve to link these efforts to global reform agendas and the work of international development agencies with, for example, lessons focused on the work of the United Nations and the need for population control in the interests of alleviating poverty and protecting the environment.<sup>2</sup>

Since the return to multi-party democracy in 1990, aspects of this vision have been increasingly contested. For example, language issues have emerged as a key area of contention and ethnic activist groups have utilised campaigns for the provision of mother-tongue schooling as a focal point for wider social and political demands. Further, schools themselves, as symbols of a highly particular construction of the state, have become the subject of direct action, including forced closures and physical attacks on personnel and property. In December 2002, the Maoist-affiliated All Nepal Independent Student Union (ANISU) called an indefinite education strike, forcing the

closure of schools and colleges nationwide as a show of strength and to promote their demands for wide-reaching social and political change. Within the social space of the school visions of the Nepali nation and appropriate trajectories of development are contested and alternatives advanced.

This paper seeks to illuminate the current political significance of schooling by setting educational reform within the broader context of socio-political change. It provides an historical overview of the development of education policy in Nepal since the overthrow of the Rana oligarchy in 1950. Each shift in political regime has been followed by a revision of the education system as the incoming regime attempted to reinforce its own vision of the idea of the Nepali nation-state by re-articulating the relationship between the state, schools and 'the people'. Such continual redefining has led to a feeling of "repeated beginnings" (Onta 1996: 221) as newly-formed governments sought to legitimate their position by differentiating themselves from the previous regime. Discourses of development and visions of the 'external' have become intertwined with representations of intra-state relations and schooling itself has emerged as a central feature of this vision. By exploring education policy from such an historical perspective, this paper highlights the shifting political interests that have been asserted in the social space of the school and offers a contextualised understanding of contemporary education reforms and broader socio-political tensions.

### **'Selective Exclusion': Education Under the Ranas (1846-1950)**

The Rana era extended from the overthrow of the Shah kings in the Kot Massacre of 1846<sup>3</sup> through to the restoration of the monarchy and the introduction of political parties in 1950. During this period the ruling elite sought to maintain their almost absolute power internally while struggling to accommodate the demands made by the East India Company, the government of British India and later the Republic of India (Burghart 1996: 227). The King was reduced to being a "religious and ceremonial figurehead", with the Rana family taking not only the hereditary Prime Ministership but also dominating the army and civil government positions. The regime adopted isolationist positions both in terms of the contact between the state and the international community and in regard to intra-state relations. Specifically, little attempt was made to integrate or unite the various communities within Nepal into a

cohesive national unit. Rather, the Ranas attempted to maintain their power and legitimacy through force, instilling fear among the geographically scattered population. Thus, despite being a unitary state within almost the same territorial boundaries since 1769, Nepal never became fully “unified in spirit” under the Ranas (Mihaly 1965: 14).

The Rana-governed state limited its contacts with external powers as a consequence of geographical factors and, most significantly, political restrictions imposed by the Treaty of Sagauli, signed with the East India Company in 1815 (Burghart 1996: 227). As a result of this, all contact with a third party had to be negotiated with the British and a permanent British Resident was placed in Kathmandu. Thus, the Ranas’ policy was not so much one of total isolationism but rather the “selective exclusion” of particular aspects of “foreignness” (Liechty 1997).<sup>4</sup> The contact with the British in India exposed the Ranas to Western ideas and institutions, some of which came to influence how the Ranas governed the state and sought to enhance their own position within it and in the region.

The diversity within the Nepali state was recognised through a framework of inequality, with cultural variation framed around the central pillar of Hinduism and rulers presented as a focal point of the political and ritual order (Pfaff-Czarnecka 1999: 52, Burghart 1996). Ethnic and caste-based divisions were legally formalised in the *Muluki Ain* (National Legal Code) of 1854, in order to create a national hierarchy which effectively legitimated the position of the ruling group (Hofer 1979). Prestige and social advancement thus came to be associated with the practices and customs of high caste Hindu groups, with opportunities to gain education and employment in the civil service dependent on familial and caste ties with the Rana elite.<sup>5</sup> Such a vision gained further legitimacy as members of various ethnic groups sought to enhance their positions through adopting the cultural symbols and traits of those in power (Pfaff-Czarnecka 1999: 53), a move which both secured greater opportunities for the ethnic elite and further divided any potential sources of opposition to the Rana regime (e.g. Jones 1976). Internal legitimacy was thus gained through recourse to a vision of a Hindu-based hierarchical model and the image, if not the practice, of monarchical supremacy. External legitimacy and the ability to enter into negotiations on the world

stage was made possible by framing decisions within models intelligible to Western, and specifically British, audiences.

### **Education Under the Ranas**

This somewhat contradictory attitude to the world outside the state boundaries, which sought to “both limit the dangers inherent in foreignness, and at the same time harness its powers” (Liechty 1997: 9), is particularly evident in relation to the provision of education under Rana rule. On the one hand there was a strong recognition of the need for the ruling class to engage with Western-style education in order to increase their ability to participate effectively in negotiations with other states. Yet, there was also concern about “giving education to the common people, lest they should be awakened and be conscious of their rights” (Shakya 1977: 19). Education was treated with considerable suspicion, as was evident to the English journalist Perceval Landon during his period in Nepal in the early 1900s. He noted “the first beginnings of education were looked upon with something of the mistrust with which the medieval church of Rome heard of the work of scientists within her fold” (Landon 1976 [1926]: 179). As a result, schooling opportunities were severely restricted, even for the elite, and popular education was almost non-existent.<sup>6</sup> Formal tutor-led instruction for the children of the Rana elite was initiated in 1854 by Jung Bahadur Rana, with classes held within his palace. His successors gradually extended this provision to encompass non-Rana children of high status, aided by the relocation of the expanded ‘Durbar School’ to its current site in central Kathmandu (Aryal 1977, Bista 1991:119).

The content of the education provided under at the Durbar School was strongly influenced by external models of schooling and, in particular, the English system of education.<sup>7</sup> Such emphasis further reinforced the disparity in status between the ruling elite and the rest of the populace. As Bista notes:

While Nepali language and Sanskrit were taught, little else of Nepal was introduced. The history or geography that was taught was confined to that of the British Isles and India, a practice that was to instil a sense of inferiority and ineffectiveness of things Nepali and a debasement of the ethnic heritage of the different Nepali peoples (1991: 119).

Interest in Western-style education for the ruling elite was motivated in part by a need to engage with the British in India effectively (Aryal 1977: 123). The ability to negotiate with this powerful political force was crucial for the continuation of the Rana regime, in terms of maintaining at least nominal sovereignty over the territory of the Nepali state and in preventing too much influence of external ideas. School education became a prerequisite for taking up a position in government and literacy came to symbolise political influence and social prestige (Caplan 1970, Bista 1991).

However, the perceived educational needs of the elite were tempered by perceptions of the risks associated with the provision of certain forms of schooling and, particularly, with travel to foreign countries. In 1902 sons of members of the aristocracy were sent to Japan to receive a grounding in technical education to temper “the progress of liberal and popular education” (Aryal 1977:124). However, concern was raised about the dangers associated with the contact they had with impure, non-Hindu peoples (Landon 1976 [1926]: 179-80). Consequently, when a request was made in 1905 that students be sent to study in Europe or America, the advisory council to the Prime Minister “advised against this scheme and suggested that it would be better to invite the help of Indian experts” (Landon 1976 [1926]: 180). Thus the ideas associated with the purity of the Hindu state and the need to maintain political and social separation, both within the state and between Nepal and the ‘outside’, were reinforced through the approach the regime took to the provision of education.

This dual attitude to the ‘external’, which counters a fear of impurity with an interest in mimicking the approach of the British in India is evident in the language policy adopted by the Ranas in the early 1900s. On the one hand the ruling elite maintained a strong interest in emulating the English-medium education system. Yet there was also recognition of the importance of language as a means of differentiating Nepal from India. Under the brief reign of Dev Shumsher Rana in 1901, 200 Nepali medium primary schools were established across the country. These were opened to all children, a move that was regarded by others as a potential threat to the position of the Ranas. After only four months, Dev Shumsher was ousted from power and many of these schools were closed down. However, language as a marker of ‘Nepaliness’ was again emphasised in 1934, when Nepali was declared the official language of all

educational institutions and the medium in which School Leaving Certificate examinations were to be conducted. It is notable that this move was made at a time of increased nationalist activity against the British and princely rule in India, and was thus a clear attempt to distance the Nepali polity from this and secure the continuation of Rana rule. Yet, despite such measures, it proved impossible to isolate Nepal from the “ideas and political ferment of modern India” (Mihaly 1965: 16).

### **Resisting Rana Rule**

Attempts by the Ranas to control social dissent resulted in the strict control of teaching of even basic literacy skills, with harsh penalties for those caught engaging in unsanctioned teaching and learning activities. However, covert teaching and learning still took place in homes, behind closed doors. The gradual expansion of educational opportunities gathered pace with the inflow of knowledge and expertise from those who had travelled out from Nepal, either to escape Rana oppression or to seek employment, and the continued transfer of ideas and people across the porous Indo-Nepali border (Wood 1965: 22, Dart 1973).

The period during and immediately after World War II was a time of considerable unease among the Ranas. The return of servicemen and the consequent spread of ideas about alternative ways of life and styles of government posed a threat to the position of the ruling elite. In addition, many ex-soldiers conducted informal literacy classes or established schools to pass on the skills acquired during their period of service. The elite’s wish to maintain Nepal as an ‘isolated’ and consequently ‘pure’ Hindu state became increasingly untenable, as did the position of the Ranas within it (Wood 1965, Aryal 1977). The growing cross-border transfer of knowledge and political ideas, particularly from Nepali Congress party activists in exile in India, became gradually more difficult for the regime to control and ultimately contributed to the overthrow of the oligarchy in 1950.<sup>8</sup> In its place a governing alliance was formed between the Nepali Congress and the Ranas, with each group having seven representatives in the government. The Shah King, Tribhuvan, ascended to the throne and formed the third element of the coalition. The end of Rana domination did not, however, lead to a corresponding reduction in the political use of schooling to justify and secure the positions of particular interest groups. Rather the form and content of

educational provision shifted in order to support the position adopted by the new government.

### **Emerging from Darkness: Experiments with Democracy (1951-60)**

The image of Nepal as being closed off or ‘isolated’ from the rest of the world during the Rana oligarchy is one which strongly influenced the post-revolution government’s attempt to reconstruct the ‘idea of Nepal’. To legitimate their position, the post-1950 period was presented by the government as a time of ‘opening up’ to the outside world. Indeed, due to the somewhat uneasy coalition of groups involved in the overthrow of the Rana oligarchy, the key basis of unity between the ruling groups was their opposition to the previous regime. Consequently, past isolation was equated with stagnation and lack of change (Onta 1997), in contrast to the more dynamic, ‘developing’ path to be taken in the new period of apparent openness. Democracy, modernity and the interconnection between Nepal and the rest of the world became the clarion calls with which the new leadership hoped to gain the support of its newly defined ‘citizens’ (De Chene 1996). Engagement with ideas of modernity and scientific and technological advancement were utilised as markers of the changed attitude and vision of the new leaders. For example, the Five Year Plan for Education (1956) expressed concern that “the encrustation of the rusts of centuries of ritualism have made the conservative minds least receptive and responsive to science” (MOE 1956: 3).

As well as utilising the rhetoric of development, the Nepali state began to engage actively with the new international apparatus of foreign aid. Specifically, funding was accepted from bilateral donors such as India and China, who had strategic, geopolitical interests in offering assistance. Similarly, the United States regarded support for poverty reduction measures in Nepal as a key means to contain the spread of communism in the context of the Cold War (Mihaly 1965). The concept of development (*bikas*) and engagement with external sources of financing increasingly became the mechanism through which the position of the Nepali state came to be understood in relation to the rest of the world. As Pigg notes, “development — rather than the residue scars of imperialism — is the overt link between it and the West. *Bikas* is the term through which Nepalis understand their relationship to other parts of the world” (Pigg 1992: 497).<sup>9</sup> The dominant position of the ruling elite (Indian-

educated, generally high-caste Hindu men) was maintained and even strengthened through the use of this rhetoric, with the idea of development and modernity coming to shape intra-national identities and relationships (Shrestha 1995). *Bikas* thus becomes “the idiom through which the relationship between local communities and other places is expressed” (Pigg 1992: 499). Here a discourse explicitly advocating equality and inclusion sets up as its implicit referent a specific vision of what it is to be modern or developed. This discursive move has significant implications for how inequality is dealt with in practice.

### **Expanding Schooling: A Symbol of Nepal’s Modernity and Development**

The opening up of education opportunities and the development of a ‘national’ education system was used to mark the shift in vision the state had of its relationship both with its citizens and with the outside world.<sup>10</sup> Promoting schooling became both a symbol of the modern, developing nation and a medium through which to transmit this revised vision of the state to the populace. As Caplan has noted, “in practical terms, a programme to build schools in every corner of the country could be implemented in a relatively short time, which meant that results were highly visible, and the resources required, however great, were by and large available locally, so that reliance on external assistance was minimal” (Caplan 1970: 8).

In the education policies developed in the 1950s (e.g. NEPC 1955, MOE 1956) a strong connection between education, the “emerging from darkness” and the “enlightenment” gained by being connected with the outside world is emphasised. Education is seen as an essential tool in enabling both the country and the individual to deal with the challenges of engagement with the international community:

We have become part of the world, whether we like it or not. We can no longer remain isolated; the world has come to us. How can we meet this world without education? Must we — who once were the crossroads of civilisation — bow our heads in shame to our worldly visitors? How can we evaluate the ‘gifts’ that are offered us — ideologies, new customs, inventions and the ways of a new strange world? How can we protect ourselves against slogans and ideologies detrimental to the interests of our country? We can do none of these without education to give us understanding and strength to lead us (MOE 1956: 2).

An increased connection with the outside world was also related, as highlighted in the education policy discourse, to the necessity of having a strong national character to the state, with education envisaged as a crucial medium through which this could be disseminated. Indeed, it was felt that “schools and educational systems exist solely for the purpose of helping the youth of a nation to become better integrated into their society” (NEPC 1955: 14/1).

But in what image was this emerging national identity constructed, and what form of education was consequently encouraged? As noted above, the ‘democratic’ nature of the new government clearly staked out the difference between it and the previous regime, and was the basis upon which it claimed legitimacy. Participation in schooling was portrayed as a way of supporting the national projects of democracy and development and providing the means through which people could “work for the good causes of the nation”. Indeed, the ‘national’ character of the new education system is continually stressed by the NEPC — reference is made to the plan as the ‘Nepal National Education Plan’, to ‘National Schools’, and a ‘National Curriculum’ (NEPC 1955: 7/2). As the NEPC stressed, “Education is the *sin-qua-non* [sic] of success of democracy... if ignorance and illiteracy remain for a long time, democracy will spell doom and disaster. Here is one opportunity for the sons of Nepal to come forward and fight against darkness and bring light in the country” (NEPC 1955: ii).<sup>11</sup>

Such a vision of the nation is, however, founded on the unity, that is the similarity, of the people living within its boundaries. An implicit, highly specific referent is used as the basis on which unity is to be understood, limiting the extent to which ‘difference’ can be valued. This is particularly clearly highlighted in relation to the question of the appropriate language of instruction. A policy explicitly advocating the marginalisation of ethnic languages spoken within the state was introduced on the basis that:

The study of a non-Nepali local tongue would mitigate against the effective development of Nepali... If the younger generation is taught to use Nepali as the basic language then other languages will gradually disappear and greater national strength and unity will result (NEPC 1955: 8/2).

From Class 6 onwards it was regarded as acceptable to begin teaching other languages, including Hindi and English, as by this stage “Nepali can be firmly established” (NEPC 1955: 8/12). From 1959, with the adoption of a national primary school curriculum, Nepali became the compulsory medium of instruction for classes one to five (Onta 1996: 217).

Such practices highlight an implicit valuation of ‘the external’ over ‘the local’ in regard to intra-national relations and contact with influences from beyond the national borders. The external is seen as more ‘enlightened’ than the local. The school curriculum reinforces this valuation, with a move from an emphasis on “life in school and at home” in Class 1 to “life outside Nepal” as a feature of the Class 5 social studies curriculum as a means of gradually expanding “the child’s vision from his immediate to as broad a world outlook as possible” (NEPC 1955: 8/9). The content of schooling reinforced this vision, with a rift emerging between local knowledges about, for example, health and cleanliness and the ‘scientific’ advice presented by teachers and in texts (e.g. Upreti 1976, Shrestha 1995). Thus the more educated children are, the more acquainted they become with places outside their locale. Conversely, there is an impression that those who are uneducated remain confined to the local.

One cannot discuss the emergence of Nepal’s education system in this period without reference to the external (non-Nepali) influence on the development of national education policy. The NEPC, and all major education policy documents prepared through the 1950s and 60s, were devised with the financial and technical assistance of the United States Overseas Mission (USOM, later renamed USAID). Many of the decisions relating to schooling policy were made in light of the experiences of the United States, as a press release, quoting the USAID advisor Hugh B. Wood, from March 1954 highlights:

Dr Wood expressed his views on the problem of the medium of instruction in primary education. He said that two hundred years before, the very problem had started [*sic*] them in the face in the United States of America, which at that time had a multiplicity of spoken languages: but that after the War of Independence, English was given due prominence as the medium of instruction and that today there was no problem of language there. Without laying any emphasis on minor local languages,

Dr Wood referred to the three fold benefit of giving prominence to one language; first, it strengthened national unity; secondly, it economised books and teachers; and thirdly, little boys and girls were apt to learn other languages quicker than when they were fully grown up. Therefore, he added that if primary education was imparted in a national language they would begin to understand it better from their very childhood [sic](reproduced in NEPC 1955: 20/A-2).

From these early attempts at building an integrated education system, external influence on both the structure and content of schooling provision was considerable, with a high level of reliance on foreign funding to finance the promotion of a 'national' programme of education.

Yet, despite these changes in policy and the establishment of new structures for the administration of education at the central level, the impact in terms of access to school at the local level and the control the state had over individual schools was rather limited. The continued conflict between the Ranas, Nepali Congress and the King throughout the 1950s limited the effective implementation of policies and resulted in the rather slow construction of a state infrastructure at the local level, particularly in more remote areas. The lack of effective administrative structures in place meant that the pace of change, the location of schools and the content of instruction were not effectively regulated, contrary to the policy emphasis on the extension of a national, unified system (Ragsdale 1989, Onta 1996). Indeed, in 1960 the Education Minister was still concerned about the "great intermixture of the various systems in the educational structure of the country" and believed that "a democratic national system of education is the imperative need of the hour" (quoted in Onta 1996: 217). The inability to curb the expansion of diverse educational institutions led to calls for a more interventionist approach to ensure that the state's vision of national development could be pursued. Such a policy became more practical to implement as political differences were quashed and large scale infrastructure development projects were undertaken, including the construction of the East-West highway and the expansion of telecommunication links in the post-1960 period.

### ***Ek Bhasa, Ek Bhesh, Ek Desh: National education and the Panchayat Era***

Following almost a decade of struggle and tension between the Nepali Congress party and the monarchy over the locus of legitimate power in the post Rana period, the King

eventually disbanded the party system in a royal coup in December 1960, declaring the “experiment with multi-party democracy” a failure. In its place the *panchayat* system of governance was developed. This would, it was claimed, promote a particularly Nepali style of government. This reconstituting of the state to legitimate the increased power of the monarchy entailed a further revisioning of the relationship between the population and the system of governance.

Under the Rana regime intra-national differences had been recognised through a codified, hierarchical caste structure. The approach taken to the diversity of the Nepali population during the *panchayat* period was far more integrationist, focusing on unity around a common culture (Burghart 1996: 227). Such an approach to the governance of the nation-state was based on tightly organised management and control of intra-national ‘difference’, with strict boundaries imposed on how diverse interests could be expressed (e.g. Adhikary 1996). Ethnic differences were given little official recognition, with public organisations required to fit within particular categories of “class organisations” which were approved by the government. Political parties and ethnic-based groups were explicitly excluded from this.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the nationalistic rhetoric and the forceful propagation of an ‘official’ Nepali nationalism the vision of Nepal presented was still very consciously constructed in relation to images of ‘the external’. Further, with the increasing involvement of development agencies and external financing of activities, the nation-state had to be legible to the international community. To secure external support, the government had to present the state as the provider of key services to the population, such as health, water and education, and to demonstrate a justifiable claim to represent the interests of its citizens. Engaging with the economic and social reforms that were advocated at the global level was thus an important mechanism through which the monarchy and *panchayat* model of government could enhance their popular support within the country and boost the external support required to ensure financial backing for initiatives.

A focus on development and ‘modernity’ also advanced the position of the political elites and their attempts to assimilate different groups within a particular vision of the nation-state through the interlinked processes of ‘Nepalisation’ and ‘modernisation’

(Pfaff-Czarnecka 1997: 435-6). Such a vision of the Nepali nation-state is succinctly expressed in the widely promoted slogan '*ek bhasa, ek bhesh, ek dhesh*' (one language, one dress, one nation). In practice this translated into the forceful presentation of a particular vision of the nation, one that served to legitimate the position of the political elites both to an internal audience and in the eyes of the international community.

The education sector was regarded as a crucial tool in ensuring the promotion of this image and was used by the *panchayat* regime in two distinct ways. Firstly, schools, both as physical spaces and in terms of the curriculum promoted through them, were regarded as a medium through which to propagate a particular vision of the Nepali nation from Kathmandu to the remotest areas of the country. School texts highlighted the 'backwardness' of villages, and ethnic, rural and non-Hindu groups were marginalised and placed in an inferior position to the lifestyles and customs of high caste, Kathmandu living citizens (Pigg 1992, Pfaff-Czarnecka 1999). Secondly, the focus on education helped legitimate the dominant position of the political elites by associating the traits of these groups with 'development': one cultural form was presented as proffering the opportunity to move beyond a state of 'underdevelopment' (Pfaff-Czarnecka 1999: 59). The construction of education as a symbol of progress and modernity, coupled with the strong emphasis given to the modern over the non-modern, cast their position in terms of merit — they were 'educated' — in a society where, at least *de jure*, caste and family privilege had ceased to be a justifiable basis for maintaining positions of power.

Initially, education policy continued in much the same way as had been envisaged by the 1955 NEPC, with education presented as a mechanism which would encourage people to unite around the goal of national development and which would enable Nepal to play a more significant role in the international community. The Rana regime remained the central focus of attack and the basis against which the regime defined itself, with the primary curriculum including time for "discussions on the drawbacks of the Rana regime, with special reference to the freedom of speech, schools for children, facilities to the people (recreation), blind obedience, etc" (MOE 1968: 28).<sup>13</sup>

However, a tighter administrative system and political structures that extended down to the village level ensured that the state was more able to enforce policy and promote changes in public behaviour.<sup>14</sup> Thus when, in 1961, it was made compulsory to sing the national anthem at the beginning of each school day and to display the King's portrait in all school premises, the infrastructure existed to enforce such decrees. Indeed, singing of the national anthem and *rastriya git* (national songs) gradually displaced saying a prayer to Saraswati, which had been how the school day began in the 1950s. As Onta notes, "generating 'a feeling of national unity and solidarity' by making students recite early in the morning words that evoked grand images of the Nepali nation had become more important than praying to Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of learning" (Onta 1996: 219).

Yet, by the late 1960s concern had emerged among the ruling elite, fuelled by the need to address international donor interests and priorities, that the education on offer was not appropriate to the needs of national development, in relation both to the promotion of national unity and economic development (e.g. Wood and Knall 1962, see also Upraity 1982). As Ragsdale explains, "Nepal's small, elitist system of education had been expanded without regard for its suitability to the country's needs", leading to its functioning as a "psychosocial adornment" rather than offering a system which produced citizens able to contribute to the country's economic development (Ragsdale 1989: 15). Attempts to rectify this, and to bring the system more in line with emerging donor interests in technical and vocationally-oriented education, created resentment and increased opposition to the *panchayat* system, notably from students who saw opportunities for advancement foreclosed. For example, in an attempt to limit the numbers of arts and commerce graduates and encourage involvement in more vocationally-oriented sectors, a failure rate of 80% was introduced for university and college courses in these areas, a move which angered students and increased the resistance to the regime (Caplan 1970: 10). In addition, students highlighted the lack of employment opportunities available to graduates, raising fears about the validity of the linkage between improved education and economic development which had informed many of the government's policies and visions of national development.

Such dissatisfaction spread wider than just the education sector, with disquiet increasingly expressed over the way that the state, which had set itself up as the locus of development and modernisation, was unable to match this with actual reform for the mass of the population (Pfaff-Czarnecka 1999: 60). By the late 1960s discontent with the *panchayat* system was growing among the (now underground) political party activists, students and more widely, leading the regime to take a more aggressive stance in order to promote the merits of *panchayat* democracy. Here, again, schooling was used as one of the main mechanisms through which the idea of the *panchayat* as a particularly Nepali system of government and route to development could be reinforced. Thus, while educational institutions were a key source of unrest and dissent, presenting particular images of the state through schools remained one of the primary mechanisms through which the *panchayat* regime hoped to reassert its authority.

### **The National Education System Plan**

The National Education System Plan (NESP) of 1971, perhaps the most politically significant education policy document to emerge in the post-Rana period, was the central focus of this attempt to re-legitimize the *panchayat* regime. It represented a more aggressive attempt to mould the Nepali nation into a particular image, one which served the interests of the *panchayat* rulers. The NESP took the position that education should be based on the promotion of national unity and the assimilation of individuals into the mould of the Nepali nation-state, a state that had at its heart the *panchayat* model of government. As the goals of the NESP state, education was:

to strengthen devotion to crown, country, national unity and the *panchayat* system, to develop uniform traditions in education by bringing together various patterns under a single national policy, to limit the tradition of regional languages, to encourage financial and social mobility, and to fulfil manpower requirements essential for national development (MOE 1971: 1).

The significance of this shift is perhaps most clearly highlighted by comparing the position it takes with that of the earlier Plans. The NEPC stressed that “the context of the curriculum must be adapted to the culture and needs of the people” (NEPC 1955: 8/6), whereas the NESP actively attempted to change the way individuals and groups viewed their ‘culture’ and their relationship with the state through the education

system (Onta 1996:221). As Mohammad Mohsin, one of the main architects of the Plan, emphasised:

Its over-all objective ... is to overhaul the inherited system of education and transform it into a potent and effective mechanism to synthesise diverse socio-economic interests, negotiate ethno-lingual heterogeneity and convert the geopolitical entity of Nepal into an emotionally integrated nationhood (Mohsin 1972: 35-6).

In part this move marked a growing confidence in the government's own capabilities, which resulted from the return of Nepali education experts trained overseas. But it could also be read as an expression of concern over the impact that policies so tied up with international agendas were having on the ability of the ruling group to maintain their legitimacy and control over the various institutions of the state. Indeed, the NESP can be seen as "Nepal's declaration of independence from U.S. policy dominance" (Sellar 1981: 11). Since the 1950s there had been a significant reliance on US financial and technical assistance in education sector reforms; they were the only major donor to the sector in this first 20 years of foreign aid support.

Consequently, shifts in the donor country's aid policy and educational priorities had a significant impact on the form that education reform took in Nepal (Reed and Reed 1968, Sellar 1981).<sup>15</sup> The NESP thus represents, at least in part, an attempt to challenge and break away from this pattern of influence, with some key features of the American-influenced system being overturned. For example, school management committees, which had been introduced in line with the U.S. experience of such systems, were abolished under the new Plan (Reed and Reed 1968: 131-2, Master Plan Team 1997: 124). Schools were thus presented as government, as opposed to community, institutions drawing the school and the village firmly into the national project of development and allowing increased central control over teacher appointment and transfer.<sup>16</sup>

The power of the NESP rhetoric lay in its promotion of the view that national unity based on sameness would provide a level playing field, that it would help promote social mobility and open up greater opportunities for the development of individuals as well as the state. However, the basis of this unity and the sameness to which all were to conform were modelled on, and thus privileged, specific segments of the

society. The “triumvirate of official Nepali nationalism” (Onta 1996:38) — the monarchy, Hinduism and the Nepali language — provided the basis for this national culture with the first two collapsed into a powerful motif of the national culture “palatable to the dominant communities of Bahun and Chhetris, as well as to the elites among the Newars and other communities” (Shah 1993: 9 cited in Onta 1996: 38).

In terms of the curriculum promoted under the NESP, language was again stressed as a crucial factor in promoting the vision of a united Nepal, with 40% of teaching in the primary school devoted to Nepali language instruction. Again this represents a key dimension of national identity and unity, as conceived by the regime. The emphasis on Nepali both differentiated the country from India and highlighted a marker of internal unity and ‘sameness’. In addition, while languages such as English, French, Russian, German, Japanese, Portuguese and Spanish could be taught as optional subjects in high school, only three of the ‘local’ languages of Nepal were included (Maithali, Newari and Bhojpuri), further emphasising the interest in downplaying the value of mother-tongue instruction and diversity while expressing the wish for Nepal to be a player on the world stage.

Further, as Onta (1996, 1997) highlights, a particular vision of the *bir* (brave) Nepali nation was created in school textbooks during the *panchayat* period. Indeed, this template of *rastriya itihas* (national history) was “at the centre of the state-sponsored effort to make students into citizens socialised and loyal” to a specific vision of the nation (Onta 1996: 215). As such, it emerged as an important strand of official Nepali national culture under the *panchayat* system. The picture presented, while claiming to be ‘national’ offers a very particular interpretation that serves to reinforce and legitimate the dominant position of the elite Hindu caste groups and the Shah monarchy. The valuation of high caste Hindu lifestyles and the culture of the urban elite over that of other groups within Nepal was intertwined with and further reinforced by modernisation discourses. Engagement in the project of development was defined as the major marker of social difference, while emphasis continued to be given to the national, and ostensibly inclusive, nature of this project.

The NESP approach was also designed to bring the schooling system firmly into line with the economic development and labour force requirements of the country. As

well as including vocational subjects such as poultry farming, metalwork, auto-mechanics and plumbing in the secondary school curriculum (MOE 1971: 27), dedicated technical schools were also established in a number of areas.<sup>17</sup> Here, however, a key problem with the NESP initiative becomes apparent: despite the well-laid plans to increase the vocational element of instruction, without equipment or trained teachers it was impossible to implement the Plan successfully. Teachers at one school in my research site explained how students at the school had been awarded points for typing courses, when they had never even seen a typewriter. In another I heard that kitchen equipment was kept locked and unused, despite it having been brought in explicitly so that the school could provide training in catering.

There are clear tensions evident in the discourse and practice of the NESP, with the defining of national unity, modernity and the recognition of diversity open to interpretation and political manipulation. For example, the idea of 'the modern' as that which emanated from the centre (i.e. from Kathmandu) was reinforced by the NESP policy of bringing teachers from 'outside' to village schools as part of the National Development Service (NDS) that university students had to complete. Introduced in part to expand the development-oriented dimension of schooling and in part to extend central control over rural areas, the NDS required all university students to spend a 10 month period engaged in rural development work in order to be awarded their degree (Yadav 1982:42).

While the NDS made some contribution to breaking the long-standing urban bias of the education system, the programme was the focus of resistance from many students, particularly those who were from Kathmandu and had to travel out of the Kathmandu Valley for their NDS placement. As Acharya notes, "as the motivation of parents and of students for higher education is largely conditioned by its link with non-farm urban employment opportunities, the program was not readily welcomed in its initial phases" (1982: 56). The student strike of 1975, which expanded to include a series of political demands and marked the start of a concerted campaign against the panchayat system, was initiated around demands associated with their dissatisfaction with the NDS programme. With this growing unrest, the possibility that the presence of students in rural areas would lead to the rapid spread of dissent concerned the government and the programme was quietly abandoned.

Student unrest played a significant catalytic role in the move towards reinstating a multi-party system, with the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) attempting to organise this discontent into a movement against the *panchayat* system in 1980 (Mikesell 1999: 100). While the movement was not in itself successful, a referendum was held to gauge popular support for the *panchayat* system, a vote which, amidst a high level of intimidation and ballot rigging (Mikesell 1999), was narrowly won by the ruling regime. From the late 1970s through to the *Jana Andolan* (People's Movement) of 1990, there were strikes and protests as the political parties became increasingly visible, with schools and colleges significant sites of protest and unrest. The teachers' strike of 1984-85, for instance, began as a pay dispute yet was quickly taken up by the two major outlawed political parties, the Nepali Congress and the various Communist Party factions, as a way to further their popular base (Burghart 1996). A student protest in 1985, called as the result of the police firing on students in the classrooms of Kathmandu's Durbar School, further contributed to the growing unrest across the country, which culminated in several bomb explosions in Kathmandu and a number of provincial centres in June 1985 (Mikesell 1999, Burghart 1996). The shock at this violence led to a temporary abatement of opposition from teachers and political parties alike, only to be fuelled again by the popular discontent with increased food and fuel prices which resulted from the Indian trade embargo imposed in March 1989 and the growing confidence and frustration of the political parties (Hoftun 1994, Hoftun *et al* 1999). This time the movement was more coordinated and coincided with a growing sense of defeatism and internal division within the old regime, and thus ultimately led to the 'revolution', or rather the restoration of multi-party democracy, in 1990.

With such unrest and the failure of the iconic NESP, education policy in the 1980s became increasingly tied to the agendas of international donors as the government sought financial support and both internal and international legitimacy. During this period a shift in the support given by donors to Nepal can be traced, with the United Nations' agencies and the World Bank becoming increasingly significant players in the education sector. Two projects of particular note were introduced during this period, the Education for Rural Development Project ('the Seti Project'), developed and funded by UNICEF, UNESCO and UNDP (Bennett 1979), and the Primary

Education Project (PEP), supported by UNICEF and the World Bank. Both were spatially bounded initiatives, confined to a limited number of districts: the former to six districts in the Far Western region of the country, and PEP in a further twenty districts scattered throughout Nepal. Such initiatives highlight the explicit intertwining of approaches to education reform in Nepal with global programmes and the interests of the international donor community, in these cases the need to utilise integrated approaches to rural development and the growing focus on the promotion of ‘education for all’, with a particular emphasis placed on primary schooling. Such a focus encouraged a move away from a centrist approach to school administration with the introduction of a school ‘cluster’ model and the use of ‘resource centres’ as mechanisms to encourage more decentralised control and management of educational institutions (e.g. Tamang & K.C.: 1995:i).<sup>18</sup> Clearly such moves represent a clash of interests for the government which wished both to gain international support, by engaging with the rhetoric of decentralisation, and to maintain the privileges and power of the ruling group.<sup>19</sup> However, this process of seeking internal and international legitimacy for the state through engagement with global development discourse and international initiatives continued apace as the state was subject to a further re-visioning as a result of the ‘Movement for the Restoration of Democracy’ in 1990.

### **Unity Amidst Diversity: Multi-party Democracy and Schooling**

With the fall of the *panchayat* regime and the re-emergence of a multi-party democratic structure in 1990, the Nepali nation was again re-imagined and redefined. The Constitution was re-written to define Nepal as a “multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, democratic, indivisible, sovereign, Hindu and Constitutional Monarchical Kingdom” (Hutt 1993). This shift in construction of the nation represents a further attempt by a new political regime to distance itself from its predecessor, in this case by emphasising the acceptance of a greater degree of intra-national ‘difference’ — both political and social — than was permitted during the *panchayat* period. In addition, with ‘development’ remaining a key feature of this construction, government policy continued to be influenced by external relations and, specifically, the requirements and expectations of development assistance organisations.

The return to multi-party democracy was couched in terms of increasing participation and strengthening of civil society. This fitted neatly with the expressed interests of leading donor agencies in promoting greater partnership between actors in the development process and for a more participatory approach to the construction and implementation of programmes. Indeed, as De Chene has highlighted, what has emerged in the 1990s is not “adjective-less democracy”, but “*bikase*” democracy; democracy based on engagement with development processes of the international donor community (De Chene 1996). Yet, multiple layers of conflict remain, with the government seeking to mediate competing visions of the role of the state whilst striving to maintain the authoritative position of the ruling elite.

Such interests are particularly evident in negotiations that took place as the Constitution was prepared and attempts made to appease the interests of various groups.<sup>20</sup> Ethnic and linguistic rights organisations, for example, found their claims for the greater recognition of diversity were widely dismissed or only partially dealt with by those preparing the final documentation. Their demands were interpreted by the Constitution Recommendations Commission as a source of communal tension and a potential threat to national unity. Rather than address the concerns expressed by these groups and acknowledge their claims for greater inclusion, the activists’ claims were dismissed as irrelevant (Hutt 1993: 35-6). What recognition of diversity there was in the Constitution was carefully balanced against provisions which secured the position of existing dominant groups. In the case of language, for instance, while languages spoken as a mother tongue within the state were given the status of ‘national languages’ (*rastriya bhasa*), Nepali in the Devanagari script retained a privileged position as the ‘language of the nation’ (*rastra bhasa*) and the official language of government.

An examination of the impact of global discourses on educational reform in the post-1990 period highlights this intertwining of local, national and global visions of the state and the inclusion of diverse groups, and highlights the tensions that exist as a result. The World Conference on Education for All in 1990 and the Declaration which stemmed from it (WCEFA 1990) reiterated the belief that a ‘global consensus’ on education for development policies had emerged. This position included a call for a greater focus on basic and primary levels of education and the reaffirmation of the

commitment to universal primary education. The new government in Nepal signed up to the WCEFA Declaration as one of its first international agreements, signalling interests in establishing strong links with the international community and in attracting financial support for development efforts. In 1992, the multi-donor financed Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) was instigated as a national response to this global initiative.

The relationship between education and the dominant global vision of development became more strongly articulated throughout the 1990s, with greater certainty over, for example, the links between level of education and fertility levels, farming productivity and child mortality. This discourse filtered through to the national level, with the promotion of education in Nepal linked even more strongly to ideas of development. Here, however, a relationship with ‘development’ and external ideas and institutions is articulated not simply in terms of modernisation discourses, but in relation to discourses of participation, partnership and poverty alleviation. Further, with this increasing globalisation of education initiatives came a need for a high degree of comparability between the outcomes of BPEP and the indicators used for the assessment of Education For All at the regional and global level. Thus an increased focus on quantifiable indicators of achievement emerged, with studies commissioned which aimed to highlight changes in areas of key interest to the global donor community (e.g. EDSC 1999, 1997, CERID 1997).

Consequently the types of ‘diversity’ focused on and made explicit for this forum were somewhat different from previous policies, with gender, disability, ‘socially disadvantaged’ groups and, particularly, poverty becoming salient indicators of difference at the policy and programme level. The 1992 Report of the National Education Commission, for example, highlighted that, “After the reinstatement of democracy in the country, it has been realised on all hands that education has a key role to play in bringing about social changes, and in the reconstruction of the nation as a whole” (NEC 1992: 1). It was therefore important to provide education to women, children, orphans, the disabled and the poor “to enable them to become partners of national development” (*ibid.*: 6). Such rhetoric speaks to two distinct audiences, the international aid community and an internal audience who anticipated significant social and political change in light of the constitutional reforms.

The images which adorn the covers of the social studies textbooks portray the sense of unity around development interests which is emphasised in education policy. The Class 5 textbook *Mero Desh*, for example, depicts school children engaged in a range of development efforts, including planting trees, helping disabled people to cross the road, and cleaning a temple courtyard. More direct articulation of donor agency interests can be found in the content of the school curriculum. For example, UNICEF's mark can be seen in the Social Science curriculum. *Mero Desh* Book 4, for example, includes a lesson on children's rights which draws attention to the plight of the *kathi*(street children) of Kathmandu and the difficulties faced by child workers. The Health, Population and Environment component of the grade 9 and 10 curriculum has received extensive support from IUCN (The World Conservation Union) and UNFPA, with curriculum development and textbook publication assisted by these organisations. The content of this course thus links very strongly with the development goals prioritised by these institutions, namely the need to curb rapid population expansion in the interests of alleviating poverty and protecting the environment.

Despite the emphasis on 'unity amidst diversity' as the defining characteristic of the nation, a lack of clarity remains about how diversity is actually to be dealt with and in what image 'unity' is to be constructed. As the NEC Report notes, the new Constitution "affirms that the State will follow a policy of maintaining national unity in the midst of the cultural diversity of the country by allowing everybody to develop his [sic.] language, literature, script, art and culture in healthy, happy harmony with all other religions, ethnic groups, communities and languages" (NEC 1992: 6). Tension remains, however, over whether this vision can go beyond representing diversity as the colourful cultural differences of the many ethnic groups, their food, clothes and lifestyles, and begin to tackle the underlying inequalities of access to resources and the differential status of various social groups within the nation.

The greater recognition of diversity proffered under the multi-party system also produced greater space for challenges to be made to the existing construction of 'Nepaliness'. Again, education policy and practice emerged as key arenas within which alternative visions were advanced. Consequently, a complex network of interests and competing visions of the Nepali nation-state can be seen interacting in

and around the site of the school (Caddell 2002). Political parties and ethnic activist groups, for example, have sought to harness the power of the school to advance their particular visions of the Nepali nation and social change. This power stems partly from the presence of large groups of educated young people in a context where they are able to communicate and mobilise — a situation which continues to make schools and colleges desirable recruiting grounds for support. Indeed, teacher and student unions affiliated to the main political parties are active in many government schools, recruiting members and disseminating party messages.

But the significance of the school goes beyond this. Its political value is integrally linked to the widespread perception of the school as an institution connected to places and ideas considered to be ‘developed’ (Pigg 1992). The school acts as an arena in which alternative models of development and the state can be presented. Groups, such as the Maoists and ethnic activist organisations, compete to win the support and confidence of the populace through school-based activities (Caddell 2002: 203ff). For example, the Maoists have demanded an end to the practice of collecting fees from government school pupils, the cessation of compulsory Sanskrit instruction and have forced schools to end the practice of singing the national anthem during assemblies. Such moves appear to be aimed both at gaining popular support for the movement at highlighting the alternative vision of Nepal the Maoists wish to see develop – a republican state.

The challenges offered do not, however, completely reject the dominant model of the state. Both the Maoists and the ethnic activist groups retain a focus on improving and expanding ‘development’ opportunities. It is the nature of that ‘development’ and the intra and inter-state relations in which it is to be achieved that are contested. The Maoists, for example, claim to offer opportunities for previously marginalised groups to directly engage in development efforts. In this context, however, the process of development and participation is somewhat different from the dominant model promoted through government policy, involving a reshaping of the political and social landscape. Ethnic activist organisations seek to place their perceived constituents at the centre of development efforts whilst challenging inequalities in existing state policy and practice. Many ethnic organisations offer scholarship programmes to allow children from their respective groups to attend school. Others aim to promote

mother-tongue instruction through the development of textbooks and teacher training in ethnic languages. In this case development and diversity are again central features of the vision of Nepal, although the specific configuration of the relationship poses a challenge to existing practice. The school, as a key site of ‘development’ in the popular imagination, is thus an important arena in which these alternatives can be promoted and legitimated.

## **Conclusion**

Through this paper the relationship between schooling, development and the Nepali state has been explored from a historical perspective, highlighting the complex intertwining of these concepts and the contested and political use to which they have been put by various groups. Significantly, there remains a degree of common ground between the positions. Both those who promote and those who seek to challenge the dominant frameworks of schooling in Nepal engage in discussions that revolve around the same central ideas, particularly the importance of schooling as a site for the promotion of individual, community and national development. Yet, despite the common language, distinctly different dialects are discernible, which significantly shift the way in which the rhetoric is utilised.

In the post-1950 period, we see the formulation of ideas of the ‘nation’ and of ‘development’ which, while presented as neutral, converge with the cultural and social traits associated with the ruling groups. Purportedly ‘national education’ is in practice education which promotes a particular vision of the nation — and benefits specific groups within it. Due to the considerable donor involvement in the education sector since the early 1950s, the construction of a national education system is also strongly influenced by external visions and representations of ‘Nepal’ and the wider development aid agenda of agencies involved in the reform process. Burghart’s assertion that the *panchayat* government legitimated itself “on native terms, but through foreign eyes” (1996: 260) is therefore more widely illuminating in terms of education policy development. Education as a ‘national’ project is articulated by successive governments in terms that resonate with internal political interests. In addition, the requirement of foreign funding and support ensures that ideas and forms of organisation are presented in terms that are legible within an international context.

In the post-1990 era this remains the case, although with greater opportunity for those ‘native terms’ to be challenged and alternative visions proffered.

Understanding the historical context of educational, political and social change highlights the embedded nature of tensions between visions of national unity, modernity and ‘development’. Such a trajectory has important implications for how the contemporary context of education reform is conceived and engaged with. Calls to keep politics out of educational planning (e.g. MPT 1997:5) and policy documents that highlight the development ‘goods’ that schooling offers overlook the complex position of the institution in contemporary Nepal. Rather, there is a need to take a more situated view of the intertwining of visions of development and tradition, national unity and external influence. Educational reform and the social space of the school remain key arenas in which struggles over the nature of these relationships are played out. Understanding the multiple visions of the Nepali state and development promoted and challenged through schools must, therefore, remain a key concern of those seeking to comprehend or influence social and educational change in the contemporary context.

### **Endnotes:**

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<sup>1</sup> The PhD research from which this paper draws was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. Further support for publication and dissemination of findings was provided by an ESRC Post Doctoral Fellowship.

<sup>2</sup> The current primary school texts were produced with the assistance of UNICEF and, at the secondary level, particular courses have been introduced and supported by development agencies. The Population and Environment component of the Grade 9 and 10 curriculum received support from IUCN (The World Conservation Union) and UNFPA.

<sup>3</sup> Instigated by Jung Bahadur Rana in a temporary alliance with the Queen, the Kot Massacre of 15th September 1846 saw the routing of the leading noblemen and the fleeing of the King to Banaras. Attempts were made by the King in 1847 to regain his position, but he was taken prisoner and the heirs to the throne were kept under strict surveillance (see Wright 1958 [1877], Mihaly 1965: 14 for a detailed account of these events).

<sup>4</sup> Liechty suggests that “Nepal’s management of foreignness through a practice of selective exclusion shifted from being a strategy of foreign policy (to protect the state from foreign intervention) to a desperate domestic policy (to protect the Rana regime from its own people)” (Liechty 1997: 8).

<sup>5</sup> This legal codification of intra-state relations and the strict taxation policies of the Ranas were somewhat variably enforced (Pfaff-Czarnecka 1999: 51, Mihaly 1965: 14).

<sup>6</sup> Indeed, in 1877, the British Resident Surgeon in Kathmandu remarked that the subject of schools could be dismissed as “briefly as that of snakes in Ireland. There are none” (Wright 1958 [1877]: 18).

<sup>7</sup> During his trip to Europe in 1850, the first Rana Prime Minister, Jung Bahadur Rana, appeared particularly impressed with the English system of education (Aryal 1977).

<sup>8</sup> An abortive coup attempt in 1940 led by Indian-educated Nepalis was the first of a series of high profile attempts to topple the existing system. This led ultimately to a concerted military attack on the

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ruling oligarchy from Indian soil in 1950, notably with the assistance of disaffected lower ranking members of the Rana family.

<sup>9</sup> This vision of Nepal as only opening to the outside world in 1950 was also utilised by the development agencies as a basis for justifying intervention, with Nepal seen as a “development laboratory”, a “blank slate” and a “textbook opportunity” to try out new approaches to social reform and aid provision (Fujikura 1996).

<sup>10</sup> The increase in the number of schools in Nepal since 1950 is striking, rising from 321 in 1950 to 10,130 in 1980 and 23,702 in 1994 (NPC 1996, MOE 1997).

<sup>11</sup> The ‘daughters’ of Nepal were not to be excluded from this process. Girls were considered to be “homemakers and citizens” and needed education as much as boys in order to fulfil these roles (NEPC 1955: 8/2).

<sup>12</sup> Five class organisations were recognised — farmers, women, workers, youth, and ex-servicemen — and all organisations had to fit into one of these categories if they were to be deemed legitimate groups under the *panchayat* system (Borgstrom 1980).

<sup>13</sup> The All Round National Education Committee, established in 1961, did introduce slight revisions to the previous school curriculum, including the inclusion of the biographies of national heroes, patriots and martyrs and lessons on *rajbhakti* (service to the monarchy) (Onta 1996: 218).

<sup>14</sup> The regime, however, was not interested in challenging private behaviour, only that which directly and publicly threatened to disrupt the order of the regime (see Burghart 1996 pp. 300-318).

<sup>15</sup> From 1954-1975 USAID provided nearly US\$19 million to education projects in Nepal, including support to the Educational Materials Organisation, a focus on promoting universal primary education between 1954-67, and attempts to promote vocational education. The university sector received support from India (Upraity 1982: 5).

<sup>16</sup> A further rejection of the U.S. model was the reduction of primary schooling from five to three years.

<sup>17</sup> Pre-vocational training was introduced in lower secondary (Class 4-7), with primary classes including sections on hygiene and handicraft production (MOE 1971: 24-25).

<sup>18</sup> A number of schools (approximately 15-20) are grouped together for training and supervision purposes. A ‘resource person’ is responsible for each cluster and events are held in the designated ‘resource centre’.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Dixit’s discussion of the Seti Project (2002: 209).

<sup>20</sup> There was also a significant external focus to the constitutional amendments. The Commission sent a representative to Britain on a study tour, to examine constitutional issues, including relations between the elected government and the monarchy (Hutt 1993: 35).

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