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The Politics of Public Schooling in Nepal, and the Quest for Leadership for Social Justice: An Exploratory Study of Public School Leaders in Bardiya District

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I was born and schooled in Bardiya, a rural district in western Nepal which is synonymous with Tharus as this is their ancestral homeland. Tharu is one of the many severely disadvantaged indigenous communities in Nepal, although the country prides itself being a cultural mosaic. I grew up with them celebrating their festivals, their culture and traditions, and speaking their language. Although the district was predominantly Tharus, they remained almost invisible in public schools. There was a complete disconnect between their schooling experience and home experience resulting their alienation from schools. Public schools are conducted in Nepali language that celebrate dominant high-caste hill Hindu culture in schooling processes serving mostly dominant community. Given this context, I am now investigating for how public school leaders, those who are committed for social justice, ensure education success for these students who are the victim of the education system they are the part.

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