

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
DHARAN, NEPAL: A NARRATIVE STUDY

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## AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Dolaraj Bhandari* for the degree *Master of Philosophy in Educational Leadership* presented on *17 November 2025* entitled *Conflict Resolution Strategies of Secondary Schools in Dharan, Nepal: A Narrative Study*.

## APPROVED BY

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Though the schools and parents are joint partners in student achievement, conflict between them pose significant challenges to schools advancement. This study discovers the causes of school-parent conflicts and explores the resolution strategies used by the nine participants of four secondary schools of Dharan Sub-metropolitan City.

Following the narrative approach, the study begins with a comprehensive review of the available empirical, theoretical, policy, and methodological literature. Findings indicate that inadequate communication, unrealistic expectations, a lack of understanding, unprofessional teachers, rising school fees, unaccountability, inadequate parental support, student- related disputes, and weak implementation of government policies contribute to conflict.

Through the theoretical lens of Behavioral Leadership and the Theory of Conflict Transformation, this research examines how leaders make decisions based on their prior experience. The personal experience of the cause and resolution of conflict is different. Thus, strategies are applied by different individuals in similar situations as well. It observed the necessity of school leaders to transform conflict into peace and cooperation through effective leadership strategies.

Conflict can be transformed through effective communication, development of understanding, and adherence of professional etiquette, that in turn enhances teacher

professionalism, foster greater accountability, promotes a positive family ethos, and supports spirituality in daily life. Behavioral leadership and conflict transformation strategies are important for conflict resolution.

Despite the constitutional and legal provisions of the Constitution of Nepal (2015), Consumer Protection Act (2018), and School as a Zone of Peace Implementation Directives (2011), and Educational Act (1971) weak implementation is prevailing due to ignorance, and negligence. These policies have not been effective in preventing and resolving the school-parent conflict. Valuable contributions of this research to the literature include; following a decent family ethos and adherence to spirituality in daily life foster tolerance and acceptance, thereby meaningfully reducing conflict and promoting resolution. The outcomes are applicable to strengthen school-parent associations, which advise policy implementation, monitoring, and strategy development for the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

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17 November 2025

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## शोधसार

शैक्षिक नेतृत्व तथा व्यवस्थापनमा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीको लागि दोलराज भण्डारीको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक "माध्यमिक विद्यालयहरूको द्वन्द्व समाधानका रणनीतिहरू: एक सङ्कथन" १ मंसिर २०८२ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो ।

.....

डा. कुलप्रसाद खनाल

शोध निर्देशक

विद्यालय, अभिभावक र विद्यार्थी सिकाइका साझेदार भएतापनि उनीहरूविचको द्वन्द्वले विद्यालयको प्रगतिमा चुनौति खडा गरिरहेको छ।यो कथात्मक अनुसन्धान पाँचवटा विद्यालय र नौवटा सहभागिहरूका अनुभवका आधारमा विद्यालय र अभिभावक विच हुने द्वन्द्वका कारण र ती द्वन्द्व समाधानका लागि धरान उपमहानगरपालिका भित्रका माध्यमिक विद्यालयहरूले अपनाएका रणनीतिहरूका बारेमा केन्द्रित रहेको छ।

यो अध्ययन कथात्मक विधिमा आधारित रहेर पूर्वसाहित्यको अनुभवजन्य, सैधान्तिक, पद्धतिय, तथा नीतिगत पक्षको विश्लेषणबाट प्रारम्भ भएको छ।अध्ययनबाट प्राप्त तथ्यहरूले अप्रयाप्त संचार, अव्यवहारिक अपेक्षा, असमझदारी, पेशागत गुणमा कमजोर शिक्षक, विद्यार्थी र विद्यालयका चासोहरूमा अभिभावक सहयोगको कमी, विद्यार्थीहरू विचको द्वन्द्व तथा सरकारी नीतिहरूको फितलो कार्यान्वयन विद्यालय तथा अभिभावकहरूमा असमझदारी सृजना गर्ने मुख्य कारकका रूपमा पाइएको छ।

यो अध्ययनलाई व्यवहारवादी नेतृत्व तथा द्वन्द्व रुपान्तरणका सिद्धान्तको दृष्टिकोणबाट विश्लेषण गरिएको छ।यसले नेतृत्वले कसरी आफ्ना पूर्व अनुभवहरूमा आधारित रहेर निर्णय गर्दछन भन्ने तथ्यलाई कथानात्मक माध्यमबाट प्रस्तुत गर्दछ।कथानात्मक अनुसन्धान दृष्टिकोणका आधारमा विद्यालय र अभिभावकका विचमा द्वन्द्वका कारण र द्वन्द्व निवारणका तरिकाहरू व्यक्ति र सन्दर्भ अनुसार फरक-फरक हुने गर्दछन्।यो अध्ययनले विद्यालयको नेतृत्वले प्रभावकारी रणनीतिहरूको प्रयोग गरी विद्यालय र अभिभावकको द्वन्द्वलाई शान्ति र सहकार्यमा रुपान्तरण गर्नसक्ने देखिएको छ।

प्रभावकारी संवाद, समझदारीको विकास, पेशागत गुणको विकास, जवाफदेहिता, सकारात्मक पारिवारिक संस्कार र दैनिक जिवनमा आध्यात्मिकताको प्रयोगबाट विद्यालय र अभिभावकको द्वन्द्व रुपान्तरण तथा निवारण गर्न सकिन्छ । यसैगरी व्यवहारिक नेतृत्व तथा द्वन्द्व रुपान्तरणका माध्यमबाट पनि द्वन्द्व समाधान गर्न सकिन्छ।विद्यालय र अभिभावकको द्वन्द्व घटाउन नेपालको संविधान, २०७२, उपभोक्ता संरक्षण ऐन, २०७५, विद्यालय शान्तिक्षेत्र राष्ट्रिय ढाँचा कार्यान्वयन निर्देशिका,२०६८, तथा शिक्षा ऐन,२०२८

जस्ता कानुनी तथा संवैधानिक प्रावधान भएतापनि अनविज्ञता र हेलचक्रयाइका कारण ती कानुनी तथा संवैधानिक प्रावधानको पालना फितलो देखिएको छ।

आध्यात्मिकताको प्रयोग तथा आदर्श पारिवारिक वातावरणले सहनशीलता र सर्वस्वीकार्यता बढाइ द्वन्द्व रोकथाममा महत्वपूर्ण भुमिका खेल्ने तथ्य यस अध्ययनका महत्वपूर्ण योगदान रहेका छन्। यसबाट आएका निचोडहरू विद्यालय-अभिभावक समबन्ध सुधार, नीतिगत व्यवस्था तथा कार्यान्वयन, अनुगमन तथा सुपरिवेक्षणका लागि प्रयोग हुन सक्दछन्।

.....  
दोलराज भण्डारी  
उपाधि उमेदवार

१ मंसिर २०८२

This dissertation entitled *Conflict Resolution Strategies of Secondary Schools in Dharan, Nepal: A Narrative Study* presented by *Dolaraj Bhandari* on *17 November 2025*.

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

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## DECLARATION

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

.....

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## DEDICATION

My M Phil journey is based on the selfless support of my parents and family members. Thus, this dissertation is dedicated to my respected parents and loving family members. Your continuous faith to me resulted this achievement.

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I am deeply grateful to have completed my MPhil dissertation, '*Conflict Resolution Strategies of Secondary Schools in Dharan, Nepal: A Narrative Study*', at Kathmandu University. This success denotes the completion of a long standing academic ambition.

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I am extremely grateful to my parents for their absolute affection and blessings. To my wife, whose tolerance and support sustained me through the most challenging phases of this work I am forever thankful. I also thank my children, friends, and well-wishers for your inspiration throughout this academic journey.

Despite facing hindrances such as participant withdrawal and transcription issues, I continuously committed to ethical and rigorous research practices. I am sincerely grateful to all research participants for their valuable contributions. Similarly, I appreciate the support of the head teachers from the five selected schools from Dharan.

Throughout my MPhil expedition, I had the pleasure of learning from and engaging with committed faculty members and peers. I extend my heartfelt thanks to all of them for enriching my academic understanding.

To conclude, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the scholars whose work informed and inspired this study. I am indebted to everyone who supported me, directly or indirectly, in making this journey significant and enjoyable.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Eds	Editors
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoLESC	Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security
NLC	Nepal Law Commission
PP	Pages
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
RP	Restorative Practice
SEE	Secondary Education Examination
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### **Chapter Overview**

This is the introductory chapter of this research. It begins with scene-setting and the background for conducting the research. The introduction also incorporates the research problem, with the problem statement providing clarification. The purpose of the study addresses the necessity of the research, while the objectives elucidate the reasons for conducting it. The rationale of the study underscores its significance. Finally, the limitations are discussed, specifying the areas within which the research is confined.

### **Setting the Scene**

I have been a teacher and school leader since 1997. As a subject teacher and appointment holder, I have encountered different conflicts with the parents of the students in my school. Throughout my teaching career, I have consistently interacted with parents. When parents come to school with a happy mood and positive remarks, it greatly delights me. At the same time, there are many cases where the parents come with anger and frustration. They blame teachers and staff for every weakness of students. Many times the debate turns into conflict. I observed that the conflict between family members and the school affecting the psychology of young students.

The debate and conflict multiply the problems rather than the meaningful solutions and positive results. The few conflicts were easily solved, but many of them ruined our personal relationship. Sometimes, the debates between the teacher and parent turned into a debate between the school and the parent. I found that, when the conflict between the school and parents is resolved the problems of students decrease, but if the conflict is continues, cooperation and achievements are compromised. When involved in conflict resolution between the school and parents, I recognized that some strategies could easily lead to fierce debates and hinder a productive partnership. I decided to explore effective strategies of resolving conflict between the school and parents. I realized that rather than using random methodologies, there should be prescribed strategies to resolve the school-parent conflict, which help to save time, resources, and the dignity of both parents and the school.

I have been an eyewitness to both challenging and positive parent-school relationships. I have experienced difficult situations when conflicts arose between parents and the school, and I have also observed the joy of working with cooperative parents who support the school community in times of need. From my experience, a warm and supportive relationship can help navigate even the most difficult situations, while a strained relationship can create obstacles, even in comfortable circumstances. Numerous studies supported the importance of parental engagement and involvement in the learning process. A comprehensive acceptance of parental involvement lays the groundwork for schools to offer suitable assistance to all parents in caring for their children (Goodall & Montgomery, 2023). Parents and schools should work together and support one another. There needs to be a supplementary partnership between parents and school, nonetheless, there are severe conflicts between these stakeholders on a regular basis. People believe that for effective learning at home, student require parental support (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017).

Throughout my career I have frequently experienced conflict between school-parent. I felt really hard when I was needed to be involved in debate and arguments with the parents. Most of the tussles were not directly related to parents and teachers but they were connected with the students which used to ruin the warm relations of school and parents. I would complain that the teacher did not pay sufficient attention to homework checking, paid less attention in checking the examination scripts, followed physical and verbal insults against students, students got low achievement in curricular and extra-curricular activities and so on. Meanwhile, I found that the conflicting situation was also related to the parents and students.

I attempted to identify some effective ways of dealing with parents and applied them. Unfortunately, many of them did not work with the next parent. I asked some of my friends what they were doing to resolve the conflicts with their student's parents. Inquiring about others' ways of conflict resolution led to a desire to conduct this research at the MPhil level.

During this study, I reviewed some of the research conducted to resolve conflicts related to schools. Most of them were related to teacher-student conflict, which is done in other nations. I found limited studies concerned to school-parent conflicts that were conducted in other nations. In my experience, conflicts between schools and parents are increasing daily. However, there are no contemporary local strategies that are recommended based on recent investigations. I did not find

satisfactory field- based suggestions that could be applied in the school worked, which motivated me to undertake this study. Thus, this study aims to identify the strategies employed by the schools in their interactions with parents. This study refers to the teachers, school staff, deputy head teacher, head teacher, and other school authorities collectively as the ‘school’ as a whole. Similarly, the following section provides an overview of the study’s background.

### **Background of the Study**

Conflicts in beliefs, actions, and lifestyles are common among diverse personalities. At times, these variances fail to yield a mutual understanding, leading to tension in both personal and shared relationships. In my experience, conflict often manifests through anger, verbal insults, physical confrontations, and other negative behaviors that disrupt harmony and affect individuals and groups. It can be defined as a clash of differing thoughts, opinions, and perspectives that may even evolve up to enmity or hostility. The procedure of addressing and resolving such disputes in a constructive and peaceful manner is referred to ‘conflict resolution’ (Wani, 2011). Its objective is to reduce or eliminate tension through effective strategies. Strategies are context-specific methods used to cope with and resolve conflicts. In this study, conflict resolution strategies refer to the methods that schools adopt to handle and manage conflicts with the parents of their students.

Cooperation is a fundamental factor for prosperity of institutions. Trust between the parents and the school family supports students in interpreting challenges as opportunities for growth. Over a period, individual trust can evolve into institutional trust (Oelsner, 2003). Similarly, Tjosvold et al. (2014) observed that if tussles are managed well, they can be favorable and profitable. To achieve the possible benefits from the conflict leaders should adopt approaches that encourage collaboration toward shared goals rather than personal agendas (Berraies & El Abidine, 2019). School leaders need to be aware of the possible causes of conflicts and seek to resolve or transform them into positive competition. However, the academic environment is often marked by blame and criticism (Duke, 1978). I am deeply concerned that students are usually left disheartened due to ongoing conflicts between school and parent.

When students go home, they often hear complaints about school, and when they go to school, they listen to criticisms of their home. This continuous exposure to blame from both sides can be demoralizing, leading students to perceive both

environments as unsupportive or even aggressive. Lareau (2000) focused on promoting intensive home-school connections and advocates for the removal of barriers that hinder positive associations between families and schools.

Schools and parents can make a remarkable contribution to students' academic achievement. A close association between them enhances learning by encouraging students to engage equally at home and at school. Student progress, therefore, depends on the strength of the parent-school relationship (Oostdam & Hooge, 2013). Though parent-school partnerships are well-recognized in educational literature, they are not effectively practiced by many schools and parents. In my observation, many students are negatively impacted by serious conflicts between schools and parents. The broken organizational spirit of schools needs to be revived through ideal partnerships.

Commonly, people do not view conflict as something optimistic. However, not all conflict is dangerous (Lampkin, 2023). In fact, it can foster a vigorous competition of thoughts, encourage diverse approaches to work, and enhance performance in areas such as service delivery, academic achievement, and workplace responsibilities (Bacal, 2004). Conflict becomes destructive when it intensifies into personal quarrels, verbal abuse, or emotional and physical damage. Hence, schools must manage conflict in a positive manner to maintain a healthy atmosphere that supports performance and collaboration.

Conflict often creates tension and discomfort in social and professional relationships. When people work together, differences in opinions about how to achieve shared goals, frequently lead to conflict (Uline et al., 2003). These differences are often rooted in diverse cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs, societal upbringing, and learning styles (Jared & Thinguri, 2017). From this perspective, conflict is usual and expected part of human interaction, especially in environments where individuals work together.

In the school context, unresolved arguments between parents and teachers can significantly damage the relationship between home and school (Lasater, 2016). These conflicts are repeatedly shaped by differing educational philosophies and expectations, which reveal broader tensions between the roles of schools and families (Mueller, 2014). However, there is a notable lack of research on how such school-parent conflicts are addressed in contemporary Nepal. There is no local evidence to suggest that a particular strategy would be effective in a specific situation. I could not

find reliable studies related with school-parent conflicts that are connected to student academic and extra-curricular achievement. Likely, there is lack of local study that highlights conflict among students transforming into conflict between school and parents.

Grounded in my experience, if conflicts between parents and schools can be transformed into cooperation and trust and interaction, they can significantly improve institutional effectiveness and student outcomes. I have found that conflicts are inevitable, they can be addressed through well-planned, constructive strategies. Not the conflict itself, but the approach to its resolution that shapes the future of school. Operational strategies can lead to institutional progress significantly, while poorly handled conflicts can create long-term dysfunction.

I have regularly observed that strong parent-school relationships contribute to a more supportive and productive learning environment. While conflict is not possible to isolate, it is essential that both groups work together to resolve conflicts and restore collaborative relationships. I observe conflict as a usual phenomenon, one that must be addressed through timely, thoughtful, and profitable solutions. School leaders, in particular, the head teacher, can play a crucial role in managing conflict and turning disagreements into opportunities for dialogue and professional growth.

So far, encouraged by my understandings and observations, I have been exploring operational strategies for resolving school-parent conflicts. At the same time, I need to undertake a dissertation as part of my MPhil program. These two influences have aligned to form the basis of this research: identifying and analyzing effective conflict resolution strategies between the school and parents in the context of Dharan, Nepal.

School-parent conflicts are among the important factors contributing to an unhealthy school environment. Ideally, corporations would thrive without friction between schools and families. However, in practice, conflicts regularly arise as schools and parents operate within different social subsystems, meet with varied worldviews, expectations, and communication styles. School-parent conflicts can disrupt the learning environment, foster mistrust, and divert attention away from student-centered collaboration. If these conflicts are not resolved, they negatively impact students' academic growth and excellence.

Identifying and applying constructive approaches to resolve misunderstandings between schools and guardians is critical for building a positive

educational climate. In this regard, Gary (2021) emphasizes that differences in perspectives and opinions are common in collaborative settings, which underscores the importance of implementing effective conflict resolution strategies.

This study takes a narrative approach to explore how schools in Nepal manage and resolve conflicts with parents. There are several key questions that guide this research: Why do conflicts arise between the school and parents? Do they stem from a lack of parental understanding of school operations? Are they the result of school staff disregarding parental input? Can they originate from students' behavior and their interpretation by both parties? What strategies are currently applied by schools and parents? How effective are these approaches in resolving conflict? There are many questions connected to the relation of school and parents waiting for an evidence based answer.

These questions highlight to gaps in the existing literature, particularly in the Nepali context, where studies on school-parent conflict resolution are insufficient and often unconvincing. This research aims to contribute new, context-specific visions into how such conflicts are navigated in Nepali schools. The next section outlines the statement of the problem that underpins this study.

### **Statement of Problem**

Conflicts between schools and parents originate from various reasons, have hampered the academic atmosphere of the schools. In my experience, conflict of school and parents is one of the stressing factors for schools and cause of worry for the students, teachers and schools. The complementary components are turning into opponents due to conflicts. Thus, it is necessary to prevent and resolve the conflict in school-parents partnership. The news titles that express the occurrence of conflict between the school and parents in a regular basis is a matter of worry for those who advocate for cooperative school operations.

Some attempts are made that describe the reasons of conflicts which occur in school. Jared and Tinguri (2017) found conflict causing discouragement, pressure, sadness, frustration, and a sense of low respect to others. According to them, lack of adequate information, personality conflict, and a difference in value, experience, and qualification was the cause of conflict. According to Thapa (2015), misuse of power and authority, controversial government policies, and socio-cultural ethics are the key reasons of conflict in the schools of Nepal. This study describes the impact of Maoist conflict in Nepal which is not related to the conflict between the parents and school.

Existing literature pointed the changing paradigms in schools. Valente et al. (2022) perceives that the school is a common subsystem in which continuous fluctuations are replicated. Schools require to adjust these fluctuations to avoid the conflicts. Msila (2012) observes that preparing students, teachers and parents to live together and solve their problems as one of the most significant task of schools. However, the mentioned literature did not extensively discuss the resolution of conflicts between school and parents.

I did not get satisfactory answer of these issues in case of contemporary Nepal and felt the necessity of a fresh research. The existing studies lack of field-based strategies on conflict resolution. Furthermore, there is lack of context-specific approaches, and the absence of research connecting conflict resolution with better student outcomes. The existing approaches are insufficient to avoid the school-parents conflict in Nepal which are connected with multiple causes. Similarly, there is social, temporal and place difference between contemporary Nepali society and the context of the available literature.

I felt until the effective measures for the prevention and resolution of conflict is recommended the students, schools, and parents will consistently suffer. Thus, it is necessary to get the research based answers to resolve the school parent conflict which help to maintain the harmonious relationship between parents and school. It is also necessary to find the ways to settle the parents-school conflict for better academic achievements. Thus, this study aims to navigate the cause of school-parent conflict and bring the field based suggestions to resolve school-parent conflict. The purpose of the study is mentioned in the next title.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study intends to explore, analyze, and identify practical strategies for resolving school–parent conflicts. More specifically, it aims to find the conflict resolution strategies employed by the schools to resolve the conflicts with the parents of their students.

### **Research Questions**

In line with the research purpose, the following were the questions of inquiry of my research:

1. What experience do the parents and school leaders share about causes of conflict between parents and schools?

2. What are the coping strategies adopted by the school leaders and parents for school-parent conflict resolution?

### **Rationale of the Study**

In Cutler's (2000) opinion conflict between the school and parents is distracting the smooth function of the whole school system. This narrative study is designed to explore the conflict resolution strategies employed by the secondary schools in dealing with parents in Dharan, Nepal. The existing literature in this area is insufficient to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies for conflict resolution. Effective conflict resolution is achieved when integrated with the theories of conflict transformation and behavioral leadership (Northouse & Lee, 2019). Identifying and addressing the issues that lead to these conflicts is crucial. While the emergence of conflict cannot be entirely prevented, it can be redirected into healthy discussions leading to constructive outcomes. Therefore, this research aims to identify the effective strategies that schools employ to resolve conflicts with parents.

In day- to-day practice, there is often a lack of clarity, collaboration, and open dialogue to prevent school-parent conflict (Saiti, 2014). The schools where I have worked so far dealt with parents on a haphazard basis and could not play a significant role in resolving the school parent conflict. Nonetheless, I experienced, until there is harmony, school leaders are not worried about the possible consequences of school-parent conflict. They rush to make decisions and when conflict arise, which often do not yield a desirable outcome.

Conflict between schools and parents presents a significant barrier to student learning. Based on both personal experiences and anecdotal reports from peers, it has been observed that some parent-school meetings escalate into unproductive and contentious debates. During such interactions, whether inside or outside school settings, parents and school authorities often position themselves as adversaries, emphasizing each other's shortcomings and raising emotionally charged issues. These confrontations hinder collaboration and ultimately impede academic progress.

There is little evidence in the Nepali context on systematic, field-based strategies for conflict resolution. While existing literature has primarily focused on identifying the causes of parent-school conflict, this study adopts a different approach. It aims to discover the operative strategies to avoid conflict and foster a collaborative association between school and parents. Hence, the study narrates valuable procedures

for building a cooperative and supportive school environment, inspiring school and parents to function as companions rather than the opponents.

I found significant research about parent-student and student-student conflicts. There is a noticeable gap in the literature addressing conflicts specifically between parents and school, especially in the Nepali context. Furthermore, few current studies have explored conflict resolution strategies within this background. As schools continue to explore effective methods for managing parent-related conflicts, this research aims to identify actionable strategies that can be adapted in various educational settings.

It is essential to understand the reasons behind conflicts in order to resolve them effectively. This study contributes in two vital ways: (a) by identifying and helping to prevent the root causes of school-parent conflict, and (b) by proposing effective strategies for conflict resolution that can strengthen school-community relationships. The outcomes are expected to be particularly relevant for fostering an optimistic, respectful, and cooperative school climate. It is anticipated that the insights from this study will support schools and parents in working collaboratively toward student success. It benefits policy makers to consider the factors that create conflict between schools and parents and to apply preventative and curative measures to mitigate conflict. The next section outlines the delimitations of the research.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

This research aims to investigate the causes of conflict between school and parents. It is also focused on finding the schools' strategies (not parental strategies) to resolve the school-parents conflict. It is mostly a qualitative narrative study. It is not concerned with other types of conflicts, like internal school conflicts or student-student, student-teacher conflicts. It is also limited to the school microsystem. This study encompasses five schools and nine participants from Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City. The participants are middle-aged individuals. This research is grounded in the theory of conflict transformation and the behavioral theory of leadership. It includes the Constitution of Nepal (2015), "*School as the Zone of Peace, Implementation Directives, 2011*", and *the Consumer Protection Act, 2018* as part of the policy review. The study is based on depth interviews, observations and a review of relevant literature. The following section summarizes the chapter.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the inspiring facts to conduct this research, the statement of the problem, questions, and limitations of the study. The objective of this research is to navigate the causes of school-parent conflict and find the resolution strategies. This study is essential to apply the effective field-based conflict resolution strategies against the conflicts that occur between school and parents. The research questions of this research are; (a) what experience do the parents and school leaders share about causes of conflict between parents and schools, and (b) what are the coping strategies adopted by the school leaders and parents for school-parent conflict resolution? This study is limited to five schools and nine participants. It studies only the school-parent conflict and not related to other type of conflicts that occur between other stockholders of school.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter is related to the review of the literature. The review comprehensively covers the thematic, empirical, theoretical, policy review, and study gaps. The thematic review talks about the definition of conflict and school conflict. The empirical review provides an overview of the topic, methodology and findings of related studies. The theoretical review provides the theoretical framework for this research. The policy review reviews the relevance of selected policies to this research. Finally, the review identifies gaps in empirical research, theory, methodology, and policy, which are addressed in this research.

#### **Conceptual Understanding**

This section tries to include the concept of key terminologies and a brief review of conceptual and empirical research.

#### **Conflict**

Though the scholars defined conflict in different words, the gist of the views is similar. According to Lazarus (2005), opposite views, opposite interests, working styles, personalities, necessities, and thoughts are some causes of interpersonal conflict in school. Conflict needs to be kept far away to maximize the learning output. This view matches to my view in terms of defining conflict.

The causes of conflict are different depending on the time and place. Results show that the 'hidden costs' of school, which are not disclosed in advance, play a significant role in student drop out (Williams et al., 2014). Stewart (1998) highlights that political participation, economic assets, employment and income, social access and situation are the factors that create differentiation among individuals who play a role in conflict. Hence, conflict means misunderstanding, debate, arguments, criticism, verbal and physical insults.

Professional disagreements of human capital significantly reduce an organization's base because they make it harder for employees to accept or tolerate others and to resolve issues in a productive way (Adams & Iwu, 2015). Hence, raising conflict is natural and resolving it is the need of the time. Thomas (1971, as cited in Ghaffar, 2009) suggests citizen advisories, confrontation hearings, sensitivity training,

process participation, educational heterogeneity, volunteerism, cooperative studies, and failure as conflict resolution strategies used by administrators in educational settings. Although these studies do not directly address the conflict resolution between the school and parents, they provide me with insights into different dimensions of conflict within the school environment.

Based on the mentioned literature and my experience, this study defines conflict as circumstances in that two or more rivalries observe their goals, intents, values, as requirements are differing which resulting in discrepancy, opponent and rival thought, action, and behavior that occurs when people work together. Conflict is natural behavior that becomes apparent when different people come into close proximity. School-parent conflict means the conflict between school authorities and parents. In this context, conflict is natural phenomenon that occur when parents and school personnel interact that can be positive or negative based on the way of management. The next title is related to the review of literature on school-parent conflicts.

### **School Parent Conflict**

The school and parents' conflict are highlighted differently in various literature. In this study, unsupportive, unfriendly, critical, and oppositional behavior between the school and parents is considered as school-parent conflict. Lake and Billingsley (2000) found that the views of parents and school authorities are different in special education. Parents are unhappy with the school authorities as they did not take the weakness of the students into account, which created a difference in the perspective of guardians and the school as a responsible factor in the conflict. The guardians are frustrated when the school authority describes everything about children in a negative way. Although this study is not directly related to special education, it highlights the importance of paying attention to the whole child, including their abilities, strengths, aspirations, and needs, to prevent conflict. There is no doubt that parents need to be given the opportunity to describe their children by the educators.

The review of the literature also matched my personal experience. In Lazaru's (2006) assessment, opposing views, interests, working styles, personalities, necessities, and thoughts are some causes of interpersonal conflict in schools, which are found to be common causes of conflict widespread. This study aims to identify the causes of conflict between the school and parents, which is useful for understanding the existing reasons for interpersonal conflicts within the school sub-system.

Jared and Thinguri (2017) suggested that the conflict between the head teacher and deputy head teacher needs to be addressed immediately, otherwise it can adversely affect the teamwork. Realizing the essence of conflict resolution strategy, the paper suggested that school head teachers and deputy head teachers are obliged to process the necessary qualifications in conflict anticipation, management, and resolution, which are essential for settling unfair relations. The school administration should be able to identify conflicts before they arise and resolve conflicting causes in a timely manner. According to them, conflict management should be familiarized to the teachers as a learning theme by teachers' training institutions, at undergraduate and advanced levels. It shows that there are multiple dimensions of conflict in the school sub-system. In my opinion, conflict resolution skills should be one of the qualifications for a leadership role, including that of head teacher.

Valente et al. (2022) highlight that the institute is a societal sub-system, where constant changes are revealed. The purpose of school is to organize pupils, educators, and parents to live and overcome the problems that arise from rapid changes and personal conflicts, which hinder the improvement process of every person. Being a societal sub-system, carrying various ways of life together, thinking, feeling, and association creates a space favorable to personal conflicts. These are remarkable suggestions for those who want to study conflict and conflict management. This study is concerned with teacher-student conflict, which I perceive is a major cause of school-parent conflict.

Thapa (2015) argues that misuse of power and authority, controversial government policies, and socio-cultural values as the major reasons of the tussle in the schools of Nepal during the insurgency period. This research concerned with the effects of the Maoist's 'People War', that happened in the period of 1995 AD to 2005 AD in Nepal. This study is fully focused in political conflict among the rebellions and the state forces and didn't bring the issue of school-parents conflict. Though it is not directly connected to school-parent conflict, it highlights that political conflict can affect the peaceful operation of school.

School conflicts ultimately affect the students of that school. Brkovic et al. (2013) noticed that parent-child and school conflict affect the overall achievement of students, but the age and effect rates for boys and girls may differ. This study also points to the need to settle the conflict between parents and student and the school as soon as possible for better academic performance. It simply suggests resolving the

conflict among parent the child, and the school without discussing potential resolution ideas. The conclusion of this study can be synthesized that a peaceful lifestyle it is important to avoid the child-parent conflict in the family.

Brooks and Brooks (2018) conducted an ethnographic study on culturally (ir) relevant school leadership: Ethno-religious conflict and school administration in the Philippines. They remark that culturally competent school administrators assist the development and maintenance of school cultures that foster students' academic and social success. Leaders at the school continue to make deliberate decisions that disadvantage some pupils because they are not culturally sensitive. In their opinion numerous students are marginalized on the basis of their color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion. Therefore, four characters have an impact on how culturally appropriate leadership is practiced. Political context, pedagogical style, a person's journey, and professional responsibility are among them. It is an example that ethnographic study also can be conducted in the field of school related conflict. From this research it is clear that culturally relevant leaders have a beneficial impact on their students.

Concluding the gist of the above literature, in my opinion, conflict might have originated with the origin of society. Disparity is the fundamental cause of conflict (Arbatli et al., 2020). It is clear that disagreement, in whatever form it takes, will occur in the majority of circumstances and situations that cause conflict. Conflict is unavoidable in human societies.

According to the mentioned literature, it is understood that there are various types of conflict in school. School-parent conflict is among the types of conflict that is affecting schools widely. Conflicts occur due to misunderstandings on various issues, and they need to be resolved. There are very few studies they are concerned with the school-parents conflict and it is necessary to conduct recent research in this area. The coming section discusses the review of literature in conflict resolution.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution involves finding a meaningful outlet for any conflict. It is the process of putting the existing debate to an end or minimize the conflict. Unavoidable conflict could be resolved through effective strategies. Shonk (2025) remarked conflict resolution as formal or informal process where parties seek a peaceful solution through negotiation or mediation, avoiding the time and costs of arbitration or litigation.

In this study conflict resolution strategies means to the actions, behaviors and events which are created to minimize and end the conflict between the school and the parents. The conflict resolution strategies comprise an extensive variety of activities which contain communication, problem solving, dealing with sentiment, and compromising positions (Brett, 2007). Conflict resolution is one of the most important steps of the conflict cycle (Wohlfeld, 2010). I am going to focus on the conflict resolution strategies which are used by schools in this study.

Within any conflict, we need to consider two factors; achieving the goal and preserving an ideal relationship with others. Understanding the value of these two bits help in the selection of the most useful conflict ideas for conflict management. Johnson and Johnson, (1995) suggested that the increased conflicts and violence in the school are increasing the severity and cost of the school in terms of time, energy, and money. Their suggestions making schools systematic and quiet places where excellent learning can take place through conflict management is considerable. This is an inspiring idea that conflict need to be resolved for better working conditions.

Jeong (2008) argues that for the exploration of effective conflict management strategies, we need to study human behavior and their surrounding environment in depth. Most conflicts have been engaged in a series of actions and reactions, moves and anti-moves, communications ideas and concepts, and analysis of messages which directly affect the significant outcomes (Putnam & Folger, 1988). Baron (1997) emphasized that managing conflict in organizations offers a fresh perspective highlighting the growing understanding of how conflict can enhance individual success, improve the quality of group decision-making, and boost organizational productivity. It narrates conflict management as a means to improve work performance and explains how this connection can be better understood. Conflict resolution is an international issue that spans multiple fields, including social science, political science, civics, and many other fields.

Through a review of 17 peer reviewed qualitative publications, Weber and Vereenoghe (2020), recommended Restorative Practice (RP) as effective measure for conflict resolution. They mentioned check-in/check-out, proactive circles, emotional statements, restorative questions, restorative chat, peer mediation, restorative meeting, and restorative conference are pointed as operative measures by the studied articles.

Adhikari (2017), reviewed the peace of peace process between the then government of Nepal and the then Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). The article reviewed the peace process that resolved a decade long war between the government and Maoist. This study analyzed stepwise negotiation and involvement of United Nation's Mission in Nepal as a supervisory agency. In brought integration of Maoist armed force into Nepali Army as a major understanding. It also integrated the agenda of Constituent Assembly and state restructuring which were the political agenda of Maoist. So, integration of thought, individuals, and other components into one also can be taken as the way of conflict resolution. However, this study was focused on resolution of armed conflict in Nepal.

Dhungana (2022) wrote an article on, “‘Othering’ and violence in Schools: A Barrier to sustain peace in Nepal”. The study revealed the conflict originated in terms of communal and religious perspectives and students being suffered by the conflict. conflicts well as The article indicated that low academic achieving students are dominated by different low ranking words such as ‘*Bhuskul*’, ‘*Najanne*’, ‘*Adham*’, and ‘*Jauwa*’. The article noticed relationship between authoring and violence in the five schools of Nepal. Those who are suffering from ‘othering’ are also suffering oral and physical violence by the teachers. The author pointed the need of teacher training to stop othering and violence. Nonetheless, it was not related to the conflict resolution between school and parents.

Ministry of Education (MoE) (2016), prepared School Sector Development Plan, 2016 to 2023. It envisioned to develop sustainable, competitive, innovative, and value focused citizens for socio-economic advancement of Nepal. It aimed to reduce disparities through inclusive development of human resources. Its goal were to achieve, equity, quality, efficiency, governance and management, and resilience through school education. If the priorities of School Sector Development Plan (2016-2023) such as, quality and effective pedagogy for improved learning outcomes, assessment and evaluation, teacher management and professional development were really implemented, it would resolve many possible conflicts between the school and parents.

As conflict is a natural process, the resolution of conflict is also a natural phenomenon. The mentioned literature suggest the need of effective strategies for conflict resolution. It is also known that the conflict resolution strategies can be different as per the situation, individuals and time. However, I did not get ample

studies which unearth the ground based strategies to resolve school-parent conflicts in Nepal.

When conflicts persist, we need to find effective ways to resolve them. Strategies are the ways which are used to achieve a goalmouth. Strategies represent categories of possible actions or reactions which could be useful for conflict management in school. Conflict resolution strategies are the ways, ideas, and doings that reduce and settle the existing conflict. Hence, the theme of this study to find the conflict resolution strategies between school and parents.

### **Empirical Researches on School Conflict**

Sellman (2011), conducted a study on *Peer Mediation Services for Conflict Resolution in Schools – What transformations in school culture characterize successful implementation?* The writer undertook a critical study that was related using peers to resolve the conflict of the students. This study questioned the traditional teacher and administration centered arbitration system which brought peer mediation for student conflict management in school. Though this study was conducted in nine schools of England this method could be effective way of conflict management for school children in Nepal as well. It shows the possibility of use of mediators to settle the conflict between the school and parents through this study. The role of mediator may need if the conflict of school and parents goes burst out.

Msila (2012) made a qualitative study on Conflict Management and School Leadership. This research suggests that most of the time the conflict can be observed in the school and the participants of the study felt need to be empowered in conflict resolution. The participants who were involved in the study recognized essential skills that empower them to be a real conflict resolver. According to the study perceiving oneself is as important as perceiving the other party which is the foundation for generating an actual school atmosphere. It can be agreed that the operational school leaders evade seeing conflict in a harmful manner. The true visualization of the school can be achieved after the conflict has been managed in a healthy way. As per the assumption of the findings this study also views the importance of school leadership in school-parent conflict resolution.

Johnson et al. (1994) highlighted conflict resolution and preventing violence as interrelated processes. They stress the need of wisdom to manage conflicts constructively. Schools need to train their students to stop violence and conflicts. They also suggested that the schools need to follow; i) admit the destructive conflicts

are out of control, ii) implement a violence prevention program, iii) become conflict positive organization and iv) implement conflict resolution program in a sequential process to resolve violence and conflict. These strategies can be useful in other conflicts which may occur in schools. But, this study is not concerned with the resolution of the conflict between parents and school.

Chandolia and Anastasiou (2020) wrote an article on leadership and conflict management style associating with the effectiveness of school conflict management in Greece. Writers opine that the leadership style contributes a major role in conflict settlement. They suggested some ideas for conflict resolution including collaboration and compromise. From this study it can be extracted that the school leaders have important roles to identify the best conflict management strategies to handle the conflict which is under their responsibility. I agree, that the art of leadership is vital for schools to be effective for their internal and external school components including the expectation of society and the parents.

Sibajene (2022) conducted research on “*an analysis of school-community conflict management strategies in selected schools in Zambia*”. This study intended to find the existing conflict and to recommend the strategies which management used in resolving these conflicts between schools and communities in selected primary schools of Zambia. The study found that conflict occurs between the community and school on policy-related, land boundaries related, partisan political inclination, school fees, social life, the matter of faith and social acquisition. The research suggested home visits, arbitration, general meetings, interpretation of government authority, and discipline help to understand the community and school one another. It also suggested the school and community to understand the conflict-causing policies of the government and develop strategies to resolve them. It gave some useful ideas of conflict prevention that occurs between community and school. The essence of this research is there should be warm school-community relations to have warm school-parent relationship.

Perales Franco (2018) conducted an ethnographic study on school community relationship conflict management in two primary schools of Mexico. This study analyzed the relationship between two schools and their local communities in terms of family engagement. The study was conducted through the use of observation, interview and survey methods and suggested to improve the convivencia for conflict reduction. It found the type of convivencia were shaped by the participation,

inclusion, exclusion and conflict management process. This is also a fact that school-community relationship determines the school-community conflict. This study does not follow the survey method.

In some cases the socio-economic conditions of Nepal and African countries match to each other. Thus, some of the studies which conducted in Africa are included in this study. Mohamed (2011) studied the conflict resolution strategies in selected primary schools of Kenya. Researcher used descriptive survey method and open ended and closed questionnaires where the conflict of student-student and student-teacher conflict is high. Its suggestion to strengthen the parent-school relation and formation of counseling and guiding committees could be effective strategies to decrease school-parent conflict in Nepal as well. Similarly, getting the help from local civils, religious leaders, elders and selected elites can be meaningful to reestablish cooperation among the school and parents in schools under this study.

The above literatures are related to find the causes and resolution strategies of conflicts among different stakeholders of the school system. These literatures lack the detailed analysis of school parent conflict. They mostly highlighted the causes of conflict and mentioned a few strategies which are adopted to settle the conflict in international area. The role of leadership in resolving school-parent conflict is not much discussed. However, the mentioned literatures gave a low priority on occurrence and resolution of conflict connected with leadership.

I could not find the contemporary literatures which suggested the ways to end the school-parent conflict in Nepal. If there are no suggestions on conflict resolution, studies of any conflict are not completed. In conflict resolution, the parties involved in finding a permanent solution to the problem. Thus this study is designed to find the conflict resolution strategies of schools with the parents of their students. It can be taken as an example of study which focused on conflict resolution. The upcoming section deals with the theoretical review of the literature.

### **Theoretical Review**

This section deals with the theoretical perspectives for this study. I have decided to overview this study with a theory of conflict and a theory of leadership as this research is related to conflict resolution and form educational leadership specialization. The purpose of this research is to highlight the field based strategies of conflict resolution between school and parents. Thus, the theories which are related to transformation of conflict and guide for conflict resolution can guide this research

genuinely. In this perspective a theory which can guide to transfer the existing conflict into productive conclusion and other which guides for the prevention and resolution of conflict are necessary. Therefore, the Theory of Conflict Transformation and Theory of Behavioral Leadership are most suitable theoretical framework to get the answer of my research questions. The review starts with the review of theory of conflict transformation.

### **Theory of Conflict Transformation**

After the review of the theory, it is decided to view this research with the lens of conflict transformation theory. The theory of conflict transformation was propounded by Lederach (1995). Conflict transformation is a method of conflict resolution that strive for the structural and social roots which cause conflicts. Conflict transformation theory deals with the ethical and moral dimensions of human beings. Conflict transformation provides a long-time horizon through changing perception and improving communication skills by removing inequality and social injustice.

Theory of conflict transformation assumes that conflict is not isolated from human behavior. Conflicts could be managed and resolved. Conflict transformation is long-term, steady and complex process that needs continuous commitment. Conflict resolution helps to transform the debate into the peace. This method is very fine demonstrated in Folger and Bush's theory of transformative mediation (Folger& Bush, 2014) and the Lederach's model of conflict transformation (1995). Lederach further stresses that the quarreling parties are needed to be changed by sanctioning them to recognize their own condition and needs, as well as inspiring them to identify the condition and requirements of their rivals.

Lederach's idea of conflict transformation is very significant to manage the parent-school conflict in the school microsystem. According to conflict transformation theory school conflicts are not always stable. They are constantly changing, and the goal is to transform them into something socially harmless and useful functions. So, conflict transformation is a dynamic and changeable process and helps to alter the school-parent conflicts. Conflict transformation also views that some conflicts are better transformed than resolved which are useful for irresoluble conflicts between school and parents.

We can't change the people but we can change our workstyles. So, I think conflict transformation is a major way to end the conflict in the school and going to associate this theory to my study. As this study has observed effective ways of

conflict resolution it connects with theory of conflict transformation. I have related this study with the transformation of conflict into cooperation and partnership. Through the eye of conflict transformation, I have presented the efforts applied by the school leaders to transfer school-parent conflicts. I have also presented the experience of some of the school leaders to transfer the school-parents conflicts into partnership. In the next, the behavioral theory of leadership is reviewed.

### **Behavioral Theory of Leadership**

It is decided to view the application of behavioral theory of leadership in this research. Behavioral theory of leadership was developed on the base of behaviorism movement in 1950s. Behavioral leadership theory was developed by a team led by Rensis Likert in the 1950s at the University of Michigan attempting to find characteristics (behaviors) of effective leadership (Deshwal & Ali, 2020). The premise of behavioral theories is that exceptional leaders are created, not born. A behavioral approach is centered on the leader's views, values, and interpersonal relationships. Behavioral theories focus on what leaders do (Mulholland, 2019). This theory argues that the most effective leaders are those who can modify their styles of leadership and apply the appropriate strategy in any circumstance (Purohit, 2019). This theory involves observation and evaluation of the action and behaviors of the leader to a particular situation. This theory looks close to my problem as the school is related to the people of diverse attitudes and behavior. Leader needs to adopt diverse leadership skills according to the time and situation. The behavioral theory of leadership provides effective leadership for academic organizations.

Conflict is the product of human behavior so, behavioral theory of leadership associates to my research. According to the essence of the theory, leaders need to adopt People Oriented, Directional, Task Oriented, Country Club, Participative, Sound, Status-quo, Opportunistic, Indifferent, and Paternalistic Leadership style as per the requirement. These leaderships are followed according to the need of time and situations to be handled with. The school system needs to develop new and contextual leaders to settle the school conflicts. The school leaders should have the leadership qualities to deal against the conflict. School leaders should be dynamic and behavioral. Thus, theory of behavioral leadership is relevant to this study.

The behavioral theory of leadership highlights that good leaders may acquire and implement habits that scales down disputes, encourage cooperation, and cultivate a healthy work environment, making it extremely important to conflict resolution.

Operative school leaders can settle disputes while preserving output and team unity by striking a balance between task- and people-oriented actions. Leaders can learn the new ideas, they can direct, participate and supervise the desired actions within the school system. They can turn the conflicts in constructive debate and manage time dynamic for better performance.

My research questions (what experience do the parents and school leaders share about causes of conflict between parents and schools and what are the coping strategies adopted by the school leaders and parents for school-parents conflict resolution) align with the theory of conflict transformation and theory of behavioral leadership as they are concerned with the conflict transformation with the support of leadership skills of the school authorities. I wanted to study how the school leaders keep on finding new and more effective ways of conflict resolution with the parents of their students. It focuses to narrate the experiences of the participants which matches to the behavioral theory of leadership.

Theory of conflict transformation is meaningful to transfer the existing conflict into peace and positive debates. In the same way behavioral theory of leadership can be guideline for the school leader to be a practical and behavioral leader who can wisely settle the stressing conflicts. The combination of two theories could be complementary to study the school-parent conflict.

Socio-cultural and political theories are not viewed in this research as they deal to the socio-cultural and political cause of mass conflict. Those theories are better to view class, community and group conflicts. This research is not related to the class or community conflict. In my opinion though the communities have no internal and external conflicts there could be the school-parent conflict. School parent conflict and community or group conflict are different and other theories are not fitted to the school parent conflict.

To sum up, based on the above theoretical review, the following theoretical perspective informed this study;

1. Conflict resolution requires identifying the conditions and requirements of the rivals.
2. School conflicts are not always stable.
3. Conflict is not isolated from human behavior.
4. Conflict transformation is long-term, steady and complex process that needs continuous commitment.

5. Effective leaders can modify their styles of leadership and apply the appropriate strategy according to the circumstances.
6. Leader needs to adopt diverse leadership skills according to the time and situation.
7. Good leaders may acquire and implement habits that scales down disputes, encourage cooperation, and cultivate a healthy work environment, making it extremely important to conflict resolution.
8. Leaders turn the conflicts in constructive debate and manage time dynamic for better performance.

The next part of this will cover the policy review of literatures.

### **Policy Provisions on Conflict Resolution in School**

In my observation school as the zone of peace, implementation directives, 2011, consumer Protection Act, 2018, the constitution of Nepal (2015), the ninth amendment of Education Act, 1971, and School Education Sector Plan, 2022-2032, are the relevant policies of Nepal in my study area. The review of each of these policies are done in separate headings.

#### **School as the Zone of Peace, Implementation Directives, 2011**

The government of Nepal promulgated an *Implementation Directives Model for schools as the Zone of Peace* in May, 2011. The objectives of these directives are to keep the school far from any types of violence and armed activities, political activities and political interference as well as keep school free from discrimination, misbehavior, irresponsibility, and exploitation. The objectives of this directive match my research area. The directives made the eight working policies to follow. They are; the implementation of guiding principles, partnership with the stakeholders, policy and structural management, study and research, promotion and awareness, involvement of children, cooperation and co-work with the mass media, and inclusion on social verification (Ministry of Education, 2011). The school and others should follow different directives to avoid conflict in school. The coordination committee plays a significant role to maintain the schools as a peace zone. The policy has mentioned the roles and responsibilities of appointment holders to manage the peace in the school area which help to reduce the conflict in schools. This policy also mentions the right of treatment for those who are the victim of the violation of child rights. If this directive is followed properly it helps to end the conflict and peacebuilding in the school. There is need of strict implementation of this policy for

peace building in the school. As the intention of this policy is to keep the school as the zone of peace it can be an instrument to keep the school free from debate and conflict. So, this policy is contextual to my study area.

### **The Consumer Protection Act, 2018**

The Consumer Protection Act, (2018) is an act made to provide legal assurance relating to customer safety. The provision of every consumer shall have the right to obtain quality goods and services without prejudice to the generality of the sub-section for the resolution of protecting the rights, interests, and concerns of the consumers, every consumer shall have the;(a) right of easy access to facilities, (b) right to select quality facilities at the reasonable competitive amount, (c) right to be up-to-date of the value, amount, purity, excellence, etc. of the facilities, (d) right to get suitable legal step taken against the unfair activities, and (e) right to get payment against damage and hurt produced with the practice of wrong services ( Nepal Law Commission , 2018).

Schools need to perceive the parents and students as their consumers. When students and parents are taken as the consumers, this act keeps the school authorities responsible for parents and students. As service provider, it is the responsibility of schools to safeguard the rights of the consumers, regulate the services, and make necessary policy and institutional provisions in time. There need to be separate agencies to listen to the complaint of parents in the school. According to the spirit of the act schools needs to behave the students and parents as their consumers and be active in consumer satisfaction. In case of parents feel they are cheated by the school in terms of quality and cost they have legal rights to register the case against the breach of the act.

### **The Constitution of Nepal, 2015**

Conflict occurs when there is a lack of equality, the prevalence of torture, violation of consumer rights, and so on. The literature also suggests to fulfill the fundamental rights to avoid the conflict. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) is the national commitment for the rights and freedom of the Nepali people. Article 17 (Right to Freedom), 18 (Right to Equality), 22 (Right Against Torture), 24 (Right Against Untouchability and Discrimination), 29 (Right Against Exploitation), 31 (Right to Education) and, 39 (Right of Children) (Nepal Law Commission, 2024). Constitution has different provisions for various rights to the children and parents. When the rights of the students, school authorities and the parents are violated by the

next stakeholder, it creates the chance of debate and conflict. These all articles are related to the topic I raised. I want to observe whether the school leaders are aware about the fundamental rights of students.

From the policy review I found, School as Zone of Peace Implementation directives 2011, Consumer Act-2018 and Constitution of Nepal-2015 are concerned policies to my study area. Among the policies, School as Zone of Peace Implementation directives-2011 only is a comprehensive policy which deals to the conflict in the school. Though policies are made school are still suffering from different internal and external conflicts. These policies do not extensively cover the school parent conflict. The existing policies are not fully able to stop the different dimensions of school parent conflict.

### **Educational Act, 1971, the 9th Amazement, 2016**

Educational Act is one of the comprehensive government policy which can minimize the possible conflict between school and parents. Educational Act, 1997 is being amended and updated in a regular basis. Different amendments fulfill the immediate requirements in educational sector. The ninth amendment (2016) of Educational Act, 1971 is a historical milestone for smooth functions of schools in Nepal.

The article 7 of the act, discussions about the educational quality examination center which checks the education quality of the schools. Article 11 of the act deals about the District Educational Council, Municipal/Rural Municipal Education Committee, and the provision of teaching license for teachers. Article 12 is related to school management committee for the management of healthy educational environment in school (Nepal Law Commission, 2016). Similarly, different sub articles of article 16 are concerned to school as a zone of peace, fee management, teachers' code of conduct, qualification for teachers and provision for 10 percent scholarship by the institutional schools. Likewise, Article 16 restricts from dismissal from school and article 17 has the provision of punishment for the violation of the act.

All the mentioned provisions helps the schools to be professional, responsible, and safe place through different arrangements and managements. If the provisions of the act are followed, many factors which are responsible to create conflict between the parents and school will be resolved.

### **School Education Sector Plan, 2022-2032**

Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, prepared a school Education Sector Plan in 2022 (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2016). The plan aimed to execute inclusive quality education to every children of Nepal and improve learning outcomes. It planned to integrate the recent development of knowledge and technology to build strong and resilient education system. It has foresighted to prepare innovative, vigorous, and convenient students who are committed to complete complementary roles to transform the nation into more judicious, steady, cultured, symphonic, tranquil, and flourishing nation. The conflict of school and parents will certainly decrease through proper implementation of the plan.

However, I have to get the response of my participants whether these policies are worthy preventing and settling the conflict between the parents and school. More gaps which are observed in the existing literatures is covered in the next paragraphs.

#### **Study Gap**

Generally, people associate the term 'conflict' with war, tension, or community tussles. While most studies concentrate on conflicts between opposing groups, few focus on conflicts within the same system. Thematically the most of the research are related to community, national, head teacher and teachers, teachers and student conflict in the previous studies. Existing research on conflicts primarily addresses socio-cultural, economic, political, religious, and ideological issues. These researches are mostly related on causes of conflict between head teachers and teachers, students and teachers, students and parents and school and community.

In educational contexts, literature often examines student-student conflicts, parent-student tussles, teacher-head teacher debates, and student-teacher conflicts. There is deficiency of studies which are directed on school and parent conflict. The studies on conflict resolution also are related to the conflicts of community, nation, head teacher and teachers, teacher and students etc. However, recent Nepali literature has not sufficiently addressed school-parent conflict resolution. There is lack of recent Nepal based field study which deals about practical aspects of conflict resolution between school and parents.

The theories of conflict transformation and behavioral leadership have not been contextualized for Nepal in the available literature. These studies do not consider the School as a Zone of Peace (Implementation Directives, 2011) and the Consumer

Act, 2018, as guiding policies. Additionally, students and parents have not been represented as consumers in this context. Thus, the existing literature do not meet the need for Nepal-specific strategies sought by educationists like me.

Effective strategies are essential for resolving conflicts between parents and schools before they become harmful. Therefore, this study aims to suggest conflict resolution strategies that schools can use to address conflicts with parents. I believe this exploration guides the school leaders and parents in finding solutions to their disagreements and foster significant partnerships. It explores the possibility of spirituality and family ethos in school-parents conflict resolution. Additionally, this study provides policymakers with insights into effective conflict resolution between parents and schools.

Most of the findings which are discussed in the review of literature are not related to in Nepal. There is a considerable time gap after the completion of those research. Contextually the nature and cause of conflict are changed with other changes in the society which shows the need of recent study to validate the contemporary practices. Only a few of the mentioned studies followed the narrative inquiry. Therefore, there is social, temporal, spatial and methodological gap between the proposed and existing literature. Thus, it is essential to conduct a fresh study within Nepal. Hence, this research will fulfill a waited gap of recent research which can suggest research based ideas to resolve the school parent conflict.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter covered the review of empirical, theoretical and policy review. The findings of available literature are presented and the gap in existed literature is pointed which demonstrated the significance of this research. After reviewing the literature it is identified that there are spatial, temporal, and situational (place) variation that sought the need of this research.

I decided to review the relevance of Theory of Conflict Transformation and Behavioral Theory of Leadership. School as Zone of Peace Implementation directives 2011, Consumer Act-2018, Constitution of Nepal-2015, and Educational Act, 1971(ninth amendment, 2016) are the policy review covered by this study. The gap in existing literature is identified after a comprehensive review that establishes the significance of this research.

## CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter discusses on the method and methodologies which are used in this study. I have given an overview of my ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology. It justifies the site and participants selection. The techniques of data assemblage and meaning making are discussed in a separate headings. Similarly, the research approach, quality standard of the study and ethical considerations of the study are also included in this chapter. The chapter summary is presented at the last of the chapter.

### **Philosophical Foundations of Research**

The research title, Conflict resolution strategies of secondary schools in Dharan, Nepal: A Narrative Study, this research is about two core questions: a) what are the causes of conflict between parents and schools, and, b) What are the coping strategies adopted by the school leaders and parents for school-parents conflict resolution?

Epistemologically, this research is based on constructivism and ontologically on relativism. On this basis reality is grounded on the life experiences of the participants. On this assumption the origin of the conflicts are diverse in different schools and different factors can cause conflicts among various personalities. Conflict resolution strategies also can be divergent according to school and individual character.

I have sincerely presented the opinions and experiences expressed by the participants. Similarly, I have genuinely interpreted what I observed in the field. I made complete efforts to grasp the views and experiences of the participants in their natural tones and forms. I did not guide and misinterpreted the views of the participants. I collected the facts as an outsider without disturbing the natural setting of the place and persons. I was always guided myself with the research ethics, during the fieldwork, observation and meaning making.

This research is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, which assumes that reality is socially constructed and varies across individuals. My ontological posture recognizes multiple realities, and epistemological belief give emphasis to that

knowledge is derived from the subjective involvements of personalities involved in the conflict resolution. As conflict resolution strategies emerge from personal and situational experiences, I admit that different individuals perceive conflicts and their resolutions in unique ways. These insights change over time and crossways the contexts. Grounded on this understanding, I selected a qualitative exploration methodology, as it aligns with the view that knowledge is subjective and context-situational.

This research follows narrative inquiry approach to explore the causes of conflict and their resolution strategies in the secondary schools in Dharan, Nepal. For Clandinin (2023), "*narrative inquiry is the study of experience as story, than a first and foremost a way of thinking about experience*". Narrative exploration helped me to capture the factual practices of school principals, senior teachers, and parents, engaging them in a collaborative method that reveals individual perspectives. As Butina (2015) views, narrative research involves storytelling, which can sometimes unintentionally representation individual identities. Acknowledging the extensive, purposive, and systematic nature of social science research, as described by Eisenberg (2018), I have structured this study to present a coherent account of conflict causes and resolution techniques within schools.

Conflicts between school and parents manifest in different ways across institutions, leading to various resolution strategies. One conflict resolution method that demonstrates effective in a school may not be equally applicable in another due to contextual differences. Furthermore, within the same school, strategies may vary over time and among individuals which requires extensive diagnostic responses from each participant. Hence, qualitative analysis is best suited to capture.

Experience of the participants is the prime source of knowledge for this research. Rather than following another instruments getting the individual experience of the participants who are related to school-parent relation is reliable to find the cause and resolution strategies of conflicts between school and parents. Narratives are changed according to person, place and situation (Bau, 2016). Hence, narrative approach is best suited to get the individual stories for this study. In this study knowledge is co-created through the experience of participants and researcher. There are multiple opinion about the origin of conflict and their resolution, so, narrative approach, constructivist epistemology and relative ontology are the best instruments to address my research questions.

In this study, senior teachers are those who have worked for more than 16 years and have held leadership positions such as head teacher, deputy head teacher, school coordinator, or department head. To confirm depth and authenticity, I conducted in-depth interviews, evaluated participants' narratives, and the answers were cross-referenced with relevant literature. Irrespective of my beliefs aligned with or differed from my participants' perspectives, I prioritized each opinion with similar importance.

To extract the experience, words and actions of research participants perfectly, narrative approach was highly useful to conduct in-depth interviews and prolonged discussions. The response diversity among individuals helped me gain a nuanced and dependable understanding of conflict resolution strategies. By engaging in empathic identification, I sought to uncover participants' underlying motives. Meaning was constructed through respondents' narratives, field observations, personal experiences, and an analysis of existing literature. I wrote reflective notes in my field diary and used them during analysis and meaning making.

People outline their perceptions and responses, which certainly influenced the data I gathered. Correspondingly, my ethics and worldview might have inclined my choice of research area, research questions, fieldwork, interpretation, and meaning-making. However, I remained aware of the potential bias throughout the research work and made best effort to preserve neutrality in collecting, processing, and presenting data. The research approach will be further elaborated in the next section.

### **Research Approach**

On the basis of my previous write-up, my key concern is to understand human experiences in the subjective world. So, I pursued the interpretivist paradigm in which I tried to understand the language, indirect and symbolic verbal expressions of participants through reasoning. I aimed to gather perceptions and experiences of individuals and draw meaning from those experiences and subjective realities. Real facts of the fields are extracted in detail with their characteristics. I followed the qualitative inductive research work approach in my research, which was carried out in natural settings.

Instead of testing human behavior, I laid great emphasis on a better understanding of the world through first-hand experience, genuine reporting, and citations of actual dialogues from participants' views. Participants are encouraged to speak freely and understand the researcher's effort to comprehend a phenomenon they

have personally experienced. Context-sensitive information acquisition techniques provide rich and detailed descriptions of social phenomena, which I find insightful. The important events, observations and context connecting ideas were noted in the field note. The method of the study is covered by the next paragraphs.

### **Methodological Review**

Narrative inquiry is widely used in qualitative exploration. I also used narrative inquiry in this research. Lake and Billingsley (2000) undertook another research entitled '*An analysis of factors that contribute to parent—school conflict in special education*' by using telephone interview method. Isabu (2017) wrote a review paper on the sources and management of school associated conflict which followed the assessment of existing literatures. Achinstein (2002) run an exploratory research on two schools under University of California, Santa Cruz, California. This research suggested policymakers need to rethink simplistic initiatives that group of teachers together with the expectation that they will learn and develop, without considering the intricate nature of the collaborative process to end the conflict. Madalina (2016) completed observation based research which concluded effective conflict management by managers is crucial for achieving institutional goals as unresolved conflicts can worsen during economic crises and organizational restructuring.

In the similar way, Brooks and Brooks (2018) led a research entitled, "*culturally (ir) relevant school leadership: Ethno-religious conflict and school administration in the Philippines*", which used semi structured interview as well as emic and etic observation methods. This study concluded head teachers who are culturally sensitive keep high anticipations from their students which guides the students emotionally, socially, and politically. Berraies and El Abidine (2019) completed a quantitative study on '*Do leadership styles promote ambidextrous innovation? Case of knowledge-intensive firms*' using survey method which was based on the responses of 265 participants who responded through email. LaRusso and Selman (2011) completed a research through exploratory research of small group interview data. They investigated adolescents' understandings of social struggles and their resolutions with peers and teachers in three schools of United States of America.

*"An essay on leadership and conflict management styles and their relationship to the efficacy of conflict resolution in Greek schools"* was written by Chandolia and Anastasiou in 2020. This study covered 12 secondary school of Greek. Secondary Education school units were randomly chosen and questionnaire were inquired to the

participants. Teachers were the participants of this study. Lasater (2016) published an article in *School Community Journal* on, “*Parent-teacher conflict related to student abilities: The impact on students and the family-school partnership*”. This study employed a qualitative research methodology, utilizing criterion sampling to select participants who met specific criteria and snowball sampling to identify additional participants through referrals.

During this research, I studied about ethnography, quasi experimental auto ethnography, and narrative inquiry methods. Similarly, I reviewed the qualitative and quantitative approaches of research. After the review of different approaches I concluded that narrative inquiry is the most suitable methodology for this study as it needs to bring the story of the participants. I am going to narrate the stories of participants about their experience of school parent conflicts and the efforts that the school made to prevent and resolve them. As it is narrative study no quantitative approaches fit to this research. Similarly, I could not find any narrative study related to school-parent conflict in Nepal which shows the necessity of narrative study.

### **Method of Study**

To find the answer to my research questions, I have employed a narrative inquiry within qualitative research to investigate the conflict resolution approaches used by schools to resolve the conflicts with the parents. Narrative inquiry proved to be a valuable approach for me to explore institutional, cultural, social, and personal backgrounds. It is a scientific and investigative endeavor. Narrative inquiry was employed for collecting, restoring and analyzing stories as well as, coding themes, contextualizing findings, and facilitating collaboration with participants. It became an effective tool to convey the story of the participant’s story. I attempted to immerse myself in the issue while conducting the detailed interviews and discussions with my participants. Mostly, I used the primary tools for data collection.

Metaphorical narratives and historiography helped me to understand the history and experiences of my participants in conflict resolution. Through the live and told stories, I used narratives to study the events associated with the school-parent conflict and their resolution. I kept the field notes and collected the available artifacts to link the narratives of my participants with my research questions. I explored the facts from the respondents and narrated their experiences as a narrator. Then the story was shaped normatively so that I could answer the research questions.

According to the objectives of my study, research questions, ontology and epistemology, required in-depth data in study area. I wanted to extract the strategies that schools use to settle conflicts with their parents. It was only possible when my respondents communicated with me openly. Therefore, conducting in depth conversations was a crucial method for collecting data for my work. Deep conversation is a detailed and prolonged discussion that helps to extract the valid data from my participants. Knowledge is subjective in my study. The personal experiences among individuals can be vary. Data is provided by the participants which is my epistemology of this research. My axiology is to get the original experience and perception from the participants. Thus, narrative inquiry is the most effective methodology for adhering authentic experiences from participants. During my field work, I felt that the selection of narrative inquiry was a wise decision, as it helped me to uncover the stories and experiences of the participants.

I created some guiding questions and prompts to facilitate deep conversations with the participants. I have conducted conversation and follow-up conversations with the participants to verify and validate the data. Data was centered on the ways schools are addressing to settle the conflicts with parents. That data, which was not possible to share in the office, was obtained during off- hours through a personal meeting. I discussed with the participants at their residence or a place they prefer. Moreover, though they were not my real participants, I made a short telephone conversation with some of the senior teachers of the schools for the validation and verification of the data shared by the head teachers and parents.

I observed school-parents meetings, result distribution events, discussions, debates, and conflicts to the extent possible. I tried to be an unstructured observer and a note-taker during the parents' meetings, visits, gatherings, and other functions where parents were in present at the school. During such occasions, I also asked the parents to explain the reasons for the conflicts with school and the ways the school uses to resolve them. The observation helped me to triangulate, validate and verify the collected data. There were several events where parents gathered, such as result distribution and parent meetings, during my field-work. To the extent possible, I attended the parent meeting and other occasions where parents and school authorities interacted.

I kept notes of the findings from the observation and other incidental actions related to my topic. Unstructured observation was helpful to grasp the facts without

interfering the natural happening of events that suited to narrative inquiry. I reminisced my life experience to connect the data that I got from the field and made the meaning. I recorded the stories of my participants. In some cases participants suggested me not to record the certain episode which are noted in the field diary. I also watched the way of expression by the participants which helped me in meaning making.

The story was analyzed contextually. Background, and position of the participant are noted for better interpretation. Background of the events taking place is perceived through the analysis of participants' narratives. Narrative approach helped me to achieve subjective meaning of participants. It made me possible to investigate how people perceive and interpret their experiences, leading to a more complex comprehension of cultural and personal meanings. However, the factual inputs was possible after multiple sitting.

Multiple visits and discussions were made to develop the confidence with the participants. Moreover, participants were given a voice through enabling them to tell their story in their own words and style at their favorable place and time. It acknowledged the value of personal stories and gave freedom to the participants to communicate their experiences freely and truly. Secondary sources such as observation, field note making and follow up questions were used to validate the investigation of the story's facets. I used a range of procedure for receiving and analyzing narrative data, including storytelling, interviews, and discussions to answer my research questions. The significance of the study site and participant selection will be mentioned in the coming paragraphs.

### **Study Site and Participants Selection**

I have worked in the schools of both rural and urban areas. As a teacher and school leader, I have encountered more conflict issues in urban schools than in rural schools. As a resident of Dharan, I was familiar with the numerous conflicts between parents and the school. Thus, Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City is taken as my field. I have lived in Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City for 17 years, which has enabled me to access me to access the schools in Dharan. I am familiar with the many school, the many schools, school leaders, and parents in Dharan.

I required thick data from participants. Thus, I established a close relationship with the head teachers before I started my dissertation work. Mentally I selected the potential schools. As I was a familiar school leader in the area, it was not difficult to work with the head teachers and senior teachers but it was not easy with the parent

participants. Because I was not as familiar as with the parents in comparison to the school family. I was known with much secondary data of the schools as a local dweller. I felt easy to check the validity of the data which is provided by the participants. It was comparatively easy to triangulate the data and meet the participants beyond the school area which helped me to get reliable data. When I felt the lack of reliability and validity in the data given by the principal I used to verify with the deputy principal and other teachers. So, Dharan Sub-Metropolitan was the best place for me to obtain the valid and reliable data.

I have selected both the institutional and community schools from the city area as the schools in the city area have more students in comparison to the rural area. According to the seventh amendment of the Educational Act, 1971, community and institutional are the types of schools in Nepal. These are the types of schools where the conflict among the parent and school may vary. I have selected the schools with higher student numbers because the likelihood of conflict is higher in these settings. As a teacher, I felt more conflict between parents and schools in the secondary level schools. Hence, secondary schools were selected for the study. As mentioned earlier, the selected schools differ in nature and represent various types of schools in terms of ownership and operation. Those schools are selected that have more than 800 students, are easy to access, and can collect and triangulate the necessary data.

I have selected the participants through snowball sampling. This study needed knowledgeable and resourceful person who can explicitly express the reasons of school-parent conflict as well as reflect and evaluate the conflict resolution strategies applied by the school and school leaders. However, I did not plan to select any participant in advance. I was neutral with my participants. Most of the stories are recorded, evidenced and transcribed. Selective interpretation is avoided to maintain impartiality of the opinions of the participants.

### **Profile of the Schools**

Five schools were selected for the study from Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City. They represent the community and institutional schools. Although the general functions of the schools are similar, they follow different management structures, student enrollment procedures, student follow-up processes, disciplinary measures, and internal working mechanisms. I have given pseudonym to each school so the secrecy of the schools would not expose. A short profile of each school is given below:

### **School 1**

School 1 was established in 1963 AD. It is running from play group to bachelors' level. It is located in the city area of Dharan. It has 73 teachers, 36 supporting staff and 1,300 students. It is an institutional school. This school is extended in a wide area with good sports and physical infrastructures. This school system also includes bachelors' program. According to the head teacher of the school, the major communities are Rai, Limbu, Kshetri, Brahmin, and Newar. Mostly, the parents of the students follow foreign employment, including Nepali army, the Indian army and the British army. Parents also work in Nepal Police, business, and service. Most of the parents follow Hinduism, Boudhism, Kirat, Christianity, and Islam. The school has football courts, volleyball court, table tennis courts, basketball courts, cricket ground, school canteen, buses, library, labs, and hostel infrastructures. It has a wide space for school activities. This school has satisfactory academic results in grade XII and X examinations taken by National Examination Board. Santa Kumar and Dhan Kumar represent this school for this study.

### **School 2**

School 2 was established in 1988 AD. It is located at a side of Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City. It has 49 teachers, 20 supporting and 45 temporary staff. This school has 1361 students. Mostly the students are from Rai, Limbu, Magar, Chhetri and Brahmin communities. Mostly the parents of the students are engaged in the Nepal police, foreign employment, business and service. Most of the parents follow Hinduism, Boudhha, Kirat, and Christian religions. The school has covered hall, football court, volleyball court, table tennis courts, school canteen, buses, library, labs, and hostel infrastructures. This school has good academic results in grade X examinations taken by National Examination Board. Hasan Kumar and Indra represent this school for this research.

### **School 3**

School 3 was established in 1990 AD. It is located in the core city area of Dharan. It has the classes from play group to grade XII. It has 75 teachers, 24 non-teaching staff and 1500 students. It is an institutional school. Most of the parents follow Hinduism, Boudhha, Kirat, and Christian religions. The school has table tennis courts, school canteen, buses, and library and lab infrastructures. This school has good academic results in grade XII and X examinations taken by National Examination Board. Ram represents this school for this research.

#### **School 4**

School 4 is an institutional school which was established in 2005 AD. It has classes from grade VI to XII. It has 55 teaching, 74 supporting and 33 temporarily placed staff for school operation. It has 852 students. It has diversification in students, teaching and supporting staff from different districts of Nepal. All the teachers have passed at least bachelors level with minimum second divisions. It is located at a side of Dharan city. It has a large diversity of students. It is noncommercial school with wide area. It has a wide area with gardens and greenery. The school has program hall, table tennis courts, volleyball courts, basketball courts, school hostels, school canteen, buses, and library and lab infrastructures. This school has good academic results in grade XII and X examinations taken by National Examination Board. Jatayu and Buku represent this school for this research.

#### **School 5**

School 5 is one of the historical school of Dharan. This school was established in 1953 AD. It has 1,125 students, 39 teachers and 9 non-teaching and supporting staff. This is located in the core city area of Dharan city but unable to get sufficient local students. Most of the parents are labors, workers, employed in the foreign nations. Some parents follow business and service. Most of the parents have middle and lower class economic status. Mostly Rais, Limbus, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Muslims and Dalits. This school has technical 11 and 12 classes. This school has a narrow space which includes academic building, lab, library and canteen. Though the area is congested the quality of building and furniture were found good. Guru and Kumari represent this school for this research. The following section provides a profile of the participants.

It is important to clear my positionality before selecting the participants. I am a person who is worried about school-parent conflict and wanted to find field based strategies from the real field. I need to find the ground reality of the field which can be useful for others. To achieve my objective I have selected the participants without any bias. In the beginning, I was unknown about the participants. I went to school, observed, talked to the head teacher, got head teacher's advices and finally selected the participant. In this way, it is snowball sampling. However, individual needed to be known the key information about the school that is being discussed. Being a local, who have been living in Dharan for 17 years, helped me to find resourceful persons without bias.

This study bases on subjective reality that considers that truth emerges through the opinions of school principals, parents, and senior teachers. Individual experience can be varied person to person that agrees in presence of multiple realities. As the researcher my experience, beliefs, observation also will shape the study. Hence, knowledge is co-constructed by the researcher and participants. However, I applied my best efforts to find and interoperate the field reality as they are. The next subsection is about the profile of participants.

### **Profile of the Participants**

After selecting the schools, I spoke with the school principals about the selection of parent participants. I got suggestions from different individuals from the principals. Among the multiple suggestions, I took one from each school. At the first meeting, I did not mention my purpose, but introduced myself to the unfamiliar participants. Some participants hesitated, and some refused to talk. Some of them were unable to provide detailed information due to their limited knowledge about the school. Therefore, I was forced to change three of the participants who were initially planned. One of my friends who was selected as a participant, called me four times at his office, but did not reply well, which forced me to replace him with another participant. In one case, a participant from one school requested that a participation another participant from the next school to talk to me. After the data collection, I could not be fully satisfied with the acquired data and went second, third and fourth round discussion and observation. At last, I added one each participant from each the community and institutional schools. When I talked with the people two of their spouses also joined in the discussion and expressed their opinions. So, altogether, I talked with eleven people. The individual highlights of the participants are mentioned in the following section:

#### **Shanta Kumar**

Santa Kumar (Pseudonym) is the head teacher of school 1. This school also offers bachelor's degree program. He is 58 years-old man. He follows Hinduism and Kirat. He has a son (29 years) and a daughter (27 years). His son and daughter completed school and are studying in college. He has been a regular teacher at school 1 for 27 years. He has completed Bachelor's in education and Master's in science. He is also the campus chief of the college.

### **Dhan Kumar**

Dhan Kumar (Pseudonym) is 39 years-old father of a 13 years young boy. His son is in grade IX at school 1. He has completed bachelors in education and practiced teaching for seven years before he entered in business field. Now he is an investor and business person investing in the field of hotels and real estate sector in the eastern parts of Nepal based in Dharan. His wife is a teacher in school 1. He is economically sound person who follows Hinduism and cadre of Nepali Congress party. He keeps knowledge in contemporary political and socio-economic sector of Nepal as well as the educational and curriculum of school education of Nepal.

### **Hasan Kumar**

Hasan Kumar (Pseudonym) is a father of a student of School 2. He is a teacher in a famous school 4. He teaches in secondary level with leadership responsibility. He is 41 years old and the father of a son (9 years) and a daughter (2 years). He has completed bachelors in education and masters' in English language. He is a regular teacher since 24 years.

### **Guru**

Guru (Pseudonym) is the principal of school 5. His school is located at core city area of Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City. He is 50 years old and father of a son who is 11 years old. He worked as the head teacher of the same school for 6 years. He is from Hindu Brahmin family. He has completed M. Ed. and received many training related to teaching, management and head teacher. He has a joint family. The economic status of his family is good. The couple are employed in government service. He is an active member of Nepal Teachers Nepal National Teachers Association (NNTA).

### **Ram**

Ram (Pseudonym) is a civil engineer by profession. He is 49 years old. He is a Hindu Brahmin. He is educated person and a teacher in different institutions. He is a father of a daughter (17 years) and a son (13 years). His wife teaches at a school 5. So, his family has a good knowledge of school system.

### **Jatayu**

Jatayu (Pseudonym) is a senior teacher of school 4. He is 42 years old. He is a regular teacher for regular 25 years. He is also a trainer of teachers. He has completed Masters' degree and has a basic knowledge of legal practices in Nepal. He lives in

Itahari. He is a father of 13 years son. His family is an educated family. His wife is a teacher in a community school in Dharan.

### **Indra**

Indra (Pseudonym) is the head teacher of school 2. He is 39 years old Hindu male. He is a regular teacher of this school for last 16 years. He is teaching in this institution since last 16 years and working in the capacity of head teacher for last five years. He has good experience of school hostel who can reflect the conflict related to school hostel. He has completed masters' in education. He is a father of a son (13 years).

### **Kumari**

Kumari (Pseudonym) is a mother of three children. She is 38 years Hindu female. She is engaged in business along with her husband. They have an ornaments and handicraft shop. Participant worked as a teacher in institutional school for 7 years in Dharan. They reside in a Dharan 15. They have a joint family. She is a parent of a student of school 5. She represents economically a middle class family who belong to *Dalit* community.

### **Buku**

Buku (Pseudonym) is 38 years female. She is a teacher of a community school and parent of a student of school 4. She has completed masters' degree. She has teaching experience in institutional schools as well. She is aware of contemporary educational rules and regulations as she has recently selected as a lower secondary level teacher by Teachers' Service Commission of Nepal. She has a son of 15 years (studying in grade X) and a daughter of 19 years (studying in diploma in engineering). Her husband is retired officer of government of Nepal.

### **Procedure of Data Collection**

At first, the research participants were identified to collect the data. Before the discussion on the topic, I developed personal rapport with the participants. I have established a personal rapport through phone calls and face to face meeting. I moved to the field after I prepared the discussion issues, prompts and checklist. To get the answer of my research questions, I engage in long in-depth interviews and thick discussions. The main purpose of fieldwork was to collect data and carry out observations

Before I went to the field, I consulted the head of the Education Section of Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City. He is one of my friends. I requested him to provide a

written permission but he granted me an oral approval and committed to support in writing if the complexity arises. He said that he would phone the head teachers if necessary. As the head teachers are familiar to me, his call was not necessary. I included one parent from each school to check the validity of the data provided by the head teacher. In this perspective, my selection was a purposive selection.

It was challenging to get the discussion time with busy head teachers. One of the head teacher recurrently gave false excuses to avoid an in-depth dialogue, which forced me to replace the next accessible head teacher. Likewise, one of the selected parent was unable to provide detailed data about the school of her children, prompting me to replace her with the other parent participant.

Collecting data for narrative study was a challenging and unpredictable journey for me. Often, when I reached out to respondents, they would request to reschedule for the next day. On some occasions, they engaged in long conversations but ultimately apologized for not being able to provide time. When I asked questions, a few participants remarked that I was familiar with the situation, implying that further inquiry was unnecessary. This required me to revisit participants repeatedly to ensure I collected the necessary data. Despite these challenges, I remained committed to my criteria; every participant had to have in-depth knowledge of the school that I was studying.

It was obvious that a newly familiar participant would not like to share their detail experience and took multiple sitting to develop a familiar relationship. Thus, I did not try to meet any participant in a formal and structured way, neither rushed for discussion. Hence, a good interpersonal relationship with the participants helped me to get a thick data I have good interpersonal relationship with the participant. Few times, some of the participants offered me tea, coffee and snacks during the discussion. I just told the prompts and let the participants to share their experiences during the interview.

To discover the perceptions of head teachers, senior teachers, and parents on the causes of conflict as well as related resolution concepts, strategies, or circumstances, I adopted the approach recommended by Boyce and Neale (2006). I conducted intensive one-on-one conversations with individual participants using the qualitative research method known as 'in-depth interviewing'. I felt it as an important instrument of qualitative research. I used prompts to encourage and catalyst the participants for discussion. When the participant dived deep down into the life story it

helped to develop a sense or partnership of the story. In this sense the experience of the participant and prompts of researcher co constructed for the knowledge for this research.

The guiding prompts were simple and easy to understand which stimulated the participants to share their experiences. I also consulted my research supervisor to improve my guiding questions.

Observation also used to detect the sources of conflict and the resolution tactics applied by the school. There was an observation Performa to guide the observation. I made a field note to gather necessary data. The major observations of the field are noted in the field note. The data which is provided by the principal was checked when I discussed with the parents.

After the completing the fieldwork, I transcribed the interviews into scripts. The transcriptions were translated in-to English and coded to develop the groups, sub-themes and themes. When I had doubts about any information I had seen on the Facebook profile, I consulted another teacher from the same school over the phone to confirm the accuracy of the data. The raw data is collected from the field in the beginning which is refined afterwards. Data organization, analysis and meaning will be highlighted in the upcoming paragraphs.

### **Data Organization, Analysis and Meaning Making**

Data are the reliable facts which are collected, discussed and observed from the field. I do not like to quote the word the ‘data’ as I am going to find the fact and data in the field. I collected the data of the words which is quoted ‘fact’ by Gould (1981). As suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), during the analysis and interpretation stage, I quickly accessed to the data by creating fundamental descriptive categories early on for coding. Content analysis was conducted after coding the facts.

I used; thematic, meta-summary and meta-synthesis, narrative, versus, values, and description coding for this research. Qualitative content analysis was applied to gather context-dependent data based on my reflection and interaction. I used my prior experiences throughout the data gathering and investigation. After comprehensive analysis, I have developed the meaning of the data to generate the themes. The coding of data was done before the development of the theme. The chronology of events is maintained.

I retold the participants’ stories in the form of episodes. In this way, I created twenty-five (25) thematic episodes from the stories of the participants. These episodes

are further coded and themed in to key meaningful categories. Clandinin (2007) articulated that the data needs to be coded into the groups and themes which is followed by this study. Similar ideas are kept under similar codes and themes. After the identifying of the themes, the chapters of this research are organized according to the key ideas. Re-storying is completed through sequencing, reviewing, refining, and shaping the raw data into a logical temporal order after coding the data.

The investigation and meaning making is grounded on field information, field diary, narratives of participants, my personal experiences and the reference materials I reviewed. My meaning making may vary with other researchers as the personal perspectives vary person to person. The experience of participant, field observation and prior knowledge of the selected institution helped me for meaning making in a great extent. The ways which are used to maintain the quality of standard will be discussed in the next portion.

### **Quality Standard of the Study**

Narrative inquiry is used as the methodological line in this research which centers on understanding lived experiences through story-making and storytelling. This approach emphasizes the context-bound, relational, and temporal nature of human experiences. While I have followed the five criteria and twelve techniques of trustworthiness as discussed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) namely credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity. Efforts are applied to embed the core dimensions of narrative inquiry: temporality, sociality, place, and reflexivity.

I explored the participants' experiences not as isolated events but as part of a temporal continuum; past experiences that influence the present and offer insight into possible futures. For instance, narratives connected the participants' earlier experiences, present school practices, and their envisioned changes for the future related to school-parent conflict. This temporal connection provides a layered understanding of meaning making over the time.

Narrative inquiry demands for attentiveness to both the personal (internal conditions; hopes, sentiments, values) and social (external conditions; cultural, institutional, and interpersonal) attention. This study explored participants' experiences within their social, familial, and institutional settings, acknowledging how relationships and social expectations shaped their perspectives. Additionally,

ethical, trusting relationships was established with the participants to create a dialogic and collaborative space for co-constructing meaning.

### **Temporality**

This study is conducted in the socio political context of Dharan in between 2023 and 2024. If the history of Nepal is to consider this period can be reflected as 'Republic Period', after the promulgation of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nepal 2015, which decentralized school education under the jurisdiction of local government. This shift occurred in the broader post 2006 political transformation, which emphasized inclusiveness, equity, responsive leadership, and social justice. These evolving principles have meaningfully shaped the nature of school-parent relation and the approaches to conflict resolution within the educational sub-system.

### **Sociality**

I passed almost 17 years in Dharan. The schools which are selected for this study are familiar to me. I know some of the school head teachers and teachers of the schools which are covered by this study. However, I conducted a brief assessment of prospective participants prior conforming them as the participant. For illustration, after selecting school 1 as one of the school to study, I consulted Santa Kumar from school from that school to confirm the suitability of selection. Then, Santa Kumar recommended Dhan Kumar from the parents' group, mentioning his aptitude to deliver comprehensive information about the school-parents relationship and conflict. According to Santa Kumar, Dhan Kumar vigorously participates in debates with the school and can genuinely represent the sentiments of parents involved in conflicts with the school. Subsequently, I conducted a preliminary discussion with Dhan Kumar and confirmed his suitability to be a contributor for the study. Similarly, I accompanied the selection round discussion before the conformation of the participants.

In the preliminary sitting, I did not engage in long discussion with my research participants. When they started to feel comfortable to talk to me I extended the length of discussion. Communication through mobile phone was very helpful to develop the preliminary rapport and inquire the follow up information. My function as a front-runner in a famous school of Dharan helped me to develop trust with my participants. During the discussion, I perceived they trusted me for not misusing the secret information unlocked by them.

## **Place**

Dharan is in Sunsari district of Koshi province. It is located within 26°42'41" to 26°52'42" latitudes and 87°12'04" to 87°21'23" longitudes. It spans a total area of 192.61 square kilometers, with elevation varying from 119 meters to 1,778 meters above sea level. In terms of area, Dharan occupies 192.32 Sq. Km space (Yadav et al., 2023). It is a historical city with cultural diversities domination with Rais, Limbus/Yakthungs, Kshetris, Newars, Bishwokarmas, Tamangs, Hill- Brahmins are the major castes of the Sub-Metropolitan city (National Statistics Office, 2023). In my view, the people of different origin, caste-ethnicity, ideology, religion and economic status are the inhabitants of Dharan which also may lead to the school parent conflict.

## **Reflexivity**

Recognizing my own position as a researcher and how it intersects with the stories being told by the participants, I continued a reflexive position all over the research. I was conscious of the fact how my experience, assumptions, and intentions can influence data analysis. This reflexivity was experienced through interview transcription and ongoing replication, which ensured that the research was not only related the participants' stories but also about my relationship with those experiences and stories.

Along with the mentioned dimensions, I have taken care to maintain research morals by informing participants about the purpose, obtaining consensus, ensuring confidentiality through coded identities, and avoiding any form of delinquency. Methodologically, transparency and rigor is maintained by vibrant outline of research design, sampling, and data analysis procedures. I have triangulated the data across participants and institutions, conducted member checks, and engaged in prolonged fieldwork with thick descriptions of events, interactions, and verbal as well as non-verbal expressions.

Moreover, I used both emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives to interpret the stories profoundly and contextually. Authenticity and verisimilitude were prioritized by including full responses, avoiding selective reporting, and staying grounded in the respondents' lived experiences. In conclusion, I confirmed the multiplicity of meanings and representations, acknowledging that participants' narratives are layered, complex, and situated. Therefore, this study is true, credible, critical, and contextually bound, grounded in the temporal, spatial, and relational realities of Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical concerns were given the highest priority in this research. I am fully committed to adhering to the ethical standards of scientific research and made every effort to avoid causing harm to others.

Informed consent was achieved from each individual contributor before conducting interviews. A few direct version of non-participants who were found during the field visit, also are used with the consent of the participants. Entire participation was voluntary, and discussions were arranged at periods and places convenient for the participants, with full consideration for their personal and cultural sensitivities. Discussion are often rescheduled for the better accommodation of participants' needs.

I developed three overlapping ethical arguments: first, the ethics of qualitative research design demand strict adherence to norms of informed permission, confidentiality, privacy, social justice, and practitioner responsibility. Second, fieldwork ethics raise important questions about authority, reciprocity, and maintaining contextual relevance. Third, the analysis and application of qualitative inquiry involve careful consideration of the morality of conducting research, are applied to this research. These three ethical standpoints are based on the suggestions of Shaw (2008). Similarly, respect for individuals, justice, and benevolence are followed throughout the research process which are suggested by Yip et al. (2016). Furthermore, I adhered as closely as possible to the procedural, situational, relational, and executional ethical guidelines proposed by Tracy (2010).

No conflict of interest is present between the participants and researcher of this research. Essentially, the participants are selected in such a way that helped to preserve the ethical morals of a qualitative inquiry. Participants' autonomy, security, and confidentiality were highly respected. During observations, I acted as a complete observer and did not interfere with any events or activities. Throughout the research process, I upheld social, professional, moral, and legal responsibilities. To ensure the confidentiality of the schools and the participants pseudonyms are used. Real names are not disclosed, ensuring privacy.

No participant's pride, secrecy, or intellectual property rights were harmed, and there was no discrimination based on gender, caste, religion, class, or other diversities during either fieldwork or writing. Relational ethics such as no harm to the participants, professional relationship between research and participants, protection of

personal secrecy, future orientation of community which are mentioned also by Clandinin et al. (2018), are followed.

I followed all ethical codes and quality standards sets of my university as a scholar of School of Education, Kathmandu University. I refrained from publishing any data that could jeopardize participants' confidentiality or privacy. When the regular visits was going on, two of participants decided to withdraw from the study. One male participant told he was very busy and cannot talk to me then onwards. Other female participant refused after few days. She told, *“Your questions are difficult. I cannot answer your questions well so, do not like to continue”*. This highlights provision of personal autonomy of participants in this study. During the course of fieldwork and writing, I persisted sensitive to cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious, political, and other private dimensions of participants. No participant was forced to share or conceal any ideas; they retained the right to separate at any time, respecting their autonomy.

Justice in the research process was confirmed by showing transcribed scripts to participants for review. In cases of uncertainty, I sought clarification from participants after analysis. Participants' views were honestly and accurately presented, without any falsification. Proper citation and referencing is maintained when incorporating the work and ideas from other resources. Organizational, domestic, communal, and personal values and regulations were respected in different steps of this research. Lastly, my ethical practice was guided by continual consultation with my research supervisor. The summary of this chapter will be mentioned next of this paragraph.

### **Chapter Summary**

This research followed the narrative approach under qualitative method. The study was based on the narratives of nine participants of five schools. Participants were nominated on the random base after the conformation of their capacity to represent the diverse socio-economic context of Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City. Data was collected through face-to-face dialogues, phone calls, video conferencing, field observations, parents' reflections, and an analysis of school-related social media content. Quality standard of research was maintained through temporality, sociality, place as well as reflexivity. Similarly, ethical standard of the research is maintained through voluntary participation, respecting personal secrecy, proper referencing, following the ethical guidelines of KUSOED. It also followed confidentiality and no

harm policy. The next chapter discusses on dynamics and sources of conflict among school and parents.

## CHAPTER IV

### DYNAMICS AND CAUSES OF CONFLICT BETWEEN SCHOOL AND PARENTS

#### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter unearths the causes of school parents causes. It also highlights the expectation of parents and schools from their counter parts. It presents 14 episodes of narratives from the participants. The chapter presents narrative and interpretations of narratives, linking to earlier knowledge, field observation and personal experience of the researcher. A short introduction of Dharan is mentioned to familiarize about the socio cultural diversity of Dharan in the next paragraphs.

#### **Dharan at a Glance**

Presentation of the sociality of Dharan would be relevant to present before discussion of the narrative of participants. Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City is situated in Sunsari district of Koshi Province which is in the eastern part of Nepal. It has 20 wards. According to National Statistics Office (NSO) (2021), it has 166,531 population. It has mixed community. Rai, Limbu, Chhetri, Newar, Kami, Tamang, Brahmin (Hill), and Magar are the major ethnic group of the city. There is ethnic, religious, cultural, original, and other diversity in Dharan. This city was famous for the settlements of retired British Gurkha army in the past. There is economic diversity in the city where 29.9 percent of people do not have their own house. This city is not the exception in parent school conflict. The school-parent conflict appears in different issues. The next part covers the changing dynamics of school parent conflict.

#### **Dynamics of Conflict**

According to participants in this study, conflict evolves over time and varies with circumstances. To examine these changing dynamics, I gathered narratives from the four participants of different age, and representing diverse segments of society. These participants are from diverse backgrounds encompassing different genders, religions, and economic levels, ranging from lower-middle class to financially secure. Every participant holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree, but they vary in ethnicity, economic status, and political affiliations. Despite these differences, they share a common connection as they are the parents and are associated with the schools in Dharan.

For the convenience of the participants' convenience, I discussed the topic in the office, at the residences and on the Zoom platform. Office days and holidays were used as per the participants' choice. Jatayu's story is concerned with the shifting dynamics of the struggle between the school and parents in school which will be mentioned after this paragraph.

### **Jatayu's Story**

Jatayu's story can highlight some shifting paradigms of parent-school conflicts, which is presented in the box below.

#### **(Episode-1)**

*Parents don't have many children. They expect different success from the children. They want their child successful in every fields. They want to see their children best in curricular as well extracurricular activities. When the expectances are not fulfilled the disappointed parents come to the school to share the frustration. Parents want their child be A+ (the highest-grade point in subject) in study, best in dance, song and other extracurricular activities. Parents come to school to ask why their child is unable to do this and that. In the past, conflicts were mostly face-to-face, but now, they often emerge on social media. Even classroom conflicts among students can escalate into school-parent conflicts. Sir, one cannot stay with fan while other cannot stay with the fan.*

*If homework is given some parents will come and if not given other parents will come to complaint. Hence, conflict is unavoidable in both the cases. The school with hostel experiences one type of conflict which may not present in day schools. Similarly, conflicts vary between urban and rural schools, as well as between institutional and community institutions. There are job specific difficulties. In the past there was less diversity but now multiplicity is added in every community. Students belong to different sociological, economic, social and religious backgrounds. The people with the middle and lower economic condition may satisfy with normal physical facilities while rich parents do not satisfy with normal infrastructures. One student criticizes other in the class as they are from various socio-economic and cultural background. Some parents do not like homework in junior level and expect their children play but others asking the reason for not providing homework in the very first day.*

Jatayu emphasized that the nature of school-parent conflicts is evolving; new areas of conflict are emerging, while some older issues have faded. According to Jatayu misunderstandings are created by social and cultural diversities. Multiplicity amongst the school and students creates conflict between the school and parents. In his opinion parents do not have a similar mentality. Guru's story also gives a good justification for the fields mentioned in the next paragraph.

### **Guru's Story**

To find the conflicting issues of school 5, I approached Guru through one of my brother's colleagues. I thought Saturday would be better to talk with him as he will not be disturbed by the office work. It was the month of February, and I went to his hometown, Itahari. I could not easily find his home. So, I called him at the nearest crossroads. He had a multi-storied house with a kitchen garden in Itahari city. When discussing the causes of conflict, Guru hinted that school teachers might also contribute to conflicts between schools and parents. I requested that he to elaborate on what he had expressed. He told;

#### **(Episode-2)**

*In the past teacher of community school used to send their children to their school but nowadays they send their children to institutional school. In my school too no teachers' children are studying. The environment of community school is not good. A teacher who has come with a great courage also turns into lazy person in community schools. One teacher criticizes another teacher. They think nothing happens with hard work.*

*There is another issue which is different than the past. Guardian send student to the school but, student does not go and pass the day outside. The student returns home in the usual time. If students do not come to school, they miss all the activities of the school. When teacher and parents meet the teacher ask the causes for not sending the children to the school. Now, the parent gets angry for not informing them in time.*

*The honesty of teacher is also changed. Those who are honest are doing their job well but there are some who come to idling. Full time teacher of one school work in another school as well. They have part time and self-jobs for the morning and evening. Community schools are turning into the rest place.*

According to Guru, community school teachers often lack confidence in themselves, which contributes to conflict with parents. He observed that many parents

are dissatisfied with the job performance of community school teachers, further straining the school–parent relationship. Guru also highlighted that teachers’ off-hour commitments are another dynamic of conflict. When teachers are overextended and unable to meet professional expectations, tensions with parents may arise. Indra’s story also provides additional insight into this issue, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **Indra’s Story**

Indra’s story is a significant remark to highlight the dynamics of parent school conflict. Here is a piece of a story about how Indra replied to me in his office. He told;

#### **(Episode-3)**

*Though there are some difficulties created by the policy of government in school operation we are not highly suffered by them. In Social Studies the medium language is changed into Nepali from English. Some subjects are added and some are removed in the school level. The examination and grading system is being changed which are creating some problems. When the practiced system of education is changed it is difficult to understanding by the parents and sets the background of conflict. We had English language teachers to teach Social Studies in English but now it is compulsory to teach in Nepali which is hard for English language.*

Indra pointed out another central characteristic of the dynamics of conflict between schools and parents. He highlighted that when government policies are unstable, they often produce tensions. Schools should follow those policies, but parents may remain unaware and unwilling about the changes, leading to misunderstandings and conflict. The following section explores the shared perspectives of participants regarding the various dimensions of school-parent conflict.

### ***Common Views Among the Participants***

The participants’ narratives revealed several recurring dynamics that adds conflict between parents and schools. One significant issue was internal conflict within the school family. Divergences within the school team results in teachers, staff and administrators involving parents to support their positions, thereby escalating tensions.

Reflecting the need of good relationship between the school and parents, participants pointed that when the connection between teachers and students weakens, the students involve their parents in disputes with. Equally, a fragile association among the head teacher and school team members directs them to search parental backing to proclaim influence over the next which further invites the parents to interfere the school internal affairs further complicates school-parents dynamics. Furthermore, participants experienced those contradictory perspectives and expectations among students, parents, and school family leads to misunderstandings and conflict teachers which shows the behavioral understanding of participants. These similar opinions provide insight into the complex factors that underlie school–parent tensions. The next heading provides further analysis of the views of participants.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Participants' Perspectives**

In the past, there was less heterogeneity in the schools. When the diversity is increasing the possibility of the conflict is also been increased. The Almost schools, included in this research exhibit the linguistic, cultural, ideological, economic and educational variation. The probability of conflict is high in the area with ethno- racial diversity (Legewie & Schaeffer, 2016) among students, teachers and leaders of the school. The people from different places of origin bring different thoughts which also increase the chance of conflict. This matches to the finding of Lazarus (2005) who assessed opposite views, opposite interests, working styles, personalities, necessities, and thoughts as causes of interpersonal conflict in school. As debate can be observed in diversity (Munanga, 2022).

Dharan is a city where the children from Terai, Hilly and Mountain origin communities often engage in debates that can sometimes lead to conflict. Legewie and Schaeffer (2016) pointed more chance of conflicts in diversified community. Similar to the study, this research also found ethnic diversity and polarization lead to heightened threats, bias, and the breakdown of communities that leads conflict among the people. The diversities of persons are in different fields. One of the diversity in attitude is towards home and vacation works. Some parents think the school should give the plenty of home and vacation works to the students so they will not have any leisure time at home while others think there should not or very less home and vacation works. They think students should not have any burden of school at home. It is the point where the behavior leadership can be useful.

I remembered my school days. In our school time, when teacher used to complain against any student, parents used to beat the student but, now, when the teacher complain against the students some of the parents return the complaint against the complaint and support the wrong deeds of their child. I have experienced that the parents believe more to their children than the teacher which is opposite to the practice when I was a school boy. Similar to the opinion of the participants of this research, the conflict of the students takes in the social media and digital platform rather than in the playground. The causes of conflict are changing as mentioned by the participants which indicates temporal change. Thus, the view of previous literature and this study is similar in the sense that school parent conflict is a dynamic process which is changing its nature with the time, situation and social setting.

Until the people are not able to accept the diversity, they will make fun of others and put negative pressure which create conflict. I believe that conflicts arise from a 'low acceptance of others' identity and dignity'. The risk and intensity of civil conflicts have increased significantly due to diversity between countries and ethnic groups, particularly when measured by the degree of variation among these groups (Arbatli et al., 2020). Often, people try to impose their culture on others, while some strive to preserve their values which invites the conflict.

Such variances in conflict reflect deeper contrasts in how these schools operate and serve their communities. On the basis of observations and discussions with the participants it is revealed distinct areas of conflict between community and institutional schools. Despite their different administrative structures, people often compare the two. In community schools, conflicts frequently arise over issues such as teacher punctuality, regularity, course completion, and the oversight of homework. Meanwhile, in institutional schools, debates often center on fees, student care, infrastructure, and the services provided. One common issue, however, is teacher behavior, which remains a source of debate in both types of schools. According to Almeida and Azkune (2018), human behavior is very complex to predict. Thus, in similar type of schools too, they have distinctive challenges as every school connected to different personalities.

As an ex-teacher of community and institutional schools I experienced that the parents talk when they meet the teachers. However, mostly the parents go to the school for protests. Variations in the working style of community and institutional school which also signify the possible differences of debate which occur in the

community and institutional schools. Community and institutional schools' are commended and managed in different which may contribute different chances of conflicts between the parents and schools.

It is not a surprising fact that conflict can be created by excessive workload. Teachers can't provide enough time for the study of students. Heavy work pressure does not let the teacher enough time to follow each and every task of the students which are expected by the parents. Ilies et al., (2015) also pointed that experiences of work-family encounter were associated with daily workload and affective discomfort; these associations were mostly mediated by emotional exhaustion.

After the discussions with the participants it is clearly understood that high workload negatively impacts expected job performance. This underscores the importance of balancing workload to achieve optimal outcomes. Schools alert the students to accept the diversity among them. School 4 celebrates the social and cultural diversity of the students. It can be analyzed the school is trying it's best to internalize the situation to the parents so the parents will understand the problem of the school. It helps to accept the diversity in the school which helps to decrease the chance of conflicts. Following the behavioral aspect of leadership school leaders are allocating less number of periods to the teachers who are working for important appointments. From my experience, I have observed the need of warm relationship in the school team which stops the leakage of unnecessary information to the parents.

The chances of cyber as well as traditional bullying and harassments are still existed in the school (Leemis et al., 2018). Such infernal bullying and harassments s are needed to resolve as soon as possible. It is obvious that when the reported fact do not match to the reality the parents show bitterness to the fabricator. It is advocated a good internal unity can prevent the irrelevant allegations. School should give blooming chance to every students and they created a respectful environment for social diversity to avoid the conflict. Counseling parents is better to prevent conflicting situations.

It is found that schools organizing picnic, gatherings and group training to improve the personal relationship of the teachers and staff. School are following inclusive participation in different events. School 4 celebrates a day which reflect the diversity of students, teachers and supporting staff. The expectation of parents and school from each other are discussed as causes of conflict between the parents and

school in the imminent section of this chapter. The expectations of the parents and school are mentioned in the next paragraphs.

To sum up, according to the change in other fields of life the paradigms of school-parent conflict are also changing. One which is demanded by a parent is hated by another. Some parents do not want to see more burden of homework while for others homework is the must. The paradigms also are shifted from academic focus to demand of skills teaching. The hard disciplinary rules are not liked by majority of parents. If the school fails to adopt the changing scenario, there is the possibilities of conflict.

### **Parents' and Schools' Expectation From Each Other**

School and parents have specific expectations from one another. The chance of conflict emerges when the expectations are not fulfilled. This portion narrates the expectation of school and parents from each other. I made an attempt to get the expectation from the participants which took me closure to the causes of conflict between the school and parents. Narratives from Jatayu, Indra, Buku and Guru are included as the relevant stories to explain the topic. Which are about to be mentioned in upcoming paragraph. Among the narratives Jatayu's narrative is presented at the first.

#### **Jatayu's Story**

Jatayu introduced expectation of parents and school as the conflicting factor. His version is mentioned in the box below.

#### **(Episode-4)**

*Parents don't have many children. Thus, they expect different success from a single child. When the expectances are not fulfilled the disappointed parents come to the school to share the frustration. Parents want their child be A+ (the highest grade point in subject) in study, best in dance, song and other extracurricular activities. School has to answer Parents who come to school to ask why their child is unable to do this and that.*

*Some parents want to stop the use of mobile at home. They can't stop themselves so they tell the teacher to stop the use of mobile phone. Parents complain that their child do not listen and follow them and recommend the teacher to instruct the child to follow parents.*

*School gives school calendar, pamphlet and brochure to the students.*

*Sometimes the school can't run the functions which are mentioned in school calender, brochure and prospects. Parents are highly concerned with the health of the student. Many parents have luxurious furniture and air conditioner at their home. Our school has hostel and all the boys are the borders. When the parents come to visit the child many of them do not satisfy with the cleanliness of the student. Some parents are not satisfied with the quality of food provided by the school.*

Jatayu claimed that he had seen schools selling unfulfilling dreams since many years. He told that if the schools are not able to fulfill their commitments with the parents and students that create misunderstanding between the parents and school. Commitments which are assured through brochure, pumped, school calender and other school document are not completed by the school which invite conflict between the school and parents. He experienced that school pile unnecessary project and homework to the student.

Jatayu pointed on mismatch in parental expectations which confuse the school and teachers to formulate concrete policy which turn in key source of conflict in the school-parent relationship. Indra's story also provides valuable inputs about the parents' expectation from the school which will be mentioned in the following section.

### **Indra's Story**

Indra recalled a recent incident in which a parent pressured him to pass a student who had failed the Basic Level Examination conducted by the Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City's education section.

Indra shared an experience where some students had to retake a supplementary exam to pass the Basic Level Examination (Grade VIII). One of the parent of his student visited him demanding to pass his son in the Basic Level Examination of grade VIII which exam was administrated by Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City. Indra clarified the parent that the exam was conducted by the Sub-Metropolitan office, yet the parent insisted the school intervene by contacting the sub-metropolitan office. Though Indra suggested the parent can to approach the education office directly for further explanation, still the parent insisted him to support. Buku's story, discussed in the following paragraph, further supports this point.

### **Buku's Story**

Buku, a parent whose child attends School 4, was asked about her expectations from the school and whether she had experienced frustrated for not fulfilling her by the achievement of her son. She told;

#### **(Episode-5)**

*When parents' desires are not met, they may become uncertain about whether the school has failed to encourage their child, lacks a child-friendly education system, or hasn't provided opportunities for openness and freedom.*

*So far the cause of misunderstanding between me and the school is not created by others. I am not able to convince the school and teachers. I did not see the standpoint where I expected my son pass through. He is not able to catch the way I anticipate. We parents wish them to success in every fields but we frustrate when they do not show any interest to those fields.*

According to Buku, when parents' concerns are not properly addressed, misunderstandings between families and the school can lead to conflict. She told that she visited the School 4 multiple times, contacted teachers, and appeared parent meetings to express her worries. She is vigorously involved, seeking solutions through regular communication. The following segment highlights Ram's story which further elucidates this issue.

### **Ram's Story**

I wanted to verify the view of Jatayu, Indra and Buku with Ram. Ram told;

#### **(Episode-6)**

*Teachers go to the class in rush, say everything from the book and force the students to write. This book confined work should be stopped. Ram also mentioned that high work pressure is also responsible for parent school conflict. According to Ram when the working hour and number of period is more there is chance of inefficiency in work. Ram mentioned that high work pressure and minute work do not go together.*

Ram mean that teacher do not have time to revise their works. According to him when people do not get good preparation time there would be problem in finishing. Ram mentioned that he had seen teachers who were highly stressed by their workload and observed potential tussles among teachers and students, teachers and school management, teachers and parents and other stakeholders. He also mentioned

that parents and students do not support unnecessary restrictions on students' freedom in the name of discipline.

After learning about parents' expectations, I became curious whether the school also has expectations of parents and students. To explore this, I consulted the head teacher and a lead teacher. The next section outlines the school's expectations of parents, as described by Guru.

### **Guru's Story**

Guru is a right character who can express the expectation of school from the parents. To express his expectation from the parents, Guru told;

#### **(Episode-7)**

*Regular discussion and interaction between the parents and school is an effective measure for better school. When parents and teachers meet and share their ideas for student improvement it creates the opportunities for improvement. It is well practiced in institutional schools. The parents of the institutional school present to the school whenever the school calls them. I think the monetary investment of the parents forcing them to present and discuss with the school. Parents need to guide the children at home and prepare for the school. But, in our school parents criticize to the school for more score in the institutional school and less in our school but they do not search the reason for this. When parents do not concern on their children the teacher also leaves to follow up the students. When the result is poor they blame one another and try to skip from the responsibility.*

*The local community organizations and political leaders are not helping significantly for betterment of the school. We visit 1 kilometer around the school during the school admission campaign every year but we have very few students from this area.*

According to Guru, although parents value high grades, they do not actively support their children's studies. He expects all parents to attend parent meetings, yet in reality, only a few participate in these events, including result distribution days. From his perspective, parents focus more on grades than on the learning process itself. Their involvement in meetings, discussions, and constructive engagement is low, but they become immediately active when their expectations are not met.

Guru highlighted the importance of monitoring of children at home by the parents. Valuing the enrollment of local students, Guru, expressed a desire to enroll

more local students. However, the proportion of local enrollment ratio is discouraging in his school. The surrounding community, which could play a vital role in overseeing school activities, remains largely disengaged in many schools. Guru seems conscious that lack of community involvement can lead to diminished teacher accountability and unchecked practices ultimately creates causes of conflicts. He believes that parents living far from the school often struggle to stay actively involved, which further reduces the school's level of oversight and attention. The following section discusses the common views of participants regarding the expectations placed on parents and the school.

### **Common Views Among the Participants**

Participants have some common expectations. Parents expect the high academic, extracurricular and behavioral performance of their children. They anticipate the teachers and school authorities give high priority to their suggestions. Their wishes are beyond the school time and premises. For an example they think that would be better if the school use its effort to avoid the domestic problem of students like using mobile, playing mobile games, time management and show the admirable behavior at home.

School teachers and appointment holders expect parents to attend parents' meeting, join in school functions and support the study of their children at home. Schools expect parents help them to bring the neighboring children to the school. School authorities wish parents join in the community related activities functioned by the school. Though the participants have high expectations from each other, they are found to be less aware of the legal and policy arrangements made by The Constitution of Nepal, 2015; The Consumer Protection Act, 2018 and School as the Zone of Peace, Implementation Directives, 2011.

In conclusion, both the parents and school authorities wish to get optimum support from the next party. They also expect the next party do the best in their job and they get full support from them. The analysis of the expectation of parents and school will be presented in the next title.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Participants' Perspectives**

Parents expect schools to help their children achieve ambitious life goals, placing the responsibility for their child's success squarely on the teachers. They desire not only academic achievement but also excellence in extracurricular activities and personal development, which can be challenging to balance in a single child.

Parents give great priority for care and attention of their children paid by the school. They expect, teachers pay high responsiveness their child's individual strengths and weaknesses, particularly the students who are physically or emotionally fragile. Ambitious and sometimes impractical expectations frequently result in frustration and conflict when the school is unable to deliver on all fronts.

Some parental expectations are challenging and sometimes impossible for schools to meet. As a school leader, I also have encountered situations where parents pressured me to pass a failing student or provide undeserving recommendation letter. When I couldn't conform, misunderstanding inevitably arose. Such experiences highlight that how some parents attempt to exert personal influence over teachers expecting them to fulfill their requests that may conflict with ethical and legal obligations. Additionally, parents often expect to be treated with respect and patience during interactions with school that not all teachers and staff can consistently maintain.

Expectation on teachers are not only recognize the traits of students but also anticipate and address the issues like sickness or bullying, even when students themselves do not communicate their difficulties. Parents often approach the school when they feel their children are not receiving sufficient attention, which can lead to complaints and debates. All these expectations are associated to traditional role and dependency of parents on teachers.

Expectations are not limited only to parents and school but of teachers and students. School teachers expect they are well behaved by the student and parents. They want the parents show a good manner, support the student at home, provide necessary stationaries, participate in parents' meeting and appreciate the decision of the school. Meeting these expectations are challenging for many parents, which often leads to frustration among school authorities.

When the expectation of the stakeholders are not fulfilled the chance of conflict raises there. Bundy et al. (2017) pointed that meeting the expectations of stakeholders can encourage compromise instead of conflict, helping to preserve and even enhance the relationship over time.

During the discussion with the school head teachers and senior teacher I come to know that some debates are appeared due to the hopes that the school kept on the parents. Schools desire the parents caring to the study of their children. When the expectations of teachers and school authority are not fulfilled, it plays a negative role

in the school-parent relationship. The conflict will significantly affect the curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular achievements of the students. If the parents show interest in the school meeting, discuss with the teachers about study and discipline, encourage the student to study at home make the teachers happy which leads for fulfilling the schools expectation and ultimately helps to resolve the problem.

It is found schools conduct door to door campaign to increase the local students. Schools organize parents meeting to aware the parents in different issues. School requests the parents to support the students morally, academically and materially. It is not better to show the striving dreams to the students and parents. Bridgeland et al. (2008) found only fifteen percent of parents of students at low-accomplished schools feel that the school is doing a very good job for challenging students, compared with fifty-eight percent of parents of students at high-performing schools. Above all, parents think that schools should make their syllabus engaging and classes stimulating, as this fosters both strong performance and positive perceptions.

Community and parents hold great expectations form school (Blustein et al., 2016) and teachers. So, teachers must be highly committed to uphold moral, social, and professional standards. At the same time, parents and students should avoid raising irrelevant issues that might unfairly portray a teacher as a criminal in the eyes of the community. The integrity of the teaching profession must be preserved by teachers themselves, and respected by both students and parents. Teachers should also learn from the experiences of their colleagues and their own past, ensuring that their actions remain untainted throughout their careers.

Though the reviewed literature in this study did not mention lack of fulfillment of expectation as the cause of school-parent conflict Brokovic et al. (2014) indicated child-parent conflict can be the barrier of overall development of student. It seems in some cases parents want to take the support of school in which they can't directly impose to their children. Brooks and Brooks (2018), Mislá (2012) and Chandolia and Anastasiou (2020) saw the role of leadership to end school related conflicts.

School and parents should not keep unrealistic expectations from each other's. Parents should not expect the impossible expectations from the school and so the schools from the parents. Schools should evaluate the completion of their commitment during the session. The basic expectation of the school and parents should be completed by the next party before that turns into the issue of the conflict.

School leaders should not share the ambitious aim to the public until they have reliable bases. School authorities should be in close negotiation with the parents and students if any plans are not possible to complete immediately. School authority should be convincing with the reliable reasons. The effective communication and warm relationship also avoids the conflict. After all, accountability on teacher, schools and parents is a reliable tool to avoid the conflict. The upcoming section of this chapter deals on the reasons of conflict between school and parents.

### **Causes of Conflict**

Causes of the conflict is another theme emerged from the stories of the participants. It is one of the research questions of this research. Similar to the previous section of this chapter, this title also based on the responses of Santa Kumar, Dhan Kumar, Jatayu, Hasan Kumar, Indra, Ram and Buku. These respondents represent diversity caste, language, and education level, economic and social status. Participants are associated to the schools of Dharan with the role of head teacher, teacher and parent. In the beginning the story of Dhan Kumar's story is presented in the next paragraph.

### **Dhan Kumar's Story**

Dhan Kumar is unhappy with the unreasonable hike in school fees. As a parent, he opened the pile of complains in this way; He complained;

#### **(Episode-8)**

*There is not homely environment in the school which is expected by the parent. For the parent of young children, the misunderstanding starts from that point. The parents of senior children are unhappy with low learning achievement, lack of different extracurricular cause misunderstanding. I expect good care and handling of my son by the school. My son is not good in study as per the expectation.*

*Many students are studying in institutional schools which increase fee in a regular basis. The school raises fees arbitrarily, without any scientific reason, or consultation with parents. Parents need to pay all the fee by hook or crook and late fine is charged for delayed payment but the similar sincerity is not seen from the school's side. I feel sad to see that there are cases of misbehavior to the parents for late payment. Isn't it wrong to publicly point out the students who haven't paid fees on time? As parent must pay by this or that way, they like to see the return in their children. It is hard to see no progress of the children who is a regular student.*

*Certain students are the showcased in all the program, average and below the average students are always boycotted from the chance of improvement which was out of his expectation.*

Dhan Kumar recounted a troubling incident involving his son, who was allegedly humiliated during an examination and forced to sign a written confession implying that his father pressured him to succeed at any cost. Dhan Kumar told that the school spread fabricated reports about the incident and distressed the child's mother (who is also a teacher in the same school) remain into silence. He articulated inconvenience over being call for a meeting without earlier communication and criticized that the school failed to deliver any records despite frequent appeals, raising worries about transparency and due procedure.

Moreover, Dhan Kumar raised health related carelessness, claiming that his son suffered by dengue due to the school's attention for proper sanitation. He further criticized against the rigid fee collection mechanism of the school and advised for a flexible payment options. He opposed the frequent exams tied to financial obligations. Notably, Dhan Kumar pointed out the absence of parental representation in the management committee of School 1. He claimed that many conflicts origin from teachers' failure to understand and address the requirements of students.

Exemplifying to an incident in Letang Municipality of Morang district; where a policewoman was killed while protecting a teacher who was accused of sexual misconduct (Bhandari, 2022), Dhan Kumar underscored how unsettled school–parent conflict can escalate into wider public violence. Dhan Kumar highlighted the spiritual value of teacher. He added;

**(Episode-9)**

*The teachers should not keep any evil intention with their student. Guru (Teacher) should not follow the character of a Goru (ox). I have seen a teacher who was following his student of school 3 from grade IX. He married her when she was in XI.*

'Guru' is the Sanskrit word used for teacher and 'Goru' is the Nepali word used for ox. His account clarifies that teacher are not showing 'teacher likely behavior'. Further, he told that he knows a teacher who was sacked from school 1 against his misbehavior against a girl. He emphasized that there should be no spousal relationship between a teacher and a student until the teacher is teaching that student.

He also told that many teachers are blamed for misconduct to their students. He asserted that it is a crime for any teacher to physically abuse their students and tried to clear that the wrong behavior of teacher is responsible to create conflict between the parent and school.

Dhan Kumar stated that he had witnessed the teacher imposing unnecessary and unfair punishments on students multiple times. He observed that some teachers neglect their responsibilities toward both students and parents. In his experience, teachers often make poor conclusions about students and are reluctant to confess their faults. Instead of accepting responsibility, they incline to blame parents for mistakes.

Dhan Kumar's bitterness stemmed from observing discriminatory treatment within the school, mainly how the children of teachers receive exceptional privileges in exams whereas his son faced unjustified punishment. Dhan Kumar remembered an event in which his son saw teachers supporting their children in examinations while unfairly transferring faults to his son. He protested that, though his son was penalized, the teacher's children were excused without any action.

Dhan Kumar claimed, "Schools exploit parents for their own benefit." He observed that while schools actively involve parents when they need support for events or gatherings, they exclude them from critical academic decisions and fee assessments. He alleged that schools invite parents when their presence is required but ignore them when they raise concerns about the school's performance. He remarked that when parents unite to address issues, school administration often attempts to divide them. According to him, schools create divisions among parents based on various factors.

Dhan Kumar stated that school authorities say, "You are a parent of a good student; don't join the crowd of problematic ones". He argued that schools categorize parents based on their children's academic performance, extracurricular achievements, or lack thereof. This strategy, he claimed, is particularly evident in institutional schools, where such tactics are used to prevent collective action by parents.

Dhan Kumar blamed the supervisory bodies for not checking the qualifications and qualities of school manpower. As he is a parent of a student at institutional school, his focus was on institutional schools. Similarly, he pointed out that institutional schools are undermining the services, payment, and honor of the workforce. In reality, some institutional schools are criticized for prioritizing financial gain over improving schools in various parts of the nation. As long as such

perceptions persist, the likelihood of conflict remains high. Guru, a head teacher of a community school has some meaningful narratives which can link to the causes of conflict between the parent and school, are presented in the next title.

### **Guru's Story**

As a head teacher in a community school, Guru can well express the causes of school-parent conflict. Guru told;

#### **(Episode-10)**

*Every teacher is not good, some of them do not follow the suggestions of the school administration. Those who are honest are doing their job well but there are some who come to pass the time and get the salary. School is the rest place for them. Consequently, there is not good education as per the guardians' will in the community school. The teachers who are hired by Teacher Service Commission (permanent) are capable but who are appointed by the school might have appointed on the basis of intimacy with the political forces and other powers are not trustworthy. Dedicated teachers often become targets of criticism or resistance from less committed colleagues, which undermines the academic atmosphere of the school. If the weaknesses in community schools are addressed, the future of institutional schools may be at risk.*

*We invite the parents meeting through the letter and phone but the presence is only 10 to 20 percent. Parents come to the school in the blue moon and angry mood. Those who come do not stay longer so the school can counsel them. There limited or no support of parents in the academic works of the students.*

As a head teacher of a community school, Guru sincerely acknowledged many systematic weaknesses within the community school education system. He emphasized that exterior intervention often weakens the ability of the school to maintain a sound working environment, which contributes to raising frustration amongst parents. Through his narrative, it is clear that parents' dissatisfaction with insufficient school facilities places extensive pressure on head teachers. Guru's considerations suggest that such challenges are important sources of tension and potential conflict between parents and school.

Guru was candid in his critique of community school teachers, pointing that many of them fail to closely monitor students' academic growth and often lack confidence in their professional qualities. He raised the issue of the admitting

community school teachers' children to institutional schools. He interpreted this as evidence of diminished confidence in the community schools and a perceived disloyalty to the schools where they work. He generalized this issue, stating, "*It happens in every community school,*" which suggests that internal disappointment further heightens the likelihood of conflict.

He also revealed that some community school teachers engage in side jobs and, to avoid administrative scrutiny, attempt to divert attention by reporting minor issues to parents and unrelated individuals. This behavior, according to Guru, often invites unnecessary confrontation between parents and the school. He further observed that due to low economic status many parents are unable to actively engage in their children's education and provide basic academic necessities such as stationery, uniforms, or calculators. His remark, "*Some of the parents do not support the minimum requirements of their children,*" reflects another reason for the conflict between school and parents.

According to Guru, the lack of parental support is reflected in students' poor academic performance, which creates additional friction. He highlighted that lack of engagement from parents diminishes the complete support system necessary for a school to thrive.

Further insights into the causes of school-parent conflict are provided by another participant, Buku, discussed in the following section.

### **Buku's Story**

Buku's story adds the dimension on the causes of school parent conflict. Buku told;

#### **(Episode-11)**

*One student in my school is very laborious in study. Her study and discipline are good. She doesn't have mother. She is forced to do all domestic works used to be done by her mother. She prepares meal, cares the pigs, washes dishes and completes many household works. All her time is consumed by household responsibilities, leaving her unable to complete her homework. When I inquired about her incomplete assignments, she replied with a sigh, 'I was busy preparing meals'. Being interested about her previous evening, I questioned more. With a troubled expression, she reported, 'My father drank alcohol and beat at me, making it impossible to finish my tasks.' Concerned for her well-being, we organized a meeting with her father at*

*school to address the situation. However, her father was protective, questioning why we questioned into their family affairs.*

Buku, a parent and teacher, described a challenge she experienced involving a student whose parents were separated. A student, once bright and high-achieving, began to struggle academically afterwards her mother left the family. Buku felt the student was unexpectedly burdened with lots of domestic responsibilities, which significantly impacted her ability to complete homework and focus on studying. This condition led to misunderstandings between the teacher and the student's father. After, the school felt that the father was not being supportive enough. This instance illustrates how family fragmentation can distress to children and even invite conflict between home and school. The next segment, which presents Ram's story, further explores the underlying sources of school-parent conflicts.

### **Ram's Story**

Ram is the father of two students at School 3. I had completed multiple conversations with him. He has some views that why the conflicts appear between the school and parents. He told;

#### **(Episode-12)**

*It cannot be accepted extravagant hardness of the school administration. For example the class in their school starts at 6:00 am but they close the main gate at 5:55, not compromising 2 seconds? Yes, a student looks gentle in a short hair but what really is short hair? I do not feel it good. School fee is the major factor which creates the misunderstanding between the school and parents. Anger rises when the school rises the fee whether the parents is rich or poor. The second factor which creates the misunderstanding is the accountability. What amount is being paid by me is enough to study in Kathmandu. If I had taken to Kathmandu everything would be different. The quality which is been delivered by this fee at Dharan is a cause of misunderstanding. Ultimately it is like there is no excuse in death.*

*There are some topics which seem unnecessarily imposed by the school. The school operators are sufficing students in the name of reputation. The school operators have wrong concept that troublous and non-practical rules which have no connection to the learning of the students builds the reputation of the school. They create frustration against the school. Schools are running a business under the guise of education.*

*When my son has video calls with our relatives, they ask why he is bald (referring to the shaved head, which is culturally significant in Hinduism). I've seen the parents come to school to protest about the punishment method the teachers have implemented.*

According to Ram, parents are required to purchase clothes, books, stationery, shoes, and other essentials directly from the school, often at inflated prices. He argued that schools impose financial burdens on families while avoiding accountability. Ram further claimed that community schools are even less transparent than private ones, which increases the likelihood of friction. He criticized schools for prioritizing enrollment numbers over the quality of education. He perceives that as long as these perceptions persist, tensions between schools and parents are likely to continue.

According to Ram's experience, parents can't express their concerns directly to the school. Ram is unsatisfied but fears to raise the issue expressively. He forecasts the chance of reflexive behavior on his children. In another way, Ram wants to compromise; which match to the suggestions of conflict resolution recommended by Saiti (2014), Chandolia and Anastasiou (2020) and Bundy et al. (2017). He explained that criticizing the school can deteriorate personal relationships with school family and potentially affects child's treatment by the school family. In alternate, he emphasized respectful personal engagement with school family as effective measure than spoiling frustrations and anger. The next section presents Jatayu's perspective on the causes of school-parent conflict.

### **Jatayu's Story**

Jatayu raised the issue of workload when the causes of conflict was being discussed. He told;

#### **(Episode-13)**

*Teachers are given many classes which cause many homework copies to be checked. Parents want to see each and every parts of the homework are well checked by the teacher. The heavy work reassurance on teacher hampers the professionalism of the job. This misunderstanding often leads to tension, as teachers may feel it is unfair to be held responsible for all these changes. However, teacher and staff will be busy to finish the work rather than doing the quality work which can satisfy parents and students.*

Jatayu mentioned that primarily, teachers focus on task completion rather than quality work due to heavy work pressure often. Teachers focusing on task lacks professionalism rather than completing learning needs. They seemed too busy to engage meaningfully with students, resulting in a lack of guidance and academic preparation. Moreover, Jatayu marked that parents frequently blame schools for failing to adjust the changes in students' needs, technological advancements, and societal expectations. Jatayu's version was similar to an anonymous quote, "*Tired minds don't plan well. Sleep first, then plan later*".

### **Hasan Kumar's Story**

Hasan Kumar experienced students also are responsible to create the conflict between school and parents. He shared his view in this way;

#### **(Episode-14)**

*There were two boys studying in different sections of my school, but they stayed in the same hostel. About two months ago, they had a heated argument that escalated into a physical fight. They pushed and punched each other. After the incident, both students remained silent and did not report it.*

*After 19 days, the hostel's vice-captain reported that his shirt had been badly damaged by someone. Upon investigation, it was discovered that a group of boys had done it to take revenge on the vice-captain, claiming he had previously harmed one of their friends, the boy involved in the earlier fight.*

*The hostel warden called the victim, inspected the body and found something unusual. He was taken to the hospital, where doctors found that his shoulder bone was dislocated and that he needed surgery. The doctor also questioned why the injury had been treated so late.*

*Following this, the parents of both boys were called to the school. When they arrived, they spoke to their sons and immediately blamed the school for poor supervision and for failing to inform them earlier. In this way, conflict between the students eventually turned into a conflict between the parents and the school.*

After sharing this, Hasan Kumar explained an incident to clarify how conflicts among students can transform into school-parent conflicts. In his example, the mother of a student who was harmed by a peer threatened to take administrative and legal action against the school. Hasan explained that, despite the school's commitment to covering the cost of medical treatment (paid by the perpetrator's parents), it still took

nearly two full days to calm the mother and resolve the situation. His example demonstrates how student-to-student conflict can quickly shift to parent-to-school conflict. The common themes which are found in the narratives of the participants are presented in the upcoming section.

### **Common Views Among the Participants**

Participants acknowledged numerous causes of conflict between parents and schools. One of the major issue was perceived lack of effective work among teachers and school authorities. On the other hand, some of the conflicts were attributed to parental negligence. When students experience problems within their families, such as conflict or separation, it negatively affects their academic performance, which leads to tensions with the school. Similarly, delay in school fee payment is another cause of conflict.

Conflict also ascends when the expectations of parents, school and students are not met. Participants quoted reasons such as sudden fee increase, poor student achievement, inadequate parental backing for both students and school-related activities, as well as issues between student themselves. For instance, when one student harms another, the situation can escalate into a conflict connecting the school and parents as well as parents of the students. The following section provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of participants' narratives. As the action is delayed the destruction of conflict keeps advancing.

### **Field Observation and Non-Participants' View**

Conflicts do not appear if parents and school try to understand one another. During the fieldwork at school 4, I met the parent who was described in Hasan Kumar's story. She was trying to convince me that her son had been injured due to the school's carelessness. A short version is presented with her consent. She said, *"The school must be held accountable for this negligence. How could the teachers not know for so long"*? She also complained that School 4 is failing to provide even basic care for its students.

I attended the Annual Day and result distribution ceremonies at Schools 1 and 4. It seemed that some students have failed. However, to avoid revealing the actual number, teachers stated, *"A few students are not graded, and we are still verifying the results"*. I observed parents were taking about low and not graded students seriously and worried on the waste of investment. Those parents whose children were not graded to the upper classes were seen upset and arguing with the teachers. During the

result day of the annual exam, I spoke to some the parents from School 5 and found that they were particularly dissatisfied with their children's low grades. After this observation it is understood that poor annual result can be the cause of poor school-parent relationship.

### **Corrective Actions**

Schools and parents are worried about the conflict they encounter one another. Discussing on corrective actions, participants mentioned that the school administration alerts the lazy and nonprofessional teachers who are engaged in side jobs. Guru highlighted the local community's role in monitoring and addressing the behavior of such '*cheater teachers*'. Guru also mentioned that his school is trying to overcome the problem through organizing parents meeting to identify problems faced by the parents. He mentioned when school and parent seat together the complex problems also are resolved. Guru stated, "School and parents sitting together is the best resolution for most conflicts between them". As a parent, though Buku is dissatisfied with her children's academic performance, continues to strive for improvement by maintaining frequent communication with school authorities.

Schools are using information technology tools to update the parents about the school timely. Teachers are encouraged to take accountability in fostering stronger partnerships with parents. School leaders aware the non -professional teachers.

Participants suggested frequent communication for the prevention of possible conflicts between the parents and school. Some of them stressed on the school need to study the expectation of parents so they can work accordingly to the particular parent. Respondents mentioned that schools need to avoid their weakness which are complained by the parents. School 4 has a mechanism to consult and address the complaints of parents.

Participants informed that they have developed a '*Parent' Relation Wing*' to overcome the parent related subjects. Guru said that they are trying to reach the parents. They launch home visit to reach some students. Head teachers follow parents' meeting repeatedly. Some schools conduct counseling and orientation for parents which can minimize the problems.

Participants mentioned that they have resolved the issues through mutual understanding between the parents and the school authorities. They opined that there needs be a check on the maturity level of teachers before they are sent to the class. A sense of responsibility from teachers is more essential than reacting after an incident

occurs. Participants mentioned that teachers should emphasize maintaining control and calming down before discussing any questionable actions, rather than explaining their behavior after the fact. When teachers resort to harsh punishments and are subsequently terminated, it often becomes a contentious problem, creating tension between school and parents. Events involving physical touch to girl students or excessive punishment can damage the school's popularity and provoke protests from parents.

All the participants accepted that discussion and understanding are very important tools for resolving of the causes of conflict amongst parents and the school. The analysis of participants' views are included in the next section of this chapter.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Participants' Perspectives**

It is revealed that the parents want to hear about their children from the teachers. Parents wish that the minor problems also be corrected by the teachers at school. Meanwhile, schools wish that parents to assist not only with individual disciplinary issues but also with curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

This study identified fee rise as one of the most striking conflicting factors between schools and parents, which was not highlighted by the previous Nepali studies. Sometimes the fee is increased in the mid-session. Generally, parents calculate the yearly expense at the beginning of the academic year. They plan their economy accordingly. However, when the fee escalates in the mid-session, it severely disrupts the financial stability of family. Murvanidze (2017) also found that higher educational fees are causing lower equality in Turkey.

Stories from the parent participants reveal deeper issues within the school system, where power is exercised unethically to manipulate and control others rather than fostering a positive and supportive learning atmosphere. Diana et al. (2021) found that a strong and positive student-teacher association fosters a sense of belonging and motivates students to be actively involved in classroom activities. Rios et al. (2016) found that test results are overvalued and underestimated by teachers, failing accurately reflect students 'actual performance in the United States of America. Lack of accountability (Ehren & Baxter, 2021), selective enforcement of rules, and coercive tactics used by the school contribute to a widening gap between schools and parents, creating conflict and distrust that harm the students, the system, and cause the conflicts.

During field observations, I encountered the parent of a boy mentioned by Hasan Kumar in the previous story. She was trying to convince me that School 4 lacks proper care for hostler students. However, I felt that, instead of addressing these incidents, the school appears more concerned with concealing them. The severity of one injury forced the issue into the open, but there is a chance that less critical cases remain hidden from parents. Lack of transparency erodes confidence, creating tension between school and family. When parents understand that their children have been harmed and the school deliberately withheld the information, it causes conflict and a breakdown in mutual understanding. If the school leaders followed the strategies of behavior leadership, they would foresee a better solution for all stakeholders.

From the head teachers' perspective, they are actively addressing issues raised by parents. They need to understand parents' awareness among non-professional teachers and organize parent meetings where the parents can question the teacher and school authorities. School 4 has formed a dedicated team to listen to parents' concerns, while School 2 disseminates important notices and updates through social media. Teachers are also being encouraged to take accountability for fostering stronger partnerships with parents. However, I feel these actions may not be sufficient to address all the complaints raised by parents under this subject.

Parent participants observed the possibility of discrimination, which aligns with the survey conducted by Byrd and Andrews (2016). That study found that students reported experiencing discrimination for seven reasons, including gender, race/ethnicity, and religion, and that discrimination came from classmates, teachers, and administrators. It also found that students who faced the least discrimination had the best academic outcomes, while those facing the most discrimination had the worst. Likewise, Romero et al. (2015) found that parents believed negative stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination were widespread in American schools. Given the socio-cultural and economic diversity in the study area, there is a possibility of discrimination by teachers and peers. In this study too, parents reported discrimination as a contributing factor to conflict.

While listening to the story of the parent participant, it reminded me of the days when my son's school (School 3) used to send out the monthly fee bill on the first day of each month. I used to feel exploitative. Similar practices lead to dissatisfaction and escalate into conflict, particularly when compounded by concerns about fairness in the education system. The cut off between parental expectations and

school practices, in terms of transparency, accountability, and excellence, further fuels the dissatisfaction and conflict that originate in schools.

Parents have reservations about physical touch and physical punishments. Schools must pay close attention to sensitive matters, such as inappropriate physical contact with students. Proper supervision of teachers through designated authorities, including coordinators, vice principals, and other appointed officials is felt necessary. Parents acknowledge the corrective measures, such as dismissing teachers who seriously violate school rules or engage in unethical behavior. When these actions are unreasonable and not aligned with the nation's legal practices, parents tend to mistrust the school's decisions.

Trust between parents and schools is essential for fostering a healthy educational atmosphere. However, instances of perceived misuse of authority by school staff can severely damage this relationship. In case of a child admitting their mistake, the school's failure to respond to them constructively, seriously damaging the family's trust in schools and causing conflict.

While dealing with the causes of conflicts, it is clear that parents' inability and unwillingness to pay school fees on time as a main cause of conflict in institutional schools. It is only the source of the school to pay the salaries and invest in requirements. According to head teachers, when the government increases teachers' salaries, schools are forced to raise fees, but even a nominal increment also is objected to by parents, leading to disputes.

It is felt that, parents, who enforce strict rules on children, and who do not feel the necessity of maintaining discipline are both problematic. However, extravagant rules are frequently met with resistance from both students and parents. The parents of community schools perceived the school administration as unresponsive. It is believed that some of the rules of the school hostel are misaligned with parental expectations, particularly in matters of student well-being and day-to-day schedules, which repeatedly lead to conflict. Thus, it is necessary that the school leaders should consider the federal, provincial and local level related policies, acts and rules before finalizing their school rules.

Parents observed that the school's homework distribution is unbalanced, which lines up with the findings of Galloway et al. (2013), who pointed that excessive homework is linked to increased school-related stress, both physical and mental, and a reduced ability to develop real-life skills. There are parents who prefer more

homework, and others who suggest less. Since there are inconsistencies in homework allocation among the schools, causes debates with parents. In a similar way, some days, students receive excessive homework, while on other days there is none. Additionally, the amount of homework assigned varies significantly across subjects and teachers, due to lack of set pattern the parents found frustrating.

Parents are dissatisfied because the school does not adhere to its own calendar which was created by the school itself. While searching for the deeper causes of conflict, I found that a few parents of schools 2 and 4 are unhappy with the food and accommodations in the hostels of those schools. In some cases, schools fail to provide proper attention for hostel students, resulting in financial strain for families due to lost belongings and medical expenses. During the field visit to Schools 2 and 4, it was observed that parents expressed concerns about the lack of empathy shown by the hostel teachers articulating on hostel teachers lacking empathy toward parental issues.

Parents and the head teacher expect teachers to dedicate more time and energy to students' academic success rather than being distracted by other concerns. There is also a concern that teachers fail to complete the curriculum on time, forcing schools to offer extra classes, which places a financial burden on parents and leads to tensions between them and school administration.

Schools charge fees for various programs for the students. However, some schools' school programs are not well organized. Parents pointed out that those programs are only for show. Additionally, the parents are unhappy with not receiving the urgent notices and updates in a timely manner. Parents of institutional schools claim that institutional schools have appointed the teacher with low qualification for economic reasons.

Problems of inadequate guidance for individual students, unreliable evaluation, and low student inspiration can worsen due to large class size, possibly leading to conflict. After the discussion with the head teacher, stakeholders and field observation, it is exposed that the teachers in Schools 1, 2, and 3 face substantial stress in checking homework, managing classroom participation, and providing individual care due to excess numbers of students and daily periods.

Though Hornby and Blackwell (2018) commend respecting parental engagement and guidance, parents report that schools do not behave toward them respectfully, contradicting educational theories and best practices. Negligence in assessing homework and exam papers also causes the conflict between the school

and parents. Conflict cannot be avoided if the students and parents perceive that the internal examinations and assessments are unfair and biased.

Schools should focus not only on their public image but also on improving real-world conditions to build parents' confidence. There are crowded classes, in school 1, 2 and 3. The school assembly observed the crowds in schools 2 and 3. Similarly, schools 2, 3 and 5 have very limited open space, which confines students to narrow areas frequently criticized by parents. Similar to this study Marais (2016) also marked that parents pointed the impacts on academic performance and disciplinary management by crowded classes. The words and deeds of the school leaders should match for a supportive parent school relationship. There is flattering of the work to show in the social media which helps to multiple parent expectation.

School commit through their brochures, pamphlets, calendars, and other written documents. They also make promises during parent meetings and other gatherings. Similar to this study, Turtel (2005) argues that community schools mislead parents into believing they are performing well. In the same way, Bryk and Schneider (2002) emphasized that contractual faith, whether based on written or unwritten agreements, weakens the school dignity when schools fail to uphold their obligations. Though schools try to forget their promises, parents and students continue to hold them accountable. When schools fail to fulfill their commitments, they risk losing trust and increasing the possibility of disputes.

It is observed that school programs, including annual events and result distribution ceremonies, are often poorly organized and feel superficial. Urgent notices are often late, leaving parents feeling left out of decision-making processes, causing parents' aggression. Community school parents argued that teachers avoid responsibility by attributing poor outcomes to low investment, which was not desired by them. Community school parents also blamed administrators arguing that they were evading responsibility by claiming that limited parental investment prevented outstanding results. These differing views contribute to ongoing conflicts between parents and schools. Parents believe that schools make poor decisions initially and later attempt to justify them. Such facts are not minutely dealt by the existing literature.

According to Johnson and Griffin (2024) effective supervision involves facilitating, self-awareness self-awareness, assessment, modeling, attention to regulatory issues and disputes, as well as offering praise and constructive criticism.

Thus, schools should ensure proper monitoring and supervision of teachers and staff. Similarly, Davison (2009) recognized insufficient facilities, concerns about children's security, and the challenge of managing multiple students as key obstructions to student achievement. Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) underlined that organization must identify the importance of an optimistic work environment in maximizing employee happiness. Equally, Hornby and Blackwell (2018) supported dignified parental involvement. Implementing these recommendations can help to mitigate possible conflicts between schools, teachers, and parents. Deficiency of respect exacerbates the growing disconnect between home and school. All these views align with the findings of this research. School leaders should ensure that parents are aware that their teachers prioritize professional responsibilities over financial gain to maintain trust.

It is revealed that parents felt schools failing to address the conflict of students adequately and blame parents and guardians unfairly. During field visits to schools 1 and 3, it was observed that students were required to purchase clothing, stationery, and books either from the school canteen or from recommended shops by the school; a practice that parents strongly oppose. Parents worried about the decision making practice of schools. Hasty decisions, particularly concerning to student discipline are made without considering the wider impact on students' well-being. Participants claimed that verbal and physical punishments are imposed without following appropriate educational practices and ethical guidelines.

During the field visits to schools 1 and 4, I met some parents who criticized the schools for placing their social media presence over expressive educational efforts. Though the pictures of events and students are frequently posted, the actual classroom experience often fails short of the expectations set by such descriptions. Participants claimed that a few students are consistently decorated in public events, while others, mainly those who are average or below average, are often overlooked, missing valuable opportunities for growth and improvement.

Many parents prioritize better exam results. However, the outcome of standardized examinations reveal a troubling trend. In the 2023 Grade XII board examination, the pass rate was only 51.91percent (Sherma, 2023). Similarly, in 2022, among 396,185 examinee students only 174,598 were graded (Shilapatra, 2022). In the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) of 2024, almost 52.13 percent of students stayed not-graded (Dhakal, 2024), and in 2025 almost 38.19 percent were

not-graded (Edusanjal, 2025). Similar high failure proportions in board examinations are draining the relationship between parents and schools, creating a significant hurdle in fostering reciprocal trust.

The issue of conflict is not easy to predict. I also encountered a student whose surname was 'Khadka,' which he inherited from his father. He received his Secondary Education Examination grade sheet and certificate with 'Khadka' surname. However, after he passed Class 10, his parents divorced, and the court declared him to be under the care of his mother. Then, the boy's mother approached the school, requesting the modification of his surname to 'Karki' from 'Khadka.' Unfortunately, this was beyond the school's power. As a school leader, I personally tried to arbitrate and convince them over numerous days, but they remained adamant. The mother threatened to take the issue to court. Nevertheless, the school was not approved to alter documents issued by the National Examination Board. It has been noted that a characters lack the basic understanding of national policy.

The salaries of institutional school teachers and staff depend on the fees paid by students. School administration frequently stresses the importance of timely fee payment. When parents fail to pay the school fee in time it invites the conflict between the parents and the school. Furthermore, the physical presence of parents at school is just an example of parental involvement. Similar to the findings of this research, Castro et al, (2015) also emphasized that active parental engagement in all aspects of their children's academic, social, and emotional growth significantly enhances student performance, aligning with the concerns expressed by head teachers.

Lack of proper parentage to children is also responsible for school parent conflict. More than 5.9 million Nepali citizens are residing in foreign countries, comprising 86.40 percent men and 13.60 percent women (Ministry of Finance, 2024). According to the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (2020), the dominating age group of Nepali people abroad is 25-34 followed by 35-44 years. It demonstrates that many parents are not with their children. When the children are not with the parents they lack proper guidance, support and supervision. When the parents return back to home they find their children are not showing satisfactory behavior which results coming to the school with arguments and articulations.

Accountability is essential in every profession, and teaching is no exception. The cases raised by Dhan Kumar, such as the Kerabari incident and the dismissal of a teacher, highlight a lack of accountability among some teachers. When the

stakeholders are not accountable, it invites tussles. Similar to the findings of this study, Christensen and Darling (2019) also suggested that schools develop a regulatory system against the sexual abusive educators. Schools should implement systems to monitor teacher behavior both in and out of the classroom. For example, sensitive areas within schools could be monitored using Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras to ensure transparency and prevent misconduct.

Comparing schools is one cause of conflict. When I talked with the participants, I found that the parents from community schools compared their children's schools to institutional schools and parents from institutional schools compared their children's school to community schools. The leaders of both community and institutional schools can adopt the best practices from the other schools if their parents approve those practices.

The dynamic nature of children's physical, emotional, and psychological development is another key area of concern. Parents expect teachers and school recognize the rapid changes that occur in their children as they grow, both in terms of behavior and individual interests. Thus, teachers' inability to understand the psychology and development stage of students becomes another cause of conflict.

A sense of discrimination and the school's failure to address the problems objectively are other factors that prompt parents to transfer their child to another school. Such instances highlight the broader issue of schools mishandling their authority, not only eroding the parental trust but also negatively affecting the emotional well-being of students. These insights suggest that both internal institutional issues and external socio-economic factors contribute significantly to the conflict between schools and parents. They show the great scope of behavioral leadership and conflict transformation in schools.

As an observer, I found most of the conflict are related to learning outcomes, achievement in extra-curricular activities, unfair punishment, and school fee. Similarly, lack of professionalism, lack of accountability and lack of fulfillment of parental responsibility are the major cause of conflict. The succeeding section recapitulates the essence of this chapter.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter exposed the dynamics and causes of conflict, emphasizing that unfulfilled expectations often lead to disputes. The dynamics of conflict between the school and parents are shifting in response to change in expectations and behavior

among stakeholders. The areas and reasons of conflict are also changing response to change in other fields.

The gap between expectations and fulfillment is found to be the cause of conflicts. Parents, school, teachers, and students have particular expectations of one another. It is also revealed that unfulfilled expectations led to conflict between the parents and the school.

It recognized specific sources of conflict related to schools, parents, teachers, and students. Conflicts are created and originated by multiple stakeholders of the school. However, the causes are different according to the school and individuals. It revealed that lack of fulfillment of expectation, lack of effective communication, lack of professionalism, and accountability are the major causes of conflict between school and parents.

## CHAPTER V STRATEGIES OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### **Chapter Overview**

This chapter reviews the key strategies applied by head teachers, senior teachers, and parents to manage and prevent school-parent conflicts. Through the analysis of the stories and experiences of participants, field observation as well as review of the available literature this chapter aims to recommend evidence-based and reliable ideas for conflict resolution that have been followed.

Drawing conclusions from the life experiences of diverse individuals including Dhan Kumar, Santa Kumar, Hasan Kumar, Jatayu, Indra, Ram, and Buku, who vary in ethnicity, language, academic status, and economic background, this chapter benefits from a rich variety of viewpoints. Their insights, collected through interviews and open discussions, were supplemented by direct observation of school environment, ensuring the reliability and gravity of the findings.

### **Conflict Resolution Strategies**

Schools and parents have applied a range of methodologies to prevent and resolve conflicts between parents and the school. This segment presents the narrative accounts drawn from Guru, Dhan Kumar, Santa Kumar, Jatayu, Indra and Buku, who are the participants of this study. Their stories characterize diverse experiences resolving the school-parent conflict. This section opens with the narrative of Dhan Kumar which offers some foundational insights into the strategies that are being used to resolve the school-parent conflict.

#### **Dhan Kumar's Story**

Dhan Kumar thinks that the generation of conflict can be stopped which can be useful tool for conflict resolution. He said;

#### **(Episode-15)**

*I experienced the teacher want to escape the meeting with the parents. I listened teachers talking, “Jhandai maile tyo abhihbabak sanga kura garna parena (Closely I am saved from dealing that parent)”. Parents rarely find time to communicate with teachers and school authorities. However, if a teacher is unwilling to meet parents, it becomes difficult to share concerns. When issues remain*

*unresolved, they can escalate into debates. Firing non-professional and unethical teachers is the best solution for resolving issues caused by teachers.*

*I want to share you another example of a teacher who was dismissed for administering a brutal punishment. He recounted an incident involving a local female leader whose daughter suffered an eye injury caused by a teacher. The injury was severe enough to require the student to be taken to Kathmandu for treatment. Although the teacher was terminated, the school kept the case secret out of fear that it might lead to a decline in student enrollment. Greater teacher empathy and communication could help mitigate such tensions.*

Teachers should have a good understanding of students and parents to prevent conflict. But, Dhan Kumar observed that some teachers tend to avoid interacting with parents. Specifically, he symbolized to the teachers at his son's school (School 1) are unwilling to talk with parents outside school premises. Guru's story further illustrates the conflict resolution strategies used by a community school in Dharan, which will be discussed next.

### **Guru's Story**

Guru suggests that teachers should play a vital role in conflict resolution through operative teaching and professional commitment. Guru told;

#### **(Episode-16)**

*Responsible and dedicated teachers can prevent many conflicts from arising. Furthermore, existing misunderstandings can be resolved through their consistent efforts. By fostering positive relationships with students and parents, teachers can significantly reduce conflicts within the school community. If a teacher spreads false information to parents and provokes unnecessary conflicts, it can harm the school environment and weaken parent-teacher relationships.*

He claims that circulating false information to parents is an invitation to conflict between the parents and the school. The following paragraphs will discuss the story of Jatayu in this context.

### **Jatayu's Story**

Jatayu, a senior teacher, emphasized the need to balance the interests of all stakeholders. In his view;

**(Episode-17)**

*I want to advise school authorities to take time to confirm the legitimacy of a problem, ensuring they have accurate information before responding. Schools should anticipate potential sources of conflict and establish effective policies to address them. We address issues in a targeted way, tailoring our method to the specific circumstance. When it comes to hostel-related concerns, we work together with the hostel team. We involve with the relevant parties and dialogue with parents.*

*Our objective is to find commonly beneficial solutions, fostering a win-win outcome. Sometimes, we employ mediation as a communication tool. Throughout these processes, our success is measured by our ability to address challenges without negatively impacting the psychological well-being of our students. We use some steps of conflict resolution. We identify the problem, categorize them, and call the meeting of stakeholders. After the meeting we take the decision which creates win-win feeling to all. We cannot boycott any parties in the system so creating win-win position is seen effective till now.*

*Training in conflict resolution could be greatly helpful in fostering a harmonious school environment. School managers must remain calm, listen more, and speak less while addressing the concerns.*

Jatayu emphasized that school leaders must develop strong negotiation skills to arbitrate disputes and find common ground between conflicting parties. He offered a structured approach to conflict resolution that improves school-parent relations. He recommended that schools establish a dedicated 'Parent Relations Wing' for effective communication between parents and the school. Similarly, he highlighted that in case of school making any mistake, it should proactively correct rather than covering it up. Furthermore, Jatayu suggested organizing regular parent meetings in small groups, as he experienced the large group are challenging to manage well. Schools should share their future plans with the parents and work on their feedback and ideas. Finally, he stressed on the importance of mobilizing the school management committee and the parent-teacher association to strengthen cooperation between the school and its parents.

Jatayu mentioned that the schools are trying to overcome the problems related to them. His school organizes cluster-wise parents meeting to identify the problems faced by parents. Similarly, his school made a wing to listen the problem of parents.

Schools circulates the school notices and information through social media. They are aware the teachers are accountable to the partnership with parents.

### **Ram's Story**

According to Ram, it is far better to stop complaining and start collaborating with the school and teachers. He opined;

#### **(Episode-18)**

*There are positive results of leaving complaint and keeping good relation with the school authorities. I can request them for the personal care to my child. If the school authorities call to my child and counsel it may work more than fee decrement. They can encourage my children which creates the positive effects. If I used to complaint all the time they would not do so.*

*In complaint the profit is less, and the loss is more. So complaining is not a solution. Hence, it is far more productive to stop complaining and start cooperating with the school and teachers.*

According to Ram the school head teacher, founder and teachers counsel his children, encourage them and show concern for better work. He said that the school would not have done that if he had opposed it. Ram suggested that the parents stop making unnecessary criticisms and start cooperating with the school authorities. In his experience, patents and students can highly benefit from cooperation which aligns with the opinion of Chandolia and Anastasiou (2020). Additionally, Hasan Kumar's story underscores the importance of emotional intelligence, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **Hasan Kumar's Story**

Hasan Kumar emphasized the importance of emotional intelligence in a teaching career. He stated;

#### **(Episode-19)**

*A teacher need to know the development psychology of a student. A young person who is below 25 years may have suffered by emotional dysregulation. A person should be tested in different ways before appointing teacher. Head teacher need to make the school's team an encultured team. Head teacher can build an emotionally responsible team which is attached to the work.*

*School and parents are not the opponents. We say it in the words but they are seen opponents in practice. The child is for both school and the parent. It is a joint*

*venture. If we can work jointly there can be progress and if not, then the conflict. It is wrong to blame the other party and tag a student, 'this child can't learn'. In this situation the child tumbles on two sided pressure. Neither academic nor intellectual and social advancement a child can accomplish in double pressure.*

Hasan Kumar believes that emotional intelligence enhances team morale and work ethic. He believes that when parents embody spiritual values, they instill in their children a deep respect for teachers. This view is not found in the available literature which was reviewed by this study.

### **Buku's Story**

Buku, as a parent, expressed that parents should be well-informed about the key aspects of their children's activities and the proper procedures for raising concerns. She mentioned;

#### **(Episode-20)**

*The parents should not think the school and teachers the contractor. Parents also should not escape from their duties. They should play a significant role for learning. They should teach the behavioral aspect of the life. Parents know the convincing way of their children which should be used. They need to cross check children's daily routine, food habits and friends. The roles and responsibilities of parents is to see the overall development of children. Admitting school and paying school fee only is not enough. When child feel the parent observing them, they also want to be safe from the wrong deeds. They need to communicate with the teacher and school. Parents should take part in the schools functions.*

*I also study along with my daughter. I made my daughter my friend. If parent and child pass the time together they can understand one another. Otherwise a gap appears among them and child complains against their parents that parents did not support and invest for their betterment.*

*The conflict can be resolved through parent education. We run parents orientation in our school but very less parents participate.*

Buku believes that if parents are able to guide their children effectively children can follow a right track which saves from many possible conflicts. In her view, instead of supporting their children's education, some parents assign excessive domestic work to children and even subject them to harsh treatment. She also

mentioned that teachers and schools often address students' home-related challenges to assist their families.

As a teacher, Buku emphasized the need for parental counseling in schools. To address this, her school organizes an annual parent orientation program. She also mentioned that household issues should not be unnecessarily brought into the school environment. The story of Santa Kumar offers valuable insights into resolving conflicts between parents and schools which is presented in the coming section.

### **Santa Kumar's Story**

Santa Kumar stressed that effective conflict resolution largely depends on the behavior of those involved. Drawing from his experience, he highlighted that the head teacher performs a central role in managing conflicts within the school. Santa Kumar mentioned;

#### **(Episode-21)**

*Individuals responsible for managing disputes must remain patient and tolerant, even in the face of criticism and procedural challenges. There are no universally effective methods for resolving conflicts between parents and schools. The best approach is to choose a strategy based on the specific needs of the parents involved. Conflict resolution strategies should be designed according to parents' expectations. Schools should make an effort to listen to all parents.*

*Some parents might be highly assertive and hostile. It is essential to listen to them sensibly, understand their worries, and address their frustrations through open conversation. This methodology helps de-escalate pressures and prevent conflicts from intensifying.*

*The school needs to follow the strategy after the study the personality of the parent. It is better to develop a guidelines of particular parent once we dealt them. That guidelines may work for the next time.*

Santa Kumar pointed out that conflict resolution becomes more difficult when dealing with parents who are unwilling to listen to others. He mentioned that the conflict resolution strategies should be parents-friendly as far as possible. The following paragraph discusses the shared experiences of participants.

### **Common Views among the Participants**

In addition to their individual viewpoints, participants shared some common perspectives, which are discussed in this section. A common belief is that parents

need to better understand effective parenting practices. Participants emphasized the significance of parent orientation sessions in guiding parents in completing their roles constructively. Participants commended gentle, empathetic dialogue as often more functioning than excessively complex or scholarly explanations when communicating with parents.

All participants agreed that discussion is a vital tool for resolving conflict, which aligns with my own experience that increased communication between schools and parents is linked with a noticeable reduction in conflicts everywhere. Participants perceived that even strong disagreements can be settled through dialogue and negotiation. They emphasized that open communication allows schools and parents to understand each other's perspectives more visibly, in that way communication recommended for reducing potential misunderstanding. To improve the effectiveness of discussions, participants proposed organizing small-group meetings, which can be fruitful for more focused and meaningful negotiation.

Timely intervention is also considered as crucial resolution strategy. Participants pointed that unresolved issues tend to escalate, leading to further complications. They favored encouraging parents to develop empathy by visualizing themselves in similar circumstances. They argued, this strategy could decrease hostility and support for conflict resolution. Furthermore, school leaders are recommended to anticipate the potential consequences of critical cases and consult external experts when necessary, particularly in complex situations.

Participants also emphasized the importance of vigorous listening. They stressed that carefully listening to parents' concerns enables the school team to take informed and rational decisions, particularly when dealing with aggressive and distressed parents. Participants recommended that schools, students, and parents collaborate to enhance students' skills and motivation addressing complain of low achievement in curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities. Schools should inspire students' involvement in diverse activities that focus on helping them to meet academic and personal development goals.

Maintaining close communication with parents is indispensable, not only to update on students' progress but also to share the school's future plans. Regular and transparent communication is experienced as key to addressing evolving challenges and fostering alignment between home and school. Though Jared and Thinguri (2017) felt the need of training for head teachers and deputy head teachers to resolve the

conflict between them. However, the participants of this study felt the need of orientation for parents but not for the head and deputy head teachers.

### **Actions Taken by the Participants**

Recognizing the necessity of conflict resolution, the schools have adopted various conflict prevention and resolution strategies. Some strategies are similar, while others differ among individuals and institutions. Jatayu remarked that his school has a 'Parent Relations Wing' that addresses parental concerns. This wing updates parents about remarkable positive and negative student behaviors. Parents submit their concerns to the Parent Relations Wing, which then forwards cases to the appropriate department based on the school's administrative responsibilities. It can be taken as structural management.

Indra stated that his school also acknowledged the need for a dedicated parent relations department to handle parental issues. He noted that the number of local and female students has increased due to strong relationships with the local community. His school provides scholarships to local students based on recommendations from the ward office, ensuring that community members receive special treatment from the school. Indra highlighted that the school benefits from access to public spaces and parks constructed by the ward office in return. This partnership allows the school to utilize expensive wide-area infrastructures that are not available to school. This example highlights how optimistic relationships with the local community can provide valuable benefits to the school. It can be understood as an initiation of cooperation to avoid conflict.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of Participants' Perspectives**

Ronald Reagan once remarked, "*Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means*" (as cited in Pines, 2024). This statement reinforces that peace arises through constructive responses rather than mere avoidance of divergence. In line with this, Shonk (2025) describes conflict resolution as a formal or informal procedure in which individuals strive to find a diplomatic resolution of disagreement through methods such as negotiation and mediation. In school context, conflict resolution strategies refers to the deliberate actions and behaviors employed by school leader and other stakeholder to reduce tension, foster dialogue, and prevent escalation.

Participants emphasized the significance of developing optimistic interpersonal connections for reducing the possibility of conflict. According to their

opinions, when connections between school and parents are established on the foundation of reciprocal admiration and cordiality, the probability of misunderstandings is decreased. Several participants reported that formal, impersonal communication styles, such as the use of English by principals in parent meetings, created distance rather than connection. They felt that respectful, informal conversations in parents' native languages are more effective in promoting understanding and collaboration. These findings echo to Sibajene's (2022) opinion who found conflict as the product of human behavior within institutions; thus, fostering genuine human connection is crucial to prevent it.

It is essential to inform the parents about the school's limitations clearly which helps to prevent unrealistic expectations and demands by students and parents. If the stakeholder is unhappy with the existing outcomes, their common efforts reflect commitment to find resolution. It shows the need for clear communication and shared understanding to bridge the gap between parent anticipation and the school capability.

From the narratives from the participants it is discovered that operative communication, grounded on humility, empathy, and confidence, emerged as recurrent theme to avoid the conflict. School leaders and parents accepted that tensions intensify when grievances are met with defensive or dismissive attitudes. Participants expressed a strong inclination for negotiation marked by openness and emotional intelligence, recommending that differences can be navigated peacefully when the concerned experience heard and respected. Reliance, they believed, permits school leaders to react tranquilly without overstretching to minor criticisms, while humility empowers them to acknowledge mistakes without compromising authority. These values are dependable with the principle of constructive leadership, such as servant and authentic leadership, which underline humility as a key leadership trait (Nielsen & Marrone, 2018).

There is need of change management strategies in preventing school-parent conflict. During periods of organizational change when communication is weak among the stakeholders resistance and confusion are common. Drawing on relevant literature, Sensuse et al. (2020) suggested to cope the change through preparation, communication, and engagement. This can be valuable in reducing the risk of failure and conflict during transitions of schools. Participants' views are aligned with this approach, signifying that leadership adaptability and planning are fundamental for

minimizing disruption. According to the opinion of the participants the behavioral school leadership can apply the qualities that prevent and resolve conflict.

In participants' perception emotional intelligence is essential quality in addressing school-parents conflicts. School leaders and teachers should be emotionally prepared to manage their own reactions, understand others' feelings, and react with empathy. In absence of emotional intelligence, even well-intended efforts also may fail to resolve conflict meaningfully. Thus, schools should finance in developing educators' emotional and behavioral abilities, particularly those linked to effective communication, rational decision-making, and collaboration skills, emphasized in behavioral leadership theory (Yukl, 1971).

Participants strongly supported for an inclusive, and ongoing dialogue among all stakeholders, including parents, teachers and students. They felt, limiting discussions between parents and teachers often leaves out students who are most affected by the decision of school. They proposed triparty periodic meetings among school, parents and students to cultivate a better understanding of students' perspectives. Such forums help to uncover the root sources of conflicts.

Similarly, the concept that conflict can also be constructive also emerged. A few participants observed conflict not only as a challenge but also as an opportunity for growth, learning, and improvement in collaboration. This perspective is corresponding with Baron (1997) who mentioned conflict in organizations provides a renewed viewpoint by highlighting the growing understanding of conflict to improve individual success, enhance the ability of group decision-making, and enrich organizational efficiency.

One more key understanding from the narratives of the participants is that the status of student-teacher relationship plays and crucial role in triggering or preventing conflict between school and parents. Many participants pointed out strained or distant interactions between teacher and students commonly leads to misunderstandings, which in turn spark disputes between schools and parents. It is discovered that sometimes students amplify minor events and other times downplay severe ones, conditional on their perception and connection to the teacher. Student perceptions often shape how parents react to school affairs. This reflection resounds with the opinion of Anthony and Walshaw's (2009) that operational teaching relies on respect and empathy, particularly in different classroom situations. Hence, functioning in

robust teacher-student associations is a necessary towards reducing school-parent conflicts.

Participants opposed the use of corporal punishment and emotional bullying related to disciplinary practices. Though every schools' authorities expressed that they have reduced or eliminated physical punishments, parents told that punitive attitudes and subtle forms of emotional pressure remain widespread. Some participants reported that they are reluctant to complain because they are worried that their children will be targeted by teachers. This emphasizes the ongoing authority inequality between school and family, which undermines trust and disappoints productive discourse. Maina and Sindabi (2016) perceived that corporal punishment backs to disruptive behaviors, suggesting that nonaggressive disciplinary strategies are more operational in promoting positive school climates. Corporal punishment is against the policies which are reviewed in this study.

Transparency and community engagement were proposed as tools for rebuilding reliance. Schools share their successful initiatives with parents and stakeholders through various channels such as newsletters, public events, and exhibitions. Activities such as student presentations, project exhibitions, and extracurricular events were observed as opportunities for parents to connect with the school and learn about its contributions. Such practices would increase a sense of common responsibility and reduce uncertainty. In Sallis's (2019) opinion, refining work performance and organizational outcome development is difficult in the absence of profitable negotiation and a cooperative approach. They advocated for the need for corporations over confrontational relationships.

Professional development is regularly cited as an essential quality in equipping teachers and school leaders with the skills essential for conflict resolution. Participants stressed the necessity of regular training in areas such as operational communication, classroom management, and ethical behavior. They also emphasized in cases where a teacher's behavior is questioned. Thus, schools should conduct fair and impartial investigations to ensure justice for serious complains. It needs smart leadership and supervision that values accountability and professional integrity. Iskandar et al. (2023) also highlighted the importance of enhancing teacher professionalism through motivation and supervision as a crucial element in decreasing misconduct and conflict.

Rather than confrontational the participants favored of cooperative conflict resolution strategies which align with Saiti's (2014) classification of five resolution approaches; avoidance, compromise, collaboration, forcing, and accommodation. They recommended collaborative and accommodative policies grounded in empathy and mutual interest. It reinforces the belief that proactive conflict avoidance is more effective than reactive conflict management strategies. For conflict prevention, schools must generate an environment that prioritizes open communication, mutual understanding, and emotional intelligence.

Finally, participants highlighted the importance of spiritual and moral awareness amongst educators and parents. They believed that spiritually grounded teachers were more likely to act responsibly and inspire students to become respectful learners. From the stories of the participants, it can be inferred that mutual admiration fosters a harmonious school atmosphere, which reduces the chance of conflicts between family and school. Largely, the study exposes that meaningful conflict resolution relies on emotional intelligence, respectful communication, inclusive engagement, and shared determination among all school stakeholders.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter argued numerous strategies employed by schools and their leaders to resolve school-parent conflicts. Some techniques are commonly applicable, while others are context-specific, replicating the distinctive requirements of a specific school. Schools pursue negotiation as the top strategy to avoid conflict. Schools leaders should strive to balance the welfare of parents, students, and the school, often seeking 'win-win' resolutions that sets up a long-term collaboration. Participants emphasized the significance of humility and emotional intelligence in promoting effective parent-school cooperation. Parents' complaints were observed not only as threats, but also as the opportunities for institutional growth. Spiritual consciousness and an ethical family environment are observed to be valuable in evading and resolving school-parent conflicts. The succeeding chapter will examine the underlying elements that contribute to the origin of school-parent conflicts and explore their resolution in a broader context.

## CHAPTER VI

### FACTORS IN CONFLICT EMERGENCE AND RESOLUTION

#### Chapter Overview

This chapter highlights the fundamental elements that cause the emergence and resolution of school–parent conflicts with special attention to family culture, spiritual consciousness, and school leadership. Sketching on the narratives of Hasan Kumar, Santa Kumar, and Dhan Kumar, it offers contextual experiences into these dynamics. This chapter assimilates behavioral leadership theory and conflict transformation theory to propose a conceptual framework for analyzing conflict and guiding resolution strategies. It also evaluates how effectively the policies introduced in the literature review section have been fulfilled in practice. The following segment will describe the association between family culture and school-parent conflict.

#### Family Culture and Conflict

Family is one of the foundational elements of socialization and is often denoted as the first school, with parents being the earliest teachers. Hasan Kumar’s narrative demonstrates the significance of family ethos in shaping cooperation and conflict.

#### Hasan Kumar’s Story

According to Hasan Kumar, family plays a central role in character development. He explains;

#### (Episode-22)

*The mind of the student is not full during the early age. The child has not gone to school in the early period of mental development. The mind of a child is like a branded computer. It is kept different software and program mostly by the family and partially by the school. In this way, family is the program installer and school is command giver, for a child. If the program is wrong the right command also cannot display a good result. Hence, if the child is grown well the work of the school also seen well.*

*Culture plays significant role in study and relationship of teacher and parents. In general, a person from diverse cultured community has high acceptance of other culture. Well cultured persons do not blame others for the problem rather take the*

*responsibility for correction. They take the problem as a common responsibility than blaming others and demanding for compensation.*

*The culture of the family also determines the rate of misunderstanding, debate and conflict with the school. The ill cultured and encultured family use different strategies to react the misunderstandings. Parents also see their child as a part of whole system. Ill-cultured person seeks the chance to blame others and claims the recompense with others which does not help for the healthy relations.*

Hasan Kumar compared the mind of a young child a new computer, not completely developed in the beginning. In his opinion, as the computer's performance depends on both the hardware and software, the development of a child is also influenced by both family (the hardware) and school (the software). Occasionally, even the best software cannot function properly without good hardware, and similarly, even the best schooling cannot blossom without a resilient family foundation.

### **Analysis and Interpretation**

Culture plays an important role in influencing individuals' values, communication styles, and approaches toward authority figures, including educators (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). Families contrast in how they perceive and behave with schools. While some parents value close collaboration with teachers, others retain a more aloof connection. These differences are embedded in cultural values, socioeconomic upbringings, and personal experiences. In this background some parents recognize teachers as service personnel, hired for academic delivery, while others regard them in great esteem, viewing them as ethical or spiritual guru. Lower views to teacher contribute to incompatible expectations and miscalculations, thereby becoming a possible source of school-parent conflict.

The theory of conflict transformation is noteworthy in this circumstance. This theory focuses on addressing the underlying cultural and relational dimensions of conflict, rather than just resolving ground-level conflicts. Family plays a fundamental role in shaping children's conflict positioning. Youngsters adopt the norms and behaviors they are familiar at home, which consequently influence their relations in school. Participants in this study emphasized the prominence of providing parenting education and orientation sessions to help parents which improves productive communication and conflict-resolution strategies. Such interventions could nurture a healthier school-parent relationship.

Family backgrounds also forms how children perceive and respond to conflict. In families where open debate and confrontation are common, children may transform more assertive or aggressive. In contrast, children from more harmonious or conflict-avoidant families may shy away from quarrels and hot sharing, altogether. These behavioral inclinations, carried into the school, can impact peer associations and student- teacher relationship. If school, family, and parents fail to recognize these background influences, misinterpretations, and strains arise.

Even though the parents desire to maintain positive relationships with schools, they may struggle to do so due to cultural, linguistic, or structural barriers. From the school's perspective, there is an anticipation that parents will appreciate the challenges faced by educationalists. In turn, schools have a responsibility to collaborate with parents in empathetic and respectful manner. A mutual understanding is essential, while schools can counsel students on preserving respectful relationships with their families. This view can supplement the perspective of Lasater (2016), who pointed that for enhancing student success, cooperation among teachers, parents and students is necessary, despite potential conflict among or between them. Thus, parents need to guide their children about the significance of peaceful co-existence and productive negotiation in their lives. The subsequent, segment examines the role of spirituality as alternative as factor in supporting pleasant school-parent associations.

### **Spirituality and Conflict Resolution**

While the prevailing literature offers an inadequate investigation of the relationship between spirituality and conflict resolution, this study seeks to contribute to that initial discourse. Specifically, one participant, Hasan Kumar, stressed on the importance of spirituality in addressing and resolving conflicts which was not found in the reviewed literature for this study. The following section presents his perspectives in detail.

#### **Hasan Kumar's Story**

Hasan Kumar placed a strong position that spiritual consciousness significantly aids in avoiding and resolving conflicts. He states;

#### **(Episode-23)**

*In our culture, we have a high value for teacher. We believe in, 'Guru Brahma, Guru Bishnu, Gurudeva Maheshora, Guru Sakshata Parabrahma Tasmō Shree Guruwe Namha (Guru is Lord Brahma-the god of formation, Bishnu-the god of*

*preservation and Maheshowr-the god of destruction. Guru, you are the absolute god thus I do Namaskar to you.).'*

*When we talked previously, my son was in one school. Recently I have changed the school of my son because I did not like to debate and conflict with the teachers of that school. I have some complaints which were not well listened by the school authority. I was required to go to conflict with the school which is not liked by me. Rather than pointing the teachers, accusing them and quarrel with them I thought better to change the school. So, my son is in another school now.*

*The spiritual person knows the ways of respecting others which can avoid the conflict. That person follows empathy and equality. The spiritual society will not have more debates and conflicts. The spiritual individual try to settle the ways to avoid and resolve the conflict. Persons with spiritual consciousness try to find a common acceptable solution for all.*

Hasan Kumar, as a teacher, reflects on how he can better serve others, a mindset he attributes to the spiritual lessons he has received. He said he had seen the impact of spirituality on conflict resolution. He shared that he incorporated into spirituality to his daily life and found it effective in preventing and resolving conflicts.

### **Analysis and Interpretation**

It has been observed that there is a positive association between spirituality and conflict resolution. Crick and Jelfs (2011) highlighted spirituality as a method of exploring the individual value of conducting research, predominantly when it holds significance outside the classroom. Spirituality, however, is not limited to individual well-being. Educational leaders, particularly head teachers, are encouraged to recognize its powerful impact on both students and teachers. Kariuki (2015) observed that in Ethiopia, older members of society incorporate spiritual practices into conflict resolution, highlighting the importance of recognizing and addressing spiritual necessities in personal relationships. Sodhi (2016) also viewed spirituality offering high importance to empathy, emotional intelligence, and constructive communication which are concerned with self-compliance, stress release, self-regard and overall happiness of individuals.

Why did the participants place a high importance on spiritual awareness? Their narratives discovered that spirituality fosters empathy, tolerance, and admiration among all stakeholders of the school. These abilities are necessary for preventing and

resolving conflict. Forgiveness and tolerance, which are the fundamental values in many spiritual traditions, contribute to maintain coherence. In this regard, Fry and Nisiewicz (2020) defined spiritual leadership as a method of motivating and energizing individuals through a collective sense of determination and ethical principles. Participants experienced that this approach maintains loyalty, proficiency, and emotional commitment within scholastic settings. Thus, spirituality supports effective leadership and conflict transformation.

Spirituality also contributes for the enlargement of cultural ethics. An individual with resilient cultural grounding is more likely to act with empathy and fairness. Such personalities tend to escape unnecessary conflict and seek peaceful resolutions. In a culturally and spiritually conscious community, all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and students work toward common goals and attempt to find solutions that are acceptable to everyone. The spiritual faith that pays a high respect to teachers, leads parents to hesitate in aggressive debate and holds teachers accountable for their job. While admiration for others reinforces the school authorities, it allows open dialogue, particularly when disagreements arise. When applied in schools, spiritual principles can support to enhance cooperation among teachers, parents, and students by promoting reciprocal admiration and ethical responsibility.

Though many educators identify the importance of spirituality in day-to-day life, the majority of schools covered by this study are not adopting spiritual practice. Paluck et al. (2015) judged that, despite improved attention in policy and research, there is limited evidence displaying that anti-conflict and anti-bullying programs have led to significant improvements in school sceneries. Nevertheless, participants in this study viewed spirituality as a valuable resource for reducing tensions and improving relationships between families and schools. Since schools are often seen as sacred spaces and teachers as respected figures, spiritual values can help foster emotional connection, empathy, and mutual understanding. Faith in teachers, grounded in spiritual principles, is an effective measure to reduce misunderstandings and strengthen the connection between home and school. The elaboration of the role of leadership in conflict resolution will follow in the next section.

### **Leadership and Conflict Resolution**

Leadership plays a crucial role in conflict creation and resolution. As leadership and decision-making is closely correlated (Prince, 2015), leaders must

understand the reasons for the conflict, ways for prevention, and the possible ways of solution. Santa Kumar's experience can highlight the role of leadership for conflict resolution.

### **Shanta Kumar's Story**

Santa Kumar thinks that the head teacher needs to think about the practical application of the system. He mentioned;

#### **(Episode-24)**

*The leader need to know whether the mentioned problem is real or not. Leader need to understand the problem in a proper way to get a real solution of any problem. Whether any misunderstanding develops into debate and conflict or not depends upon the behavior of leader.*

*Head teacher needs to think for the practical application of system. It is not good to take the decisions on single head basis. Our school has shared leadership system. Subordinate leaders are consulted during the decision process. The coordinator and the vice principal bring the problems from the field which helps to correct the weak aspects.*

*Head teacher is the focal point of any school. Head teacher needs to have depth understanding of the system of their school. They need to have a deep and all sided analysis of the school system. When they have all information about the school it will be easier to take the decision. When the decision are taken by a group, the possible consequences are predicated and the team remains prepared to handle the situation.*

*I try to be a family member and try to convince the students and parents as family members. I effort to convince the parents and students that 'though the action is not good the intention is good'.*

Santa Kumar shared his experience that the trustees and school management criticize him for not being very strict to the teachers and non-teaching staff. They expect that the head teacher will penalize the teachers and staff for every mistake, but he does not feel the need to take revenge for every action. He said that as a leader of the school, he needs to support teachers and other staff in many circumstances. He mentioned that he speaks on behalf of the payment, promotion, and rights of the teachers and staff in the meeting of the trustees. He said that he had rarely experienced any event when teachers genuinely supported the head teacher. However,

he never complained to the teachers and staff about not being supported him when he was troubled by the parents, management committee, trustees and the so-called dons.

While Santa Kumar was speaking so, I could see that his face was a picture of distress. He said, “*A few teachers support the head teacher*”. I understood the appointment holder teachers by the term ‘*a few*’. Santa Kumar told the head teacher that they should be ready to take pain for the betterment of the institution. He meant leadership is learnt through experience, which aligns with the view of the theory of behavioral leadership.

### **Dhan Kumar’s Story**

Dhan Kumar is the father of a student at Santa Kumar’s school (School1). He mentioned talking to the leadership style of Santa Kumar he remarked;

#### **(Episode-25)**

*I should oppose the wrong deeds of school. They response the suggestions and complaints in a normal way but do not follow. If I have to mark the school management, it does not get more than the 50 percent of the total marks. There is no representation of parents in the school management committee of the school where my son is studying. When there is no representation of parent in the school management committee the triparty relation of student, parent and school gets weak.*

Opposite to Santa Kumar, Dhan Kumar argues that behavioral leadership is not implemented in School 1. He mentioned that Santa Kumar’s leadership style requires improvement. He stressed that the head teacher should pay attention and incorporate parents' suggestions. Regardless of Dhan Kumar’s disapproval, the school, where his son is studying is widely recognized for its success in sports, including basketball, football, table tennis, cricket, and athletics. It has won the sub-metropolitan-level Mayor’s Cup for five consecutive years. Principal Santa Kumar, however, expresses satisfaction with the school’s academic performance in the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) and the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) Examination results as well. Additionally, the school regularly organizes football competitions for schools and district level basketball tournaments.

### **Common Views of Participants**

The narratives of the participants consistently underlined the significant role of leadership in both the origin and resolution of school-parent conflicts. A fundamental theme is that school leaders should utilize the team through shared responsibility,

diversifying tasks among stakeholders which enables students and parents to receive fast and effective services. It is underlined that without delegating responsibilities, a single school leader often faces significant challenges. Thus, collaboration with fellow appointment holders and teachers is necessary. Melodies of shared authority, participatory decision-making, and collective responsibility are commonly articulated which highlighted the participants' belief that inclusive leadership is vital in managing and resolving conflicts of school and parents. Participants also stressed the importance of listening to others as a key leadership skill.

### **Analysis and Interpretation**

The head teacher, chairperson of the school management committee, and other appointment holders of the school are the leaders of the school. In daily operations, the head teacher serves as the executive leader of the school. Parents and students serve as ambassadors for the school, so head teachers should work to foster a positive atmosphere. Head teachers need to be aware of the ground reality of their school and avoid the chance of misinformation or poor judgment. Not only the head teacher but also the school management committee, the parent-teacher association, and community educational leaders should actively contribute to prevent and resolve school-parent conflicts.

Establishing and maintaining a healthy school culture are important tasks for school leaders. Herman (2016) suggested that successful leaders emphasize leading outside the confines of their organizations, embrace and act upon their psychological importance, as well as think and behave politically. They also facilitate the development of new leadership in their organizations. Day et al., (2020) also mark that setting goals and establishing as well as maintaining a healthy school culture are important tasks for school leaders. As the leader of the school, the head teacher has many roles to fulfill in preventing and resolving conflicts. To navigate difficult situations, the head teacher should practice shared leadership to get support from others. Thus, according to the belief of the theory of conflict transformation education leader should be a conflict transformer rather than an administrator and ruler.

Leaders should not be limited only to solving present problems but should also prepare for future challenges. The dynamics of tension sources evolve over time and are influenced by competitors' actions or other external factors (Smith et al., 2016). Thus, school leaders should anticipate potential future conflicts and be prepared to

address them effectively. From this point of view, it is clearly visible that the behavioral approach is connected to the rise and resolution of conflicts.

School leaders, particularly the head teacher, should play a decisive role in generating a constructive school atmosphere that helps to prevent and resolve school-parents conflicts. Students and parents act as informal ambassadors of the school to the community, so it is necessary that head teachers cultivate a welcoming and respectful environment. Operational leaders must remain knowledgeable about the actual conditions inside their schools and practice sound judgment to escape being misled by misinformation.

Conflict resolution should not be the sole responsibility of the head teacher. The School Management Committee (SMC), the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), and local education authorities also play a central role in avoiding and managing conflicts. According to Day et al., (2020) setting clear objectives and maintaining a healthy school culture are key leadership functions. Likewise, Herman (2016) emphasizes that operational leaders extend their influence beyond the immediate school environment, use emotional intelligence, recognize political circumstances, and support leadership development within their teams.

For the successful resolution of school-parent conflict, head teachers should practice shared leadership by involving subordinates and stakeholders in important decisions. An inclusive approach fosters the advancement of shared ownership and support during challenging circumstances. The Theory of Conflict Transformation recommends that leaders should act as mechanisms of change, aiming not only to solve immediate difficulties but also to address the underlying causes of conflict. Considering this, the function of leaders extends to outdoor administration and supervision including nurturing relationships, understanding various perspectives, and promoting long-term harmony within the school system.

The assessment of participants in this research aligns with Smith et al. (2016), who articulated that leaders must also be prepared for future tensions that may arise from changing circumstances or exterior pressures. A proactive and responsive leadership style that aligns which behavioral leadership is essential for adapting to such developments. The behavioral leadership approach, which underscores collaboration, flexibility, and understanding of human dynamics, is particularly effective in preventing the origin and resolution of conflict. The succeeding section

will describe how conflict transformation theory can be functional to leadership practices in preventing and resolving school-parents conflict.

### **Application of Theory of Conflict Transformation**

Building person-to-person relationships plays a noteworthy role in addressing and transforming conflict by promoting trust and understanding. This view, articulated by participants such as Ram, Buku, Hasan Kumar, and Jatayu, aligns with Lederach's (1995) Theory of Conflict Transformation, which stresses the importance of relationship-building in resolving underlying strains and accomplishing sustainable peace.

According to the concept of the Theory of Conflict Transformation, participants emphasized that school leaders can nurture a positive school atmosphere by addressing the causes of school-parent conflict. Participants highlighted the effectiveness of thick discussion, meaningful communication and understanding the individual variation. Similar to the theory, this study identified respectful behavior as the strategies of conflict transformation. In line to the theory the participants stressed on empathy, cultural transformation, and process transformation. Theory of Conflict Transformation advocates in creating a harmonious school climate that match to the views of participants. Participants suggested to focus on weakness and change in disliked working patterns which show the relationship between the theory and findings of this study.

The relationship between schools and parents is constantly changing. After analyzing of the narratives of the participants, it is articulated that the theory of conflict transformation is highly relevant for transform the school-parent conflict, particularly in resolving existing or repetitive conflicts. Ury (2024) claims that while not an individual struggle is fully resolvable, it can be transformed through changes in opinion, communication, and connections. Likewise, Kiitam et al. (2016) asserted that conflict transformation is more operational than merely suppressing or compromising, as it nurtures long-term change rather than temporary solutions.

This study discovered that parent-school conflict can be transformed into cooperation and advancement through intentional strategies, such as regular consultations, open dialogue, question-and-answer sessions, and ongoing communication. Participants highlighted that school leaders must approach conflicts with openness, respect for diverse viewpoints, and enthusiasm to engage with then

diversities rather suppressing them. These views are similar to the Theory of Conflict Transformation.

Though not to a sufficient extent, the schools in this study are found applying different approaches including meetings, negotiation, compromise, professional development, counseling, and personal relationships. Participants mentioned that personality, attitudes, values, and power relations between schools and parents contribute significantly to conflict transformation.

Participants mentioned that they have experienced school-parent conflict transformation. Participants in this study stressed that admiration and confidence are the bases to conflict transformation. Participants remarked that meaningful communication, mediation, negotiation, and collaboration to generate a more productive school culture which are closely tied to conflict transformation. Representing the potential for transformation, some participants reported that the hostile relationships changed into friendships after adopting mutual respect and open communication. Participants suggested to follow legal procedures if the school level resolution strategies are not operational.

Finally, after being approached constructively, conflict can work as a reagent for institutional advancement and positive transformation. School leaders are suggested to focus on sustainable conflict transformation strategies rather than hurried hits or avoidance, as unresolved issues are likely to re-appear. The subsequent section will narrate how the behavioral theory of leadership supplements conflict transformation from the perspective of school leadership.

### **Application of the Behavioral Theory of Leadership**

This portion shares the narratives of the participants on how the Behavioral Theory of Leadership is applicable in school settings, particularly in school-parent conflict resolution. The behavioral leadership methodology highlights on observable activities of leaders and their adaptability based on situational demands (Iskandar et al., 2023). Unlike static leadership traits or rigid plans, behavioral theory suggests that leaders influence others through task-focused actions and learned behaviors that evolve with experience.

This study pinned that the behavior of school leaders (head teachers) during conflict situations which was examined through observations and interviews. According to the participants they developed effective leadership and behavioral perspective through past experiences and contingent learning. Participants mentioned

that head teachers tend to draw on their earlier understandings to resolve recent conflicts. Nevertheless, they also admitted that what works in one situation may not automatically apply to another, even if the situations appear alike. This highlights the behavioral theory's importance on context-driven, adaptive leadership.

Balliet et al. (2016) perceive that conflict and cooperation is connected with human behavior. The head teachers who are relationship and task oriented behavior foresight the possible causes of conflict and try to avoid them. Though the conflict is not predictable the school leaders can communicate the intentions of schools to parents and understand the intentions of students and parents. School leaders can avoid the conflicts through relational behavior and task oriented behavior. Hence, the Behavioral Theory of Leadership is highly applicable to prevent and resolve school-parent conflicts.

Head teachers and parents underlined the necessity of situational flexibility. They emphasized that leadership strategies must be designated for specific challenges, supporting the concept of the behavioral theory of leadership. From the participants' perspectives it is clear that leadership is dynamic and responsive. One of the participants stated that he continually learns more operative approaches through direct experience, exemplifying how reflective practice shapes leadership behavior.

As parent participants are unsatisfied with the low student performance, Jatayu highlighted the importance of prioritizing academic outcomes, suggesting that operative leadership must focus on both student and teacher performance. This results-oriented expectation corresponds with the behavioral theory's focus on task completion and outcome-oriented leadership behaviors. According to the participants, it is also a process of developing new leaders rather than inheriting leadership qualities by birth.

The parents also acknowledged that they have learnt from the past incidents. Ram mentioned that, "*There is loss in the conflict with the school*", which indicates the behavioral learning. Buku mentioned that she maintains consistent communication with the school family of his son's school, as she experienced a close communication is an effective way for follow-up.

The above findings align with Mpaata's (2019) assumption that head teacher play a pivotal role in engaging the community. Effective and behavioral leadership encompasses partnership with parents and the broader community as described by participants. Behavioral leadership enables leaders to be responsive to their concerns

and demonstrate behaviors that reflect an understanding of community needs. Student achievement, one of the major expectations of parents, can be addressed through a behavioral leadership approach.

The importance of effective communication is emphasized by both parents and head teachers, which in lines with the behavioral approach. They noted that the understanding of which actions are appreciated or which cause discontent among parents and students allows school leaders to adjust their behavior accordingly. This regular feedback loop among parents and school leaders supports behavioral theory's proposition that leadership behavior is formed through interaction and experience. The following section will discuss how the narrative approach complements the behavioral framework in understanding leadership in conflict scenarios.

### **Evaluation of the Narrative Approach**

The narrative approach has been demonstrated to be highly operative in uncovering the underlying stories of research participants concerning the causes of school-parent conflict and the strategies employed to resolve them. This approach facilitated the memorization and articulate on of experiences across diverse stages of the participants' life. In many instances, forgotten and formerly unspoken events were reconstructed into coherent narratives, offering valuable envisions into their individual and professional practices.

As a methodological instrument, narrative examination enabled a deeper investigation of participants' lived understandings, viewpoints, and emotional reactions. It provides perspectives for the origin of nuanced accounts that may have persisted inaccessible through more organized or quantitative methods. By underlining the opinions of the participants, this methodology generated contextually rich and reliable information about their interactions, the causes of conflict, and the ways of resolution. Similarly, it assisted in further understanding of leadership behaviors which are interpreted and enacted within the school-community environment.

Through narrative explanations, participants intensely explained the key life events that shaped their actions and perceptions. These narratives not only lightened the origins and dynamics of conflict but also discovered how individuals adapted over the period. Through the deep internalization of the participants' stories, I generated significant data grounded in authentic lived experiences. Overall, narrative approach

was both appropriate and well-suited for exploring the multifaceted social and emotional dimensions of school-parent conflict and their resolution.

The narrative approach was particularly operational in generating in-depth information about the individual experiences and meaning-making process of participants' stories. Though this technique captured the emotional and experiential dimensions of school-parent conflict, an ethnographic study could offer complementary insights into the cultural and social dimensions underlying such interactions. Ethnography would offer a lens to observe the norms, values, and communication practices of the involved communities. Therefore, future studies may adopt an ethnographic approach to explore the cultural backgrounds influencing school-parent relationships.

### **Assessing the Real-world Impact of Policy Implementation**

The provision of related policy is observed when the personal understanding cannot check the conflict. Parental frustration with school management commonly arises from weak and unpredictable implementation of government policies. Both the literature and field information highlight a persistent gap between the provisions of policies and real-world implementation. The Constitution of Nepal (2015), the Consumer Protection Act (2018) and the School as a Zone of Peace Implementation Directives (2011) are in place, but they are not followed well. Though, they are introduced to enhance school governance and safeguard the privileges of students and parents, their awareness and application are highly limited. This failure contributes in rising tensions and conflicts, particularly in institutional schools where non-obedience is more frequently reported.

An important policy is the *School as a Zone of Peace Implementation Directives (2011)*, which is deliberate to ensure a safe, respectful, and inclusive school atmosphere. However, evidence from this study reveals broad absences in its application. Students continue to experience corporal punishment and emotional exploitation, irrespective of these being clearly prohibited. After a comprehensive discussion with the participants, it is clear that the eight core components of the directive are frequently overlooked. For instance, Dhan Kumar reported instances of discrimination, misconduct, irresponsibility, and exploitation directed at students. Moreover, none of the schools covered by this study had conducted any orientation sessions about the directive for teachers, students, or parents. The coordination committees mandated by the policy were also completely missing.

This problem is further exacerbated by an absence of consciousness among the school leadership. All three head teachers included in this study were ignorant about the implementation directives. Even though they expressed support for maintaining peaceful learning atmospheres, their unfamiliarity with the policy prevented relevant application. Enhancing policy consciousness and reinforcing accountability among the school family could meaningfully reduce conflict and contribute to for more harmonious school culture.

The Consumer Protection Act (2018) affords another policy provision on the parent-school relationship (Nepal Law Commission, 2018). This is the guideline for consumer rights to receive quality services, including parents and students. However, many schools fail to acknowledge their roles as service providers and do not treat students and parents as customers. Parent participants stated that their anxieties are often dismissed, and in some cases, they perceived that head teachers and teachers as trying to dominate them rather than participate in respectful negotiation. Though some head teachers expressed verbal support for consumer rights, only a few felt a genuine necessity to implement the Act's provisions. Consequently, students often find themselves under pressure from both school and family during conflicts, which hampers their capacity to access their rights and challenges cooperative engagement between schools and parents.

The Constitution of Nepal (2015) further fortifies the legal foundation for the rights of students and parents in education and school. It protects several fundamental rights, including the right to freedom (Article 17), equality (Article 18), safety from torture (Article 22), safeguard against discrimination and untouchability (Article 24), protection from manipulation (Article 29), the right to education (Article 31), and the rights of children (Article 39) (Nepal Law Commission [NLC], 2024). Though the participants are aware of the existence of the constitution, there are significant hurdles to implement its provisions. A large portion of the participants are not very aware of the constitutional provisions. Parent participants expressed a lack of assurance in asserting their constitutional rights when dealing with school authorities.

Only a few knowledgeable parents raise concerns about constant violations of these rights the widespread lack of legal literacy continues to hamper operational advocacy. This gap not only bounds parental engagement but also leaves children vulnerable. Deficiency of policy awareness is also a cause of oppression and right violation in the school system.

Though the head teachers remained silent, the parent participants pointed the poor implementation of the Educational Act, 1971 and its ninth amendment in behalf of parents and students. Participants highlighted the neglect of the provision of 10 percent scholarship provision by institutional schools. They criticized the role of the Educational Development and Coordination Unit, District Education Council, education committee of local government and School Management Committee at school level. Particularly, they are not happy that the mentioned agencies are not operational to check the quality of school education, appointment of qualified teachers in institutional schools and collection of unfair fee by the institutional schools.

It is essential to decrease conflict and nurture teamwork among school authorities, students, and parents to increase consciousness of related rules, laws, and policies among the stakeholders of the school. Miscommunication, discrimination, and neglect of legal protections often contribute to school-parent conflicts. A cooperative approach that involves teachers, parents, school leaders, and government bodies is crucial for avoiding and resolving conflicts positively. While legal alternative remains a choice, it should be headed by open communication, mutual respect, and a commitment to collective educational goals.

Finally, a comprehensive '*Education Act*' can address the shortcomings of existing policies and prevent future school-parent conflicts. The roles and responsibilities of federal, provincial, and local governments must be clearly operationalized according to the constitutional spirit. The act should comprise comprehensive provisions for the involvement of parents, management, regulation, and monitoring. The educational act must confirm accountability and offer structured mechanisms for addressing criticisms. Existing policies need to be revised and updated to manage the contemporary educational challenges. Moreover, establishing of an independent body dedicated to monitoring and defending the rights of students and parents is required to confirm meaningful protection and enforcement. The chapter summary is presented under the succeeding caption.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter highlighted the fundamental elements related to the origin and resolution of conflicts between parents and schools. It is revealed that family culture significantly influences to shape values, attitudes, and behaviors in individuals, which in turn affect the interaction with others. Spirituality emerged as an important

dimension in promoting empathy, responsibility, and wisdom traits essential for productive conflict resolution.

This chapter also observed the practical application of two theoretical frameworks: the theory of conflict transformation and the behavioral theory of leadership. Leadership, grounded in behavioral base can assist in addressing the diverse needs and varied behaviors within the school system. Tactful leaders can change conflict into harmony and foster professional engagement in the school. They can change the conflict through transforming personal and relational dynamics, addressing sources of conflicts, transforming cultural narratives, developing strategies to cope the conflicts, and fostering mutual collaboration.

Finally, it is evaluated the available policies of the government need to be functional to avoid and resolve the school-parent conflicts. This gap between policy and practice contributes to ongoing misunderstandings and dissatisfaction among stakeholders which contributes to further conflict. The subsequent chapter deals with the discussion and conclusion of the study.

## CHAPTER VII DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### **Chapter Overview**

This is the concluding chapter of the study. This chapter synthesizes the finding, interpreters the judgements obtained in Chapters IV, V, and VI, drawing on participant narratives and field observations. It explores the wider implications of the study and critically replicates the key insights derived from the data. The chapter shortly highlights the relevance of conflict transformation and behavioral leadership theories to the observed dynamics and classifies the original influences to the existing body of literature.

### **Discussion**

This study employed a narrative approach to investigate the conflict resolution strategies used by the five schools in Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City, Nepal. The qualitative study is primarily based on participants' narratives, supported by field observations, literature reviews, and the researcher's experiences. Given the reliance on personal accounts, subjective understandings are fundamentally presented. The study is limited to nine individuals associated with five schools, aiming to provide insights into the individual experiences within the existing socio-economic and cultural context of Dharan Sub-Metropolitan City. The narratives of Santa Kumar, Dhan Kumar, Jatayu, Hasan Kumar, Buku, Guru, Ram, Indra, and Kumari are examined and interpreted.

Titled, *Conflict Resolution Strategies of Secondary Schools in Dharan, Nepal: A Narrative Study*, this research is about two core questions: (a) What experience do the parents and school leaders share about causes of conflict between parents and schools and (b), what are the coping strategies adopted by the school leaders and parents for school-parents conflict resolution?

In response to the first research question, the results suggested that conflicts principally originate from a misconfiguration of expectations and the fulfillment of hope between the school and parents. Students, parents, teachers, and the school hold distinct expectations. Among them unmet expectations lead to tensions. Conflict causative reasons include poor communication, lack of reciprocal understanding, unaccountability, and absence of shared responsibility in both sides. In some

examples, student behavior and disciplinary issues also appear as direct sources of conflict.

Concerning the second research question, schools attempt to harmonize the welfare of all stakeholders by pursuing solutions that are equally acceptable. Participants highlighted the significance of humility, simplicity, and emotional intelligence while interacting with parents. Continuous and open communication is highlighted as a key factor in preventing misunderstandings. Furthermore, participants observed parental complaints not only as threats but as prospects for learning and development. Participants also highlighted the role of spiritual consciousness and family ethos in conflict resolution, suggesting that such values foster mutual respect and consent.

This study applied a narrative approach to explore the conflict resolution strategies adopted by schools. As a module of qualitative investigation, it generated data primarily from participants' narratives, supplemented by field observations, an examination of available literature, and the researcher's experimental understanding. Given its interpretive landscape, subjectivity is a characteristic feature of this investigation. For this study, conflict is circumstances in that school and parents detect their goals, meanings, ethics, as well as necessities opposing that causing disagreement, opponent and rival thought, action, and behavior that occurs in their partnership.

Sketching on ideas from the literature, narrative interpretations from the participants, field observation, the study highlights some significant key insights including; (a) occurring conflict between school and parent is natural, (b) there are recognizable causes of conflict, (c) schools employ a variety of strategies to prevent and resolve conflict, (d) family culture, spirituality, and school leadership: shape the undercurrents of conflict, (e) weak policy implementation failing to control conflict, and (f) theories of conflict transformation and behavioral leadership are appropriate in understanding these dynamics. These themes are discussed in greater depth in the following sections:

### **Occurring Conflicts Between Schools and Parents is Natural**

From the narratives of participants, it is evident that the conflict between schools and parents is a natural incidence. This research found that every community and institutional school included in the study experience some sort of conflict with parents. Such conflicts often stem from unfulfilled expectations between schools and

families. Similar to some of the participants and Msila (2012), the Theory of Conflict Transformation observes occurring conflict is natural and they are not necessarily to perceive negative. Johnson et al. (1994) suggested schools to become conflict positive organization and organize trainings to stop conflict which also align with the finding of this study and the Theory of Conflict Transformation.

Diversity is taken as one of the ground roots of conflict (Arbatli et al., 2020) that can be addressed through the approaches suggested by the Theory of Behavioral Leadership. The schools covered by this study exhibit a range of ethnic, origins, linguistic, economic, and other variations. Participants mentioned that rather than worrying about the possibility of occurrence of conflict, it is better to think for the effective way of conflict resolution and transformation which is closer to the view of behavioral leadership. However, it is not find that the existing Nepali literature addressed the role of family culture and spirituality for the origin and resolution of conflict between schools and parents. The subsequent segment sketches specific causes behind these conflicts.

### **There are Recognizable Causes of Conflict**

The Theory of Behavioral Leadership believes the leaders should be familiar with the causes of conflict. Similar to the assumptions of the theory, this study identified that conflicts originate from specific causes related to students, teachers, the school, and parents. Moreover, the school leaders are more or less familiar with the possible causes. It is explored that found lack of fulfillment of the parental expectations, student and the school's expectations as well as disappointment with the student's and the institution's performance, are common triggers.

From the school's side, fundamental factors encompass a shortage of responsiveness to parental suggestions and involvement, increasing school fees, inadequate focus on academic performance, and a lack of accountability among staff, teachers and school leaders. Teacher-related issues of conflict include misinterpreting student behavior, the practice of physical and verbal assault, failure to acknowledge students' developmental needs, ignorance to provide effective feedback to the work of the students, and discriminatory practices.

The outcomes of this study align with those of Lake and Billingsley (2000), who found that parents are unhappy with the school authorities because they did not address the weakness of the students. They pointed out that parents are unsatisfied when the school authority describes everything in a negative way. Lazarus (2005)

mentioned that opposing views, interests, working styles, personalities, necessities, and thoughts as the causes of interpersonal conflict in schools. Brooks and Brooks (2018) found that numerous students are marginalized on the basis of their color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religion. They also mentioned that unilateral decisions by school authorities can lead increased parental dissatisfaction. In the words of Valente et al. (2022), schools' disability to adapt to societal changes leads to conflict. These findings are related to the behavioral aspect of leadership. Nonetheless, the existing literature did not discuss about the causes of school-parent conflict in Nepali society.

Causes related to the parental side are a lack of engagement, unrealistic demands, neglect of school responsibilities, and the impact of family issues such as conjugal discord. Student-related causes include failure to obey school rules, dishonoring for teachers and school authorities, suffering colleagues, and engaging in physical or verbal arguments. Likewise, there are the student-related causes as well. As a neutral observer, it can be observed that though one tries to blame others and shift responsibility, are also the major sources of conflict between schools and parents. Further, the school and parents have their own logic to show they are more behavioral and others are not practical. The succeeding segment discusses how schools prevent and resolve conflicts.

### **Schools Employ a Variety of Strategies to Prevent and Resolve Conflict**

Theory of Conflict Transform advises transformation of conflict is not merely a temporary solution. It is the way to build and redefine the relationship, working strategies, communication style and organizational structure for better future perspective. This study found schools are the frontlines of the conflict between the school and parents in real life situations. It has been found that schools attempt to resolve the school-parent conflict in various ways. They try to encompass the concerns raised by parents. They organize gatherings, discussions, and interactions with parents which are the assumptions of Theory of Behavioral Leadership. They try to negotiate and progress mutual empathy, by implementing institutional transformations which also recommended by the Theory of Conflict Transformation.

Though Mohamed (2011) observed that schools in other contexts involve local leaders and community members to bridge school-family relations, this study did not find such evidence. Instead, head teachers highlighted teachers' accountability and ensured parents are informed about student activities through different channels.

Schools put efforts into diagnosing and supporting the aptitude of students. Participants agreed with Sibajene's (2022) suggestion that home visits, arbitration, general meetings, contribution of government authorities, and disciplinary measures are effective in avoiding conflict. The outcomes of this study also align with those of Chandolia and Anastasiou (2020), who highlighted collaboration and compromise as effective methods for resolving school-parent conflict. Similar to Mbiti (2016), noted participants pointed that teacher accountability is necessary for decreasing parent-school conflict. Similar to Ratcliffe and Ratcliffe (2015), this study also supports the significance of clear communication, reciprocal accountability, and readiness to fulfill the expectations that line up with Theory of Conflict Transformation and Behavioral Theory of Leadership.

The existing literature has been unable to establish spirituality as a tool for conflict resolution. Participants did not use the term 'Restorative Practice (RP)'. However, they widely acknowledged to thick discussion, personal relationship building, follow-up conversation, respectful behavior which are not similar to Restorative Practice of Weber and Vereenoghe (2020). Rather, they match to task oriented and relationship oriented behavior under behavioral leadership. The upcoming sub section discovers important elements that influence both the origin and resolution of school-parent conflicts.

### **Family Culture, Spirituality, and Leadership: Shape the Conflict.**

Conflict and cooperation are not only limited to an individual. Different factors are directly and indirectly associated with the origin and resolution of school-parents conflict. It is found that family plays a significant role in shaping the behavior and values of associates. Family members carry the family ethos in their daily life, including attitudes toward conflict. Families that normalize arguments, may view external conflicts as normal phenomenon, while those that discourage conflict tend to foster more accommodating behavior. This is an important aspect of school-parent conflict that is not well discussed in the available literature.

Remarkably, spirituality is identified as a new tool for conflict prevention and resolution between schools and parents. Spirituality is believed to add the quality of acceptance, tolerance, self-responsibility, self-discipline, coexistence and many other characteristics which help the individual to prevent and resolve the conflict.

Similar to Lederach (1995), Folger and Bush (2014), and Saiti (2014), this study also confirms the significance of transformational leadership in conflict resolution as a guiding outline for beneficial school-parent relationships. It also sanctions that operative leadership is fundamental to managing conflict, as emphasized by Msila (2012); and Chandolia and Anastasiou (2020).

Though some of the school head teachers are observed following a *laissez-faire* leadership approach, participants underlined the necessity of behavioral leaders who recognize the need of the situation. They believe that behavioral leaders can resolve and transform the conflicts. Parent participants expressed frustration with receiving only negative comments from the school and instead sought practical solutions of the problem. Thus, leaders should consider personality differences when analyzing conflict behavior, as pointed out by Jeong (2008). The available Nepali literature has failed to highlight behavioral leadership as a major leadership style for resolving school-parent conflicts. The next session will evaluate the implementation of policies that ensure the smooth functioning of the school without conflicts.

#### **Weak Policy Implementation Failing to Control Conflict**

Despite of national policies addressing school-parent relationships; including the Constitution of Nepal (2015), the Consumer Protection Act (2018), and the School as a Zone of Peace Directive (2011), their impact on reducing school-parent conflict is negligible. The previous studies did not link these policies to school-parent conflict. Thus, it is relevant to evaluate their implication to prevent the school-parent conflict. However, the existing studies missed to evaluate the implementation of these policies in Nepal.

The constitutional rights including the right to freedom, right to equality, safety from torture, safeguards against discrimination and untouchability, protection from manipulation, the right to education, and the rights of children which are related to protection of individuals are less aware by students and parents and low attention of school due to their responsibility.

The Consumer Protection Act (2018) is another policy to protect the rights of students and parents. This is the guideline for consumer rights to receive quality services including parents and students. This act has managed the provisions of legal acts like compensation, financial penalty and imprisonment against the violence of consumer rights (Nepal Law Commission, 2018). However, many schools fail to acknowledge them due to ignorance and negligence to the responsibility. School as a

Zone of Peace Implementation Directives (2011), is another policy which is considered to create a safe school environment. However, this study found broad absences in its application due to the ignorance of students and parents as well as the negligence of school leaders.

The ninth amendment (2016) of Educational Act 1971 is concerned with overall management of school education in Nepal (Nepal Law Commission, 2016). It has the provision of different agencies in the district and municipal level which can effectively prevent the possible conflicts between the school and parents. However, the parent participants this policy is not in effective implementation in to improve the quality of schools and provide the rights for students and parents.

It is observed there is lack of study and analysis of those policy by the stakeholders. The supervision policy provisions are not followed by the supervisory agencies such as the sub-metropolitan office and education coordination and development unit. The necessity of regular supervision and monitoring of implementation of the mentioned and other relevant regulations is acknowledged policies is felt by the school management committee and other regulatory agencies.

This study exposed that school leaders, teachers, parents, and students are often unaware of these policies, resulting in their poor application. The lack of awareness and enforcement has contributed to ongoing conflicts, underscoring the gap between policy formulation and actual ground practice. Though the Theory of Conflict Transformation suggest to follow the existing policies the real field situation do not match to the theoretical assumptions.

### **Conflict Transformation and Behavioral Leadership are Applicable**

This study concludes that both the theory of conflict transformation and the behavioral theory of leadership are relevant to resolve school-parent conflict. Schools follow open dialogue and strategic responses to resolve the conflicts constructively. Behavioral leadership is evident in the proactive approach that leaders can employ to prevent or resolve conflict. However, theories are not precisely functional as articulated in academic literature and participants are often unaware of the pattern of leadership that they are following. The application of the theory of behavioral leadership is replicated in the stories, observations and decision-making process of the participants. Despite the significance importance of these theories, the available studies have been unable to thoroughly examine the application of these theories in Nepal.

The application of the theory of conflict transformation is not seen evidently among the participants. As school head teachers often lack training in conflict transformation and they are not belong from the leadership background, there is a corresponding lack of expertise in this area. However, the school leaders included in this study were required to appear to adopt transformative approaches; instead, they judging conflict as a threat rather than a chance for institutional growth. Conflict can be transformed through open communication, trust-building, participatory decision-making, school system improvement, viewing conflict as an opportunity for growth, an encultured family environment, behavioral leadership and adhering spiritual guidelines.

### **New Contributions of the Study**

This study creates two original contributions to the literature: the role of spirituality and the influence of family culture in school-parent conflict. Participants highlighted spirituality as a promoting tool for ethical behavior and reciprocal admiration, which assists in conflict avoidance and resolution. Family culture shaped how children and parents interpret and respond to conflict. Some families stress logical reasoning, while others prefer strict discipline. These opposite values shaped student, parent, and school authorities' behavior and their aptitude to manage conflict in school settings.

It unearthed original conflict resolution strategies applied by Nepali schools which are applicable to the similar situations. This study revealed relationship between the behavioral approach of leadership and conflict transformation are seen effective to resolve school-parent conflict.

Another important judgement was that student-related conflicts often intensify into broader tensions, including those involving parents. Addressing such issues through peer consultation, as proposed by Sellman (2011), may help to decrease the chance of school-parent conflict.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Narrative Approach**

This study benefitted from the use of a narrative approach, which was particularly effective in capturing the individual, emotional, and circumstantial dimensions of school-parent conflict. Participants' narratives discovered not only the practical approaches employed by schools but also the deeper moral, relational, and cultural underpinnings that reinforce behavior. The narratives of this study underlined the themes often overlooked by conventional qualitative and quantitative approaches,

particularly the impact of family upbringing, personality traits, and spiritual consciousness on how conflict is understood and resolved.

Nevertheless, the narrative approach also has its limitations in examining the border cultural context in which conflicts arise and are resolved. During the field observation, it became noticeable that the ethnographic approach provide a more comprehensive cultural lens, particularly in understanding how spirituality and leadership values function within schools. However, this study was not designed to observe the cultural viewpoints. Despite a few limitations, the narrative approach facilitated a nuanced investigation of relational undercurrents revealing the human dimensions of school-parent conflicts and the prospective for conflict transformation through communication, empathy, and shared ideals. The conclusion of these insights are deliberated in the subsequent title.

### **Conclusion**

This study sought to address two key questions, (a) What experience do the parents and school leaders share about causes of conflict between parents and schools and (b), what are the coping strategies adopted by the school leaders and parents for school-parents conflict resolution? The participants reported that a lack of professionalism, lack of accountability, unreasonable school fee escalation, a lack of understanding, conflict among students, as well as irresponsible and unsupportive parents are the reasons for school-parent conflict. Similarly, the application of spirituality, moral family ethos, professionalism, and accountability, effective communication, meaningful partnership, responsible parenting, and development for understanding are the major strategies of conflict resolution between schools and parents.

Inspired by a longstanding individual attention, I explored these questions through in-depth qualitative analysis concerning participants from five schools in Dharan. Data is collected through interviews, field observations, social media examination, literature review, and spatial replication. Insufficient academic, physical, and extracurricular facilities, suppressed disciplinary practices, and a lack of parental participation in their children's academic exists are the causes of conflicts.

Resolving these problems needs to reinforce infrastructure, maintain ethical standards, and begin open lines of communication. Parental engagement including attending meetings, paying fees on time, and participate in decision making is necessary for building faith and collaboration. Equally, parents pursue schools that

distinguish and nurture their child's distinctiveness. Teachers are anticipated to deliver professional, emotionally intelligent, and student-centered attention, while school leaders must implement situational and cooperative leadership policies that consider the varied perceptions of stakeholders.

Promotion of moral and spiritual ethics emerged as an earlier, underexplored yet significant outcome. Spiritual values foster resilient associations and shared responsibility among students, teachers, and parents. However, important government policies, including the Directives on Schools as Zones of Peace (2011), the Consumer Protection Act (2018), and the Constitution of Nepal (2015) continue to be poorly implemented. School-parent conflict resolution would be more operational through increased consciousness and improved oversight by the local government.

The suitability of behavioral leadership theory is also established through this study, which is meaningful in resolving school-parent conflicts. This theory suggests in employing operative, behavior-based approaches for preventing and resolving school-parent conflicts. This study found that conflict do not remain alike all the time. Additionally, the theory of conflict transformation is closely associated with the findings, offering important insights into the productive resolution of conflicts. Moreover, schools can strengthen parental involvement by organizing parent awareness sessions and resources as tangible tools for the overall growth of students.

Though conflict is unavoidable in educational settings, it can be positively resolved through reciprocal admiration, inclusive practices, proactive communication, and collegial leadership, which match to the assumptions of Behavioral Leadership and Theory of Conflict Transformation. Moreover, this study discovered some similarities between the two theories. They are; (a) human behavior as a deciding factor of conflict, (b) both give high priority to constructive human interaction and communication, (c) desired behavior can be learnt and practiced, (d) both the theories focus on positive transformation, and (e) behavior needs to be adopted according to the situation. The findings of this research suggest valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers committed to foster pleasant school-parent relationships. The following portion discusses the implications of the study.

### **Implication of the Study**

This research aimed to discover operational strategies for resolving conflicts between parents and schools. The outcomes offer significant insights for school leaders, administrators, and policymakers pursuing to prevent and resolve such

conflicts. By understanding the views of parents and students, school leaders can avoid choices and practices possible to cause disappointment. Teachers, too, can become more conscious of behaviors that may be perceived negatively and adopt more student and parent-friendly methods. Students can also review on their roles in deteriorating or escalating conflicts between the school and parents.

Schools may implement the conflict resolution approaches recognized by participants of this research. Operative communication emerged as a preliminary strategy, consistent with prior research, which can significantly strengthen parent-school associations. Schools are encouraged to evaluate which the most effective conflict resolution strategies and apply them. However, a single strategy may not be applicable in all cases, conditions and times.

At the policy level, the outcomes can guide local governments and education authorities in recognizing common causes of school–parent conflict and applying preventive methods. Policy interventions can implant a healthier school culture characterized by accountability, fairness, and reciprocal admiration. The study also supports the enlargement of policies that address parental grievances, inspire teacher proficiency, and hold schools responsible to both parents and students. Moreover, current national policies, such as Consumer Protection Act, conflict-free school settings and constitutional provisions that have not been fully implemented, can be reconsidered and improved, grounded in the understandings offered by this study. Useful recommendations from this study can be functional to day-to-day school operations. Preservation of transparency, neutrality, and proficiency assist to reduce the sources of conflict. Parents, too, may apply these outcomes to reflect on their roles in school and consider ways to involve themselves more fruitfully. School Management Committees, local governments, and educational development and coordination units can play fundamental roles in applying these findings to nurture harmony and cooperation.

From a methodological viewpoint, the narrative approach evidenced valuable in generating ironic, contextually grounded insights into school-parent conflict. This approach was particularly suitable for capturing different experiences while identifying collective themes. Future research on school-parent conflict can be shaped by using an ethnographic approach to discover wider sociocultural dynamics or by conducting case studies of specific cases of conflict. Furthermore, future studies can

examine the relationship between school- parent conflict and achievement of students in academic and non-academic fields.

Finally, this study supplements to theoretical understanding. The Theory of Conflict Transformation offers a crucial perspective for resolving conflicts that contribute for reciprocal understanding, common responsibility, and sustainability. Similarly, the Theory of Behavioral Leadership is applicable in further studies as it encourages school leaders to adopt context-based approaches informed by experience rather than rigid models. The findings from this study support the existing knowledge in terms temporality, sociality and spatiality. The generalizability of the findings is discussed in the subsequent episode.

### **Generalizability of Findings**

This study explored the experiences of nine participants from five schools in Dharan sub-metropolitan city. Given its qualitative, narrative approach and restricted area and sample, the judgements are not envisioned to be statistically generalizable. However, the study suggests transferable understandings into the causes of school-parent conflicts and proposes a variety of situation-specific conflict resolution strategies that may be significant to educational practitioners in new settings. It covers the experiential details of the participants from multiple perspectives.

While embedded in a specific cultural and institutional background, recurring themes such as communication breakdowns, unclear role limitations, power dynamics, inadequate policy implementation, limited proficiency and accountability, and weak coordination reveal wider challenges that numerous schools may encounter. This study offers contextually expressive viewpoints that may inform the understanding of school-parent conflicts and support locally grounded strategies of conflict resolution. The findings are more suitable to resolve Nepal based school-parent conflicts. The subsequent chapter presents the summary of this chapter.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter evaluated and interpreted the research findings, acknowledging the reality and underlying causes of conflicts between parents and schools. It examined different strategies for resolution and highlighted the functions of family, spirituality, and leadership in shaping the dynamics of conflict. It offers valuable insights that are specifically relevant to Nepal.

The key insights of the study are; occurring conflict between school and parent is natural, there are recognizable causes of conflict, schools employ a variety of

strategies to prevent and resolve conflict, family culture, spirituality, and school leadership shape the undercurrents of conflict, weak policy implementation failing to control conflict, and theories of conflict transformation and behavioral leadership are appropriate in understanding school-parents conflict dynamics.

Though it has covered a limited number of schools and participants, the recommendations of the study can be applicable to other schools. Though not statistically generalizable, the outcomes are appropriate to comparable circumstances where schools and parents face similar challenges.

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