

HEAD TEACHERS' CONTRIBUTION TO BUILDING CULTURE OF TRUST IN  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN KATHMANDU: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

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A Dissertation

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Hare Ram Khatri* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Educational Leadership* presented on *13 February 2026* entitled *Head Teachers' Contribution to Building Culture of Trust in Public Schools in Kathmandu: An Ethnographic Study*.

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Trust is a fundamental component of a school's culture, and it influences how parents, students, teachers, head, and the community as a whole interact with each other. Scholarly publications rarely explore the pivotal role of the head teacher in building a culture of trust within Kathmandu's public schools. I aimed to explore contribution of head teachers in fostering trust within public schools by interpreting their leadership practices, commitment, strategies, problem solving and decision-making processes. Many studies on educational leadership and trust have been conducted globally; however, there is a lack of research in Nepal, particularly regarding the roles of head teachers in fostering trust within community schools. If we look at actual scenarios in Kathmandu's public schools, where social, cultural, and organizational variables are different from those in other educational systems where the gap can be seen.

In my study, I have adopted ethnography as a methodological approach to understand the lived experiences of head teachers, teachers, parents, and members of the School Management Committee (SMC). I used reflective journaling, in-depth interviews, and prolonged field observation at two public schools of Budhanilkantha Municipality in Kathmandu to get the participants' points of view. For this study, I chose eight participants in total; two head teachers, two teachers, two parents, and two SMC chairpersons. Their experiences offered a helpful window into ongoing work of building and evaluating trust in public schools. I have analyzed the finding using

Vygotsky's Social-Culture Theory (1978) and Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory (1985), as both theories highlight the role leadership plays in shaping trust and encouraging participation from the wider school community. The research identified ethical leadership, transparency in leadership, participatory decision-making, and proactive conflict resolution are important aspects in fostering trust. The findings indicate that Head teachers whose action fosters transparency, participatory decision-making are ethical leaders since they promote teacher collaboration and encourage community trust. The results suggest that head teachers who maintain transparency, encourage participatory decision-making, and uphold ethical leadership contribute to stronger teacher cooperation and increased community trust. In educational institution if there is a hierarchical authority and not enough people are involved, it is very challenging for schools to keep the public's trust.

The research interpretations indicated that trust-building is a dynamic and continuous process. Head teachers need to find a balance between making decisions and being responsible, having authority and being open to everyone and being a leader and being understanding. This research is concerned with how the leadership practices of head teachers would lead to the development of a culture of trust in the Kathmandu's public schools. The understandings of this study indicate that a trust-building leadership style is an effective and cost-efficient method for improving institutions. This kind of leadership slowly makes the school seem more trustworthy by improving the culture of the school, motivating teachers and getting stakeholders in the community involved.

This research is explored at the problem of community losing trust in public schools, even though the government is trying to improve the quality of education. Leadership effectiveness is still inconsistent, and many head teachers don't know how to use participatory and trust-based methods correctly. So, the goals were to observe how head teachers' leadership styles build trust and how these styles help change the culture of trust building in Kathmandu's public schools.

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13 February 2026

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## शोध सार

शैक्षिक नेतृत्वमा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर उपाधिका लागि हरेराम खत्रीको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक "काठमाडौंका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयहरूमा विश्वासको संस्कृति निर्माणमा प्रधानाध्यापकहरूको योगदान: एक एथ्नोग्रफिक अध्ययन" १ फाल्गुन २०८२ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो ।

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उप.प्रा.श्रीकृष्ण वाग्ले, पीएचडी

शोध निर्देशक

विश्वास विद्यालयको संस्कृतिको एक आधारभूत अवयव हो, जसले अभिभावक, विद्यार्थी, शिक्षक, प्रधानाध्यापक तथा समग्र समुदायबीचको अन्तरक्रियालाई प्रभावित गर्दछ। काठमाडौंका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयहरूमा विश्वासको संस्कृति निर्माणमा प्रधानाध्यापकको केन्द्रीय भूमिकाबारे शैक्षिक प्रकाशनहरूमा विरलै चर्चा गरिएको पाइन्छ। यस अध्ययनको उद्देश्य प्रधानाध्यापकहरूले आफ्नो नेतृत्व अभ्यास, प्रतिबद्धता, रणनीति, समस्या समाधान तथा निर्णय-निर्माण प्रक्रियामार्फत सार्वजनिक विद्यालयहरूमा विश्वास कसरी विकास गर्छन् भन्ने कुराको अन्वेषण गर्नु हो । विश्वस्तरमा शैक्षिक नेतृत्व र विश्वाससम्बन्धी धेरै अध्ययनहरू गरिएका भए तापनि नेपालमा, विशेष गरी सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूमा विश्वास निर्माणमा प्रधानाध्यापकहरूको भूमिका सम्बन्धी अनुसन्धानको अभाव रहेको छ । काठमाडौंका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयहरूको वास्तविक अवस्था हेर्दा, जहाँ सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक तथा संगठनात्मक परिवेश अन्य शैक्षिक प्रणालीहरूभन्दा फरक छन्, त्यहाँ स्पष्ट अन्तर देखिन्छ ।

यस अध्ययनमा प्रधानाध्यापक, शिक्षक, अभिभावक तथा विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति (SMC) का सदस्यहरूको जीवन्त अनुभवलाई बुझ्न नृविज्ञानात्मक (Ethnographic) विधिलाई अनुसन्धानको आधार बनाइएको छ । सहभागीहरूको दृष्टिकोण बुझ्न काठमाडौंको बुढानीलकण्ठ नगरपालिकाका दुई सार्वजनिक विद्यालयमा परावर्तनात्मक डायरी लेखन, गहिरो अन्तर्वार्ता तथा लामो समय सम्मको क्षेत्रीय अवलोकन प्रयोग गरिएको छ । यस अध्ययनका लागि जम्मा आठ जना सहभागी चयन गरिएका थिए; जसमा दुई प्रधानाध्यापक, दुई शिक्षक, दुई अभिभावक र दुई विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति अध्यक्षहरू रहेका छन् । उनीहरूका अनुभवहरूले सार्वजनिक विद्यालयहरूमा विश्वास निर्माण तथा मूल्याङ्कनको निरन्तर प्रक्रियालाई बुझ्न सहयोग पुऱ्याएका छन् । मैले निष्कर्षहरूलाई लेभ भाइगोत्स्कीको सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक सिद्धान्त (१९७८) र बर्नार्ड एम .बासको रूपान्तरणात्मक नेतृत्व सिद्धान्त( १९८५)का आधारमा विश्लेषण गरेको छु किनकि यी दुवै सिद्धान्तहरूले विश्वास निर्माण र व्यापक विद्यालय समुदायको सहभागिता प्रोत्साहन गर्न नेतृत्वको भूमिकालाई जोड दिन्छन् । अनुसन्धानले नैतिक नेतृत्व, नेतृत्वमा पारदर्शिता, सहभागितामूलक निर्णय-निर्माण तथा सक्रिय द्वन्द्व समाधान विश्वास विकासका महत्वपूर्ण पक्षहरू भएको देखाएको छ।

अध्ययनका परिणामहरूले पारदर्शिता कायम गर्ने, सहभागितामूलक निर्णय-निर्माणलाई प्रोत्साहन गर्ने र नैतिक नेतृत्व अभ्यास गर्ने प्रधानाध्यापकहरूले शिक्षकहरूबीच सहकार्य मजबुत बनाउने र समुदायको विश्वास वृद्धि गराउने देखाएका छन् । शैक्षिक संस्थामा अत्यधिक पदानुक्रमिक अधिकार रहँदा र पर्याप्त सहभागिता नहुँदा सार्वजनिक विश्वास कायम राख्न अत्यन्तै चुनौतीपूर्ण हुन्छ । अनुसन्धानका व्याख्याहरूले विश्वास निर्माण एक गतिशील र निरन्तर प्रक्रिया भएको संकेत गरेका छन् । प्रधानाध्यापकहरूले निर्णय लिने र जवाफदेही बन्ने, अधिकार प्रयोग गर्ने र खुलापन अपनाउने, नेतृत्व गर्ने र समझदारी देखाउनेबीच सन्तुलन कायम गर्न आवश्यक हुन्छ ।

यस अनुसन्धानले काठमाडौँका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयहरूमा प्रधानाध्यापकहरूको नेतृत्व अभ्यासले कसरी विश्वासको संस्कृति विकास गर्छ भन्ने विषयमा केन्द्रित छ । यस अध्ययनबाट प्राप्त बुझाइहरूले विश्वास निर्माणमा आधारित नेतृत्व शैली संस्थागत सुधारका लागि प्रभावकारी तथा लागत-कुशल उपाय भएको संकेत गर्छन् । यस प्रकारको नेतृत्वले विद्यालयको संस्कृतिमा सुधार गर्दै, शिक्षकहरूलाई प्रेरित गर्दै र समुदायका सरोकारवालाहरूलाई संलग्न गराउँदै विद्यालय प्रतिको विश्वास क्रमशः सुदृढ बनाउँछ । सरकारले शिक्षाको गुणस्तर सुधार गर्ने प्रयास गरिरहे पनि समुदायले सार्वजनिक विद्यालय प्रतिको विश्वास गुमाउँदै गएको समस्यालाई यस अनुसन्धानले उजागर गरेको छ । नेतृत्वको प्रभावकारिता अझै असमान छ, र धेरै प्रधानाध्यापकहरू सहभागितामूलक तथा विश्वासमा आधारित विधिहरू प्रभावकारी रूपमा प्रयोग गर्न सक्षम देखिँदैनन् । त्यसैले, यस अध्ययनका उद्देश्यहरू प्रधानाध्यापकहरूको नेतृत्व शैलीले कसरी विश्वास निर्माण गर्छ र ती शैलीहरूले काठमाडौँका सार्वजनिक विद्यालयहरूमा विश्वासको संस्कृति विकास गर्न कसरी सहयोग पुऱ्याउँछन् भन्ने अवलोकन गर्नु हो ।

.....

हरेराम खत्री  
उपाधि उम्मेदवार

१ फाल्गुन २०८२

This dissertation entitled *Head Teachers' Contribution to Building Culture of Trust in Public Schools in Kathmandu: An Ethnographic Study* was presented by *Hare Ram Khatri* on date *13 February 2026*.

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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 represents is my original work, and it has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university.

.....

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13 February 2026

## DEDICATION

To my supportive family and inspiring friends, my encouraging teachers, my enlightened mentors, and my well-wishers, who either directly or indirectly supported me or showered me with their blessings, faith, unconditional love, and unceasing inspiration to complete my research journey so far.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this study to my parents and my wife, Shashi Dahal Khatri who patiently and unconditionally encouraged me throughout to complete this dissertation. She always encouraged me to do research in uplifting building culture of trust culture of public schools in Nepal. My love and respect you all forever. Thank you to almighty, God for your grace that has helped me moves ahead.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CSN	Collaborative Schools Network
DOE	District Education Office
ERO	Education Review Office
HT	Head Teacher
IT	Information and Technology
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
LEAP	Leadership for Educational Advancement and Practice
LMS	Learning Management System
LMS	Learning Management System
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PCL	Proficiency certificate Level
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
SCT	Social Cultural Theory
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Plan
TFN	Teach for Nepal
TLT	Transformational Leadership Theory
TPD	Teacher Professional Development

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an overview of the study, starting with a look at Nepal's school system and the role of school culture. It identifies the primary issue, which is the lack of research on how head teachers contribute to building a culture of trust among teachers, students, parents and the wider school community in public schools, and it discusses both the professional and personal experiences that motivated me to conduct this research. This chapter not only talks about the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the theoretical foundations. This ethnographic research design was adopted to explore the lived experiences, daily interactions, and cultural practices through which trust is constructed and sustained in public schools. This chapter builds the foundation for the detailed analysis that follows by giving the necessary background information.

#### **Scene Setting**

Every school has its own culture that shapes its identity and surroundings, which has significant influence on how students learn. I can reflect on myself when I was at school level I never decided to pursue my career in the teaching profession because nobody inspired me to be a teacher in the future. After completing my school level, I joined the Proficiency Certificate Level (PCL) in the management stream and I was preparing to make a career in the tourism. During intermediate level study I was offered a job in a teaching career. I suppose it might be a source of pocket money for study and other learning activities, so I accepted that offer and joined teaching in community school. In the passage of time, I started to get a flavor of teaching because I could interact with children. Their innocent behaviors attracted me to a teaching career. I felt that in teaching, I could make a future for students who are innocent in their heart. I thought it was one of the noble professions to guide, inspire, and motivate them to choose their desired future careers. Teaching motivation is rooted in human interaction, social responsibility, and commitment to students' holistic development.

Thinking this, I carried on my teaching profession and I decided to be a teacher because it is a social service-oriented job, and I could make a future for my students. I felt teaching at the school level is not only a job but it is a creation of all

the other professions. It is the foundation of other jobs, so I was determined to make my career in the teaching profession and started to work very devoted and committed way. I started to love my job and started to enjoy my profession. I have been working as a teacher for more than two decades and have more than a decade of teaching experience as a head teacher in public schools. I came to experience issues and problems of public schools and it built culture of trust. I have noted that the school culture, which includes norms, values, discipline, and traditions, has a profound influence on the belief systems of the stakeholders. According to Peterson (1998), school culture is a combination of norms, values, beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, symbols, and stories that characterize a school. Similarly, Maslowski (2001) describes it as the basic assumptions, norms, values, and cultural artifacts shared by school members. These cultural elements directly influenced a school's performance, building culture of trust in public schools.

The Kathmandu Public schools in Nepal are symbols of community aspirations and shared educational interests although the establishment of trust within the school setting is an issue that is difficult to achieve, especially concerning the cultural transformation and subsequent educational frameworks that inform the education of the younger generation (Bhatta, 2011; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Ministry of Education [MoE], 2016). Being a head teacher familiar with this setting drives me to explore how head teachers use their influence to build trust, change attitudes, and make public schools the preferred option. In my experience I realized that building culture of trust in school leadership plays a critical role in strengthening relationship among key stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and School Management Committee members. Believing culture in public schools has been reducing because of various reasons so this became a touchy topic for me as I experienced.

Nowadays normally, parents send their children to private school to show off to their neighbor. Normally, they don't evaluate a school by its results and performance. They consider public schools to be Nepali medium schools and private schools are English medium schools. They suppose that, if their children speak English fluently, they consider that their children got a better education, even though there are so many public schools that are performing well. These types of misconceptions should be avoided to gain trust in public school for the coming generation. There should be analysis and evaluation a subtle level of what is lacking

in public schools, why general people are not giving priority to send their children in public schools, why it is not becoming the first choice of schools for local parents. It should be analyzed and researched, considering that I have chosen this topic. It should be researched and get trust of parents in public schools. However, some of the public schools are doing better in their performance and gaining the trust of the public. Responding to the concern, this ethnographic research explored Kathmandu's public-school head teacher relationships, trust-building cultural and change belief system in public schools, influencing education and society.

### **Background of the Study**

Public schools are those that get their funding and are run by the government; they mainly serving the local communities and the population of the neighborhoods which is a representation of the education ambitious as well as social needs of the community. Public schools in Kathmandu are considered to be the most important educational destination in the entire country. It is after the debate of the context of public schooling and leadership that the school culture is presented as a contextual framework that influences the day-to-day practices, relations, and trust in the context of the public schools (Fullan, 2007). School culture incorporates the shared values, beliefs, norms, and traditions that influence the atmosphere and identity of a school community. These components influence the actions, interactions, and experiences of its stakeholders. A school's cultures, beliefs, and values define it apart from other schools (Cogaltay & Karadag, 2016). A study of the literature shows that school culture is still a topic of interest because it can have a positive or negative effect on how well the school works and how well the students do in school (Rai & Prakash, 2014).

Head teachers nurture trust among young people, parents, teachers, and the public as educational leaders. Their communication and leadership approaches greatly impact public schools' trust. As I am working as a head teacher in a public school, the lack a positive building culture of trust in public schools has always triggered me, so I decided to delve into research on this topic. This study looks at how head teachers try to build trust in public schools, change people's beliefs about them, and make a preferable choice for parents in Kathmandu. It is considered that the commitment and contribution of head teachers are crucial for building trust in public schools in Kathmandu. Head teachers play a pivotal role in establishing and nurturing a culture of trust between schools and the public. They are responsible for building strong

relationships and partnerships with parents, public leaders, and stakeholders (Schlaack, 2023). This trust is essential for the full growth, development, progress, and success of schools and all those who collaborate with them. Trust is the basis of a strong relationship, and in schools, the head teacher, teachers, students, and community members need to trust each other work harmoniously and get good results.

Building trust in public schools is considered to be very important for development in society today. One vital phenomenon for continuing and meeting social expectations is education. The public's trust is greatly influenced by head teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2020; Rijal et al., 2017). Over the past few years, most parents and guardians have preferred private school to the public schools because of high performing of the former schools in terms of academic performance and the fact that they focus on based on activities teaching and learning (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). They suppose that private schools are better than public schools in terms of the English language, extracurricular activities, and taking care of their children, so they are sending their children to private schools as my long tenure teaching experiences and observation reveal. The positive building culture of trust proved to be very useful for educational organizations (Panindranauth, 2023). Relationships that are genuine and sincere between all community members characterize a healthy school culture. Leadership is a prominent focus in research on organizational culture (Schneider et al., 2010). Public schools should carry on the competencies of holistic development towards their students and make it the first choice of schools. If it can happen, then only trust is transplanted into society, and cultural change can be seen in the upcoming new generation. Because of various reasons, school leaders such as openness to new thinking, talent for broadening minds, commitment to active listening, tolerance for intelligent risks, willingness to accept responsibility, and trust in team members are important qualities, that should be needed by head teachers in the cultural change of the public school. An ethnographical perspective illuminates the complex relationship between head teachers, trust-building, and cultural change.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent years, a lot of parents have lost trust in public schools and have sent their children to private schools instead (Adhikari & Pasa, 2021). There are numerous issues in the system of public education in Nepal that remain. This problem is especially clear in large cities, where the students attending public schools belong to

numerous ethnic and economic groups. The differences in performance between public and private schools are caused by a lack of resources, less motivated teachers, and traditional teaching methods (Carney & Bista, 2009; MoE, 2016). This makes people less likely to trust public schools. Poudel (2020) articulates that private schools in towns are better than public schools when it comes to accountability, parental satisfaction, and student achievement. The trust gap between private and public schools is getting bigger. Panindranauth (2023) further stated that parents choose private schools because they think they are better at managing and disciplining students. This scenario has made people less confident in public schools, which shows the need for the public education system to change its mindset and leadership. In order to resolve this problem, public schools need to change considerably in how they work and how the community perceives prevailing public schools.

However, limited ethnographic research has explored how head teachers construct and institutionalize trust within everyday school practices in Kathmandu's public schools. The majority of people agree that head teachers are essential to building trust between all members of the school community and establishing positive school cultures (Fullan, 2021; Poudel, 2020). However, there is not much research on this topic. Some of the problems that head teachers face today are students who don't have basic social and technological skills, are resistant to change, and remain rooted in old teaching methods that lead to what many people see as low academic achievement. The problem isn't just a lack of resources; it's also an enormous issue with leadership effectiveness in getting past these obstacles to build trust and make the cultural transition go smoothly.

The research explored head teacher leadership effectiveness through an examination of their specific duties and approaches which address their challenges in building trust-based positive organizational change. The research studied various stakeholder perspectives to determine effective visionary leadership strategies that head teachers could use to bridge the trust gap and fulfill community needs through public schools which would create meaningful educational impact for upcoming generations. There are many social and institutional factors that make people in Nepal not trust their public schools. Years of centralized government made it hard for people to be responsible and involved in their communities. Also, progress has been slow because of politics, changes in policy, and inadequate management. Parents often send their children to private schools because they think public schools are slow and

their children are not satisfied there. In order to better understand why this mistrust remains, how head teachers deal with these issues, and which educational actors have an influence on restoring trust and changing school culture, this study explored these topics.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of the study was to explore public schools' culture, getting public trust, the relationship among school atmosphere, head teachers' influence, and cultural change in belief systems.

### **Research Questions**

How do head teachers' leadership practices contribute to the cultural change of trust within public schools in Kathmandu?

### **Rationale of the Study**

In Nepal, the quality of schools, parental perceptions, and school enrollment remain problematic, and research indicates that parents of children attending a privately-run school have more positive attitudes towards school quality (Dangol & Lamichhane, 2024). Education system has a lot of problems, especially in urban areas like Kathmandu, where schools have students from many different social, economic, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. From what I have observed in Nepali public schools, the quality of leadership and the extent to which trust exists among teachers, parents and students strongly influence how the schools operate. This assumption guides this study. Despite several changes to Nepal's education system, many public schools in Kathmandu still have challenges building a culture of trust among parents, students, teachers, and the general public. Through this study, I wanted to understand how the leadership approach of head teachers can lift the reputation of public schools and gradually affect the way parents and the communities at large perceive and believe in public schools.

Effective leadership has been demonstrated to directly impact student outcomes and overall school performance (Leithwood et al., 2008); however, this aspect remains underdeveloped in numerous public schools. One of the most important problems is that many public school students do not do well enough to meet expectations. Some of the things that make this happen are not enough resources, not enough new teaching methods, and teachers not being motivated, which all make the quality gap between public and private schools bigger (Carney & Bista, 2009). Another big problem is that a lot of students drop out or switch schools, which is a

significant concern. In urban areas, the problem is even more visible, as many parents believe that private schools are better and choose to shift their children. When students from marginalized communities drop out, it damages the reputation of public schools and allows long-standing inequalities to continue (MOE, 2016).

According to Pherali (2013), the problem of cultural exclusion continues to persist. Kathmandu's public schools bring together children from a wide range of ethnic groups, languages, and economic situations. Still, the usual hierarchical practices within these schools often fail to acknowledge such diversity, which ends up silencing parents and reducing the community's involvement in school matters. In many cases, the relationship between schools and the community is still weak because people often only communicate with each other or make symbolic gestures instead of having real conversations. Consequently, parents and local stakeholders often perceive a disconnection from the educational process, thereby eroding their trust in public schools (Bhatta, 2011). Subsequently, a lack of leadership skills is a major issue. The preparation that head teachers receive tends to revolve around administrative responsibilities, leaving little space for learning how to build trust, shape a collaborative school environment, or apply inclusive practices. This difference, as pointed out by Leithwood et al. (2008), limits their ability to respond to long-standing structural issues. These issues highlight the importance of the reforms that would not prioritize the numbers and organizational charts, but relocate the focus to the community-centered work and the leadership based on trust. Building trust and encouraging cultural change can, therefore, be very important in changing public schools into places where everyone is welcome, everyone works together, and everyone learns well.

At the same time, the challenges and opportunities faced by head teachers of public schools in Kathmandu in terms of building trust and changing culture have not received adequate attention. A lot of work is done by these schools to promote freedom in education. It is essential to study the influence that the head teachers have on public schools because it may significantly affect how they manage. Understanding how head teachers can foster trust and contribute to a culture change in Kathmandu, Nepal's public schools are crucial for this research (Poudel, 2020). Despite the growing significance of trust and cultural change in educational literature, there is not enough comprehensive ethnographic research explaining how head teachers influence this scenario in Kathmandu's public schools. The findings of this

study could significantly influence the regulations and operations of schools. It could assist us to understand about what head teachers need to do bring about cultural change and build trust in public schools, such as what methods, guidelines, or support they require to provide. Public schools should address the expectation of society in terms of quality education, considering various aspects such as English language efficiency for students, different types of extracurricular activities and individual care of each and every scholar. In the relevant literature, the phrase *educational leadership* is frequently characterized as an impact process that deals with goal development (Theofilidis, 2021). In this way, the school's head teacher takes on different roles and duties that are both legal and ideological. Given that the legislative dimension of leadership is in the realm of the director's administrative duty, it is vital to discuss the ideological dimension of leadership in the context of this work since it affects how school culture is formed (Theofilidis, 2021). Of course, the school leader is needed.

As a researcher, I am fascinated by head teachers' multifaceted influence in building trust and changing public schools in Kathmandu. This study is important to explore trustworthiness issues and concerns of society in public schools in Kathmandu. Because good leadership affects student outcomes, I wanted to study how head teachers manage challenges like poor performance and cultural exclusion. This research observed the challenges, possibilities, and support mechanisms of these activities to influence policy-making and leadership development plans to improve educational quality and public education trust in Kathmandu.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the culture of trust within the particular setting of public schools in Kathmandu, Nepal. This study states that a culture of trust represents a situation in which everyone involved, including students, parents, teachers and community members, trusts that educational leaders, especially head teachers are truthful unbiased and responsible. This sort of culture promotes people to get along and work together as well as to talk openly and make decisions as a group. The study intended to look how the leadership styles of head teachers promote cultural change and build trust within their schools. The study looked at a number of trust-related issues, such as being responsible for the management of schools, treating people with respect behaving morally, being active and solving conflicts. These qualitative themes consist the human and relational aspects of

developing trust that influence how schools operate on a regular schedule and how they interact with the community as a whole.

Conversely, the research did not consider all elements of trust that are not tied to school leadership or culture. As an example, it did not emphasize technical trust with respect to financial auditing systems, trust in external political or bureaucratic processes and general interpersonal trust among students. The same is true for psychological notions of trust, such as trust in non-school-related abstract organizations, cognitive biases, or personality characteristics. The study focused on the leadership-based, relational, and cultural aspects of trust that are most relevant to the roles of head teachers in Kathmandu's public schools. Consequently, the study's delimitation enabled a more comprehensive examination of the ways in which trust catalyzes for cultural change in public schools through leadership practices. Although this method provides valuable insights into the social and organizational dynamics of trust, it also suggests that the results are not intended for application outside of the specific community and social context that were explored.

### **Chapter Organization**

This dissertation is divided into five chapters, each of which helps the reader logically proceed from choosing the research topic to outlining, discussing, and drawing conclusions from the findings. Chapter one gives an overview of the study's background and context, its issue statement, the research questions and objectives, the significance of the research, and its limitations. It illustrates how important head teachers are in creating school culture and makes the case for looking into how to build trust in public schools. Chapter two discusses in extensive detail the relevant literature. The research contextualizes trust, leadership, and cultural change in education within two essential theoretical frameworks: social constructivist theory and transformational leadership theory. It also critically evaluates national and international research related to these topics. This chapter constructs the conceptual framework that will guide the research. Likewise, chapter three explains why the ethnographic method was used and gives an overview of the study's methodological design. It states about the study sites and subjects, the ways data was collected such as through interviews, observations, and reflective journals and after that data was analyzed.

The chapter also addresses ethical considerations, researcher reflexivity, and the limitations of the chosen methods. Chapter Four reports the findings of the

fieldwork, describing how community engagement supports the growth of trust, how various strategies contribute to that process, how school culture influences trust building and how expectations of public schools have evolved. These findings are perceived in comparison with the past research and explained in terms of the Transformational Leadership Theory of Vygotsky and Social-Cultural Theory, connecting the practical cases with the general theoretical concepts. Chapter Five provides a final overview of the study's main reflections, conclusions, and implications. It makes evident that head teachers play a major part in forming school culture and that trust is the core element on which a healthy school environment depends. The chapter then explains the practical implications for head teachers, teachers, parents, SMCs, and policy developers, and concludes by recommending several areas for further study related to leadership and the development of trust in Nepal's public education system.

### **Chapter Summary**

The discussion in this chapter began with the research by offering a brief overview of Nepal's public education system, focusing on how school culture has changed it and how hard it was to develop trust in Kathmandu's public schools, especially in Budhanilkantha municipality. At the start of the chapter, I describe my own journey as a teacher and school leader, and how those experiences gradually pushed me toward this research topic. The chapter under discussion is the background of the study, the problem it aims to explore, and why exploring the role of head teachers in strengthening trust in public schools is very important. At the same time I have discussed the study's purpose, the research questions that guided it, and its scope and limitations. The chapter also made it obvious that the research is more about the cultural and relational aspects of trust in school leadership than the financial or political ones. Additionally, the research's structure was shown, giving an overview of the chapters that would come after it. Chapter one set the stage for the study through placing the research problem in perspective, explaining why it is significant, and describing the analysis that was to follow.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of relevant literature on head teachers' roles in building culture of trust in public schools in both global and national settings. The qualitative research aims to determine the leadership that provides a supportive school environment. The subject matter of Head Teachers' leadership in building a culture of trust in Public Schools in Kathmandu has generated considerable interest within the field of education. The role of school head teachers is highlighted based on the many perspectives through which they are seen. A comprehensive articulation has been conducted on the responsibilities of school head teachers in abroad sense as well as the particular duties stated in national educational laws. Through a thorough evaluation of current literature, a research gap has been discovered.

#### **Thematic Review**

This thematic review analyzes the academic literature regarding the roles of head teachers in building a culture of trust in public schools, highlighting both global and Nepali perspectives. Research has indeed indicated that trust plays a key role in good leadership, a positive school culture and building good relationships within the school community. Many studies point out that trust grows when leaders act ethically, think creatively, and work closely with others. Even though policy documents clearly list the duties of head teachers, there is still not much research on how they build trust in Kathmandu's public schools. Because of this lack of evidence, an ethnographic approach is needed to explore how head teachers carry out trust-building in practice.

#### **School Culture**

According to Deal and Peterson (1998), school culture is formed by the common values, habits, expectations, and ways of working that collectively create the school's environment. It affects how teachers work together, how decisions are made, how lessons are planned, and how the community sees the school. A supportive and constructive classroom environment fosters collaboration, commitment, dedication, and a sense of purpose. As mentioned by Jerald (2006), articulating that a good school culture builds trust, collaboration, teamwork, and continuous improvement. Likewise, Thapa (2013) says that a healthy school culture also includes components like

relationships, teaching and learning methods, school safety, and the setting of the school.

MoE (2016) states that making schools more welcoming and safer is one of the best ways to improve public schools. However, improper teamwork, lack of parental involvement, and distrust from prior political and managerial challenges are the main reasons why many public schools are still having trouble. So, understanding school culture has significance for figuring out how trust can be built or broken in public schools.

### **Building a Culture of Trust in School**

Building trust is an important part of making schools good places to learn. Bryk and Schneider (2002) argue that respect, personal regard, competence, and integrity are the four most important things that make up relationship trust. When school stakeholders interact with each other in a straightforward, regular, and understanding way, trust builds. People are losing their trust in public schools because they aren't exposed, their leaders aren't transparent, and they rarely speak to parents adequately (Bhatta, 2011). For this reason, building trust has become an important component of being a leader. Research indicates that head teachers must cultivate several essential components of trust-building.

### ***School-Community Collaboration***

Schools should establish trust through their partnership with local communities. The Nepali public schools develop collective accountability through their practice of holding regular community events and their School Management Committees (SMCs), and their policy of maintaining open dialogue with parents (Aryal, 2021). These collaborations foster mutual trust and promote community ownership of schools.

### ***Parental Involvement***

PTAs, school events, how decisions are made, and help in the classroom are all ways that parents can get involved and make the school more open and less suspicious of the administration. When parents feel heard and respected, they are more likely to trust public schools.

### ***Academic and Extra-Academic Success of Students***

A school achieves success through the academic achievements and outside activities that its students accomplish. The organization of extracurricular activities together with achievement recognition and individual student assistance, helps

develop community pride and confidence (Poudel, 2020). Parents develop trust when they believe the school provides their children with additional resources, including attention, caring, and power.

### ***Collaboration and Professional Support for Teachers***

Head teachers establish school trust through their support of team collaboration and their promotion of mutual respect and their development of professional learning communities (Sackney et al., 2000). Teachers who receive assistance use their help to enhance their school environment which leads parents and students to develop trust in their teaching abilities. The research identified the core elements that define the conceptual limits of building trust-based organizational culture.

### **Role of Head Teachers in Building a Culture of Trust**

The roles of head teachers have changed significantly as expectations for learning have changed. Nowadays, head teachers are community mobilizers, cultural leaders, and educational leaders (Balyer, 2014; Mulford, 2003). Their constitutional responsibilities in Nepal are still mostly administrative in nature however their performance is becoming more and more dependent on how well they can create a culture of trust and cooperation in the educational environment. Murphy et al. (2006), highlight that head teachers must devote a lot of dedication to establishing connections, motivating teachers, and ensuring that lessons represent the best possible standard to gain the trust of the community. Hebib and Zunic-Pavlovic (2018) argue that head teachers shape the culture of a school by changing the social and psychological environment.

Research has shown that effective head teachers in the community schools of Nepal do a number of things to promote trust: keeping channels of communication, money management and decision-making transparent, inviting teachers, parents and the SMC to participate in governance, not engaging in political activities within the educational institution and being a model of good behavior. Physical and emotional presence involves spending time in the school environment, addressing issues promptly, and maintaining open communication with parents through meetings, community programs, and home visits. Trust is also maintained when the head teachers can admit success, handle disagreements tactfully and provide the necessary support to the teachers. In community schools where trust has often been limited, such practices help head teachers play a central role in shaping and strengthening trust.

### **Head Teachers' Trust and Social Problems**

In the context of Nepal's public schools, developing trust among teachers, students, parents, and the broader community has a direct effect on school performance. The academic performance, the involvement of students, and motivation among teachers are more likely to be high in schools that establish a trustful environment (Celik, 2010; Wang, 2016). The Head teachers' ability to cultivate trust is essential for nurturing a positive school culture and enhancing student achievement, particularly in Nepal's community schools, which often face political pressure, ineffective leadership strategies, and continual comparisons to private schools. Building trust requires a series of visible, relational, and consistent actions by head teachers, rather than a solitary act (Education Review Office [ERO], 2019; Poudel et al, 2024).

Maslowski (2001) and MoE (2016) contend that effective communication strategy, collaborative planning, and participatory leadership significantly influence the development of public schools. In Kathmandu, trust is built by the effective head teachers who conduct themselves in a moral manner, shield their schools against political pressure, and are open with parents and teachers.

### **Key Building Culture of Trust Techniques**

By engaging with each other, schools and the local community can develop mutual trust. It is in Nepal that partnerships between schools and their local communities are viewed as a prime technique in building up trust. While building a relationship with the SMC, PTA, and the Ward Education Committee and municipality-level education department is vital, the head and the committees must not forget that they too have a part to play in this regard. The benefits of community participation in school development are clearly visible at the schools I visited. Communities take charge in the planning and building of new school facilities, the introduction of annual academic calendars and monitoring student attendance. Their involvement helped build trust, which led to better student outcomes and more students signing up.

Jana Uddhar School, where CSN has conducted LEAP program in Kathmandu became a model school by working closely with parents, local communities in the neighborhood, and municipality-level groups to create a peaceful and welcoming place for students to learn. People in the community trusted each other more when they made decisions together and had clear financial processes. Head teachers are

regularly involved in planning community events, open forums and putting school performance reports on display for everyone to see. Parents make frequent visits to the school and join various events to ensure that governance and financial practices remain open and accountable. Through these shared interactions, trust grows personally among individuals, intellectually through shared understanding, and institutionally in the school as a whole.

### ***Parents as Sources of Trust***

Trust in the public schools is directly influenced by the rate and degree of parental control. The literature review and policy of research in Nepal have shown that sustained interaction between head teachers and parents with the help of inclusive SMC activities, increases parental trust and the sense of collective ownership in the development of the school (Aryal, 2021; Katel & Katel, 2024; MoE, 2016)). Most of the schools in Budhanilkantha frequently conducted home visit programs whenever it was necessary. These programs allowed both teachers and parents to facilitate easier to communicate with each other regarding their children.

During these days, they talk to parents about learning policies, assess how well students are doing, and set expectations with parents. Head teachers build trust by conducting regular meetings with parents, putting clear agendas, and regular meetings with parents, quick contact with them through Viber groups, community networks, even from school apps, text messages, giving parents behaviour comments, progress reports, and updates on what's going on in the classroom.

### ***Trust Based on the Academic and Extracurricular Achievement of Students***

Parents and communities look at how well the students are doing to judge a Head teacher's trustworthiness. Whenever students are disciplined, determined, participate in extra-curricular activities, and excel in school, they are trusted more by the community. The Jana Uddhar School's SEE performance was greatly improved when the HT introduced programs that assist teachers and students after school in promoting success in extracurricular activities like athletics, dance, music and public speaking, which helped students, feel confident and also establish trust. Schools receiving assistance from Teach for Nepal (TFN) registered more students, improved their English and math and the number of interested students in school increased. All of these things helped to rebuild trust in the community.

### ***Teachers Collaboration and Professionalism***

Teachers are more likely to trust Head Teachers who act professionally, encourage cooperation and do what is right. Teachers' trust grows when they are respected and given chances to get involved in meaningful ways (Sackney et al., 2000). CSN's collaboration with community and public schools which has been used in several schools, shows how working together and being a leader can help students feel more confident. The collaborative model increases the expectations placed on teachers to plan together. Schools implementing CSN approaches have observed higher teacher satisfaction, lower absenteeism among students, and greater reliability in day-to-day teaching.

### ***Getting Community Support and School Improvement***

In today's competitive education environment in Nepal, a school's name and fame are essential not just for student enrolment but also for gaining the trust of parents and community members. When head teachers lead with integrity and protect the school's values, they contribute directly to building a positive reputation. Schools that worked with TFN saw a positive shift in how people thought about public schools and more people getting involved in the community. Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) indicate that trust is the foundation for cultural change, which happens over time. In Nepal's community schools, trust is a key part of the culture that helps the school flourish, a way for leaders to lead, and a source of motivation. Trust is necessary for even the best-planned reforms, like SSDP, PPP models and teacher capacity programs, to work. Those head teachers who actively try to strengthen trust within their schools demonstrate that trust is the foundation for changing school culture and supporting higher levels of student success.

The stories that come out of Budhanilkantha Municipality, CSN-model schools, and TFN-supported schools like Jana Uddhar confirm that trust is a decisive factor in the success of Nepal's public schools. Head teachers, who are always open and honest, include the community, and make decisions that are best for students, usually build stronger relationships with teachers, parents, and other people in the community. This has a direct effect on the school's reputation, the motivation of teachers, and the learning of students. These experiences show that trust-building leadership is central to shaping school culture and ensuring long-term improvement.

### **Trust Building for School Culture and School Performance**

School culture affects head teacher performance. A good or harmful school culture determines its success or failure. Deal and Peterson (1998) found that a school's culture enhances everyday behaviour and highlights its values and priorities. It fosters devotion and affinity with the school head teacher. Positive school culture promotes hard effort, accomplishment, trust, problem-solving, and student as well as stakeholder learning. School culture either boosts or lowers teacher and student collaboration, teamwork, and self-efficacy.

School culture develops everything, including student success and learning (Wagner, 2006). School culture, in addition to official classroom curriculum, is the hidden curriculum. Celik (2010) suggests that a healthy school culture with shared norms and values enhances academic achievement. The head teacher of the school encourages everyone to work towards high educational standards and to accept differences in others. A good culture boosts students' and instructors' dignity and confidence. This leads to a culture of professionalism, contentment, and mutual respect (Jerald, 2006). The school culture impacts everyday events and may either promote or hinder progress. School culture is crucial for progress (Saphier & King, 1985).

The culture of a school may either encourage instructors to enhance their teaching or discourage those who strive to do things differently. It encourages head teachers to collaborate or hinder those seeking such help. School culture may either promote high expectations for students or convey a message that they are not capable of achieving more (National Staff Development Council [NSDC], 1998). Schools have identities according to their culture (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). A strong school culture fosters social bonds and sets proper behaviour norms. It performs poorly if weak and poisonous. A positive school culture boosts student and staff happiness and morale. Research indicates that school culture is the key aspect in successful school restructuring (Stolp & Smith, 1995). School culture fosters teacher collaboration and professional community. Effective school culture is essential for achieving common vision and mission statements via shared effort.

Maslowski (2001) has cited numerous authors to abstract school culture-performance relationships. A culture that involves teachers in decision-making via a participatory method might improve school performance. A culture with similar vision and objectives fosters unity among instructors, leading to consistent practice.

Collegiality and teamwork among instructors contribute to achieving common objectives. Study links school culture to school success. My research aimed to explore how head teachers influence a positive building culture of trust. To this, my research was targeted at promoting belief systems and the desired culture. It is necessary to change the mindset, attitudes, perceptions, hearts, minds, and talents of educational leaders. The culture of a school is firmly rooted and can only be changed gradually by systematic changes in the school's environment (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). To change their behaviour, people must first have the heart to do so. Then, people must comprehend what behaviour change entails and possess the required skills or mindset to effect change (Mezirow, 1992). Nowadays, most public schools are facing trust issues and a lack of cultural change. The worth of leadership in fostering trust and cultural change is one of the themes that emerged.

In a public practice, teachers share and critically discover their practice in an ongoing, reflective, collaborative, learning-oriented, and growth-promoting way (Sackney et al., 2000). Head teachers are an important phenomenon to drive the appropriate and justifiable system; they should view society through different lenses, norms, values, and traditions in contemporary society in the 21st century, through the society at the grassroots level of educational institutions via educational leaders. My research focused on building trust and value systems in public schools through this cultural change that happens in public schools in Kathmandu.

### **Empirical Review**

There is a lack of empirical studies specifically focused on the influences of head teachers in fostering trust-based cultural change in public schools in Kathmandu. However, there is research providing a valuable understanding of related subjects. Tschannen-Moran conducted a study to examine the importance of teacher trust in promoting changes in teaching practices (Suwalska, 2020). The research highlights that cultivating a trusting rapport with the school head teacher has a lesser role in making changes in teaching practices compared to fostering trust among teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). A further study conducted underscores the significance of collaborative leadership and a professional network in diminishing teachers' confidence in education (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). An empirical study has developed the responsibilities of head teachers in public schools in Kathmandu, providing valuable insights. This section discusses the findings of surveys, interviews, observations, and case studies conducted to examine the practical aspects of head

teachers' roles. Empirical research often explores the assessment of confidence in school leadership among many stakeholders, including teachers, students, and parents.

This section reports the study's findings and considers their relevance for head teachers. My observations in Kathmandu's educational institutions helped me explore how head teachers respond to cultural demands and carry out their leadership roles. The study takes into consideration in a comprehensive manner the role of non-traditional teachers in the public schools both in terms of the challenges they have to deal with and their contributions.

The functioning of a Nepalese community school is influenced by the extent to which its community has a strong social bond, the conduct of the school's leaders, the extent to which parents are involved in the school and the level of trust. The next section brings these studies together to illustrate how head teachers contribute to trust-building and to better school outcomes.

### **Trust and Community-School Partnership**

Research from Nepal highlights that trust in community schools depends heavily on the strength of the school–community relationship. Bhatta (2011) observed that low levels of communication and parental involvement led to a noticeable drop in trust. Conversely, parents who were constantly updated and had regular meetings with teachers were more comfortable and continued to be more engaged in the school. Similarly, Aryal (2021) demonstrates the development of trust and accountability in Nepal schools through the involvement of local communities and the involvement of all in the SMC practices. The research shows that people care more about making schools better when school facilities involves collaborative decision-making. Taken together, these studies point to the importance of regular communication, openness, and shared accountability in building trust

### **Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement**

In order to build trust in Nepali schools, parents need to be involved. Parents are more likely to trust school officials when they are involved in making decisions and getting regular updates on their children's education (Poudel et al., 2024). Involved parents help their children do well in school by keeping an eye on their study habits and school environment, have higher achievement rates, more students attending, and improved educational results (Ghimire, 2019). Such developments were strongly interconnected with the development of trust-based partnership between

parents and teachers. The facts highly indicate the fact that the involvement of parents is crucial in instilling trust and improving performance in Nepal.

### **Building Trust and Head Teachers Leadership**

Research conducted under various circumstances in the real world demonstrates that leadership is a crucial component of gaining trust and performing better in school. Rijal et al. (2017) observed that when head teachers lead collaboratively and follow proper guidelines, teachers tend to be more content, are absent less often, and deliver better quality of teaching. Teachers are more likely to trust head teachers who are loyal to them, support them with their work, and keep administrative procedures open. Ghimire (2019) argues that the attitude of political neutrality in the decisions made by leaders plays a significant role in determining the trust people have in schools. Head teachers who do not let politics get in the way or show partiality make a safe and professional environment that gets teachers and community members to work together. Poudel (2020) states that in case the head teachers perform the valuable leadership activity orchestrating the lessons based on the data, managing the teachers, and supervising the lessons, schools have better academic performance and parents tend to be more pleased with the leadership of the school. Taken together, these studies reinforce the belief that trust in school leaders is a key factor in improving safety and academic performance in schools in Nepal.

### **Trust Student Achievement and Educational Environment**

What the study revealed shows that student learning increased significantly when the head teachers were effective educators and established a school culture that prompted teachers and students to support each other and communicate with one another (Adhikari 2022; Pant & Shiwakoti, 2025). According to Budhanilkantha Municipality (2021), schools that applied open government, engaged the parent community, and gave students an opportunity to plan activities experienced a substantial increase in the effectiveness of student learning. A number of the ways are available by which leaders are held accountable and those are capable of creating trust and enhancing academic performance according to monitoring, SIP, collaboration, and community reporting. When the findings are combined, the results indicate that trust acts as the mediator between leadership behaviour, school culture and student academic performance of Kathmandu schools.

## **Improving Schools Supported by PPPs and NGOs**

Public–Private Partnerships and NGO-supported school development efforts have contributed meaningfully to trust-building in Nepali schools. Results of the TFN (2020) placement study revealed that school students who had fellows in schools performed better in math and English. Close relationships between teachers and parents and students and the unceasing support of TFN fellows, were the keys to this. The idea of collaboration and the importance of building relationships within TFE also boosted the confidence of teachers.

As noted by the Collaborative Schools Network (2020), assistance from CSN has helped schools like Jana Uddhar Secondary School in Kathmandu build stronger relationships with parents, improve teacher collaboration, and increase transparency in decision-making. CNS's Whole Schools Improvement Model promotes trust by involving the community, encouraging data-informed teaching, reshaping the school culture, and mentoring school leaders. Together, these examples highlight that trust-focused leadership, supported by external collaboration, can meaningfully improve school culture and academic achievement in Nepal.

### **LEAP Model**

The LEAP program that was launched by the Collaborative Schools Network in Budhanilkantha municipality might be viewed as a promising chance of making a big difference in Nepalese schools with the help of trust-based leadership and continuous support of teachers.

#### ***Better Quality of Teaching***

The LEAP program equips teachers with more than 1000 structured and curriculum-aligned lesson plans. These tools support clearer instruction and reduce the need for rote-based teaching. Parents who saw more interesting things happening at school experienced more trust.

#### ***Ongoing Support with Teaching***

LEAP project managers, who live in the area, visit classrooms once a week to give teachers practical guidance and feedback immediately. This intensive support builds strong trust between head teachers, mentors, and teachers.

#### ***More Trust in Teachers***

Because of conducting teaching and learning activities with lesson plans aligned to the national curriculum, teachers have felt encouraged to experiment with new strategies, which has helped them become more confident and effective in

managing their classes. This increase in confidence has slowly led to a healthier and more positive school culture.

### ***Strong Community-Government Collaboration***

In Budhanilkantha, LEAP worked alongside the local government, helping to split the costs of upgrading several local schools. These long-term plans rely on all those people who are involved working together and exchanging information regularly with progress being reviewed frequently. Through this collaborative process, trust has developed, and we can be sure that the progress will be maintained.

### ***Cultural Transfers that are Beneficial***

The schools that have implemented the LEAP approach have observed a number of positive changes which include parents becoming more satisfied, students attending classes more frequently, teaching becoming more regular and classroom behavior being better. With steady progress visible in these areas, trust among stakeholders begins to build naturally. The LEAP study emphasizes how a mix of quality teaching resources, guidance for teachers, and collaboration with local government can bring about meaningful cultural shifts in Nepal's public schools. The research undertaken in Nepal has revealed more than once that trust-building leadership is among the components of school improvement. The schools tend to perform better whenever they develop positive relationships with communities, involve parents, practice ethical and instructional leadership, and create collaboration working cultures. Trust strengthens teaching, motivates teachers, supports student outcomes, and improves the reputation of the school. The achievements seen in the LEAP model, PPP projects, CSN activities, and initiatives led by Budhanilkantha Municipality clearly demonstrate this.

The study suggests that in a context like Finland, where professional relationships and collective responsibility are emphasized, the need for individual trust in the head teacher may be less significant (Rajbhandari et al., 2022). In the empirical review of the function of head teachers in fostering public cultural change, a variety of theoretical frameworks and theories might be employed in this research. This framework points out the need for a clear school vision, achievable goals, intellectual encouragement, personalized guidance, shared values, strong academic expectations, and involvement of staff in important decisions (Poudel, 2020). In this regard, head teachers and other transformational leaders are critical in establishing trust and developing the culture in the public schools. The other theoretical stance is

the belief of teachers about their capacities, the level of their knowledge, and the assistance they get regarding professional learning. From this angle, cultural change and trust in public schools depend on strengthening teachers' confidence, knowledge, and chances for growth. The cultural change does not occur immediately, but it continues to transform the manner in which schools conduct their activities and engage with their neighborhoods. Drakaki (2022) explains that culture is defined by what the community believes and values, but how people interpret and comprehend the world in which they live also defines their culture. All the activities that take place within the schools and the dynamic environment around them shape the prevailing atmosphere present within the school.

The head teacher, the students, and the parents all need to talk to each other in a certain way, not just the student being there. Residents in the area lack confidence in the public schools extremely. Public schools are like a theatre for political parties. Numerous studies supported the significant correlation between school climate and academic achievement (Griffin et al., 2017). Knowledge, caliber, and competency are considered crucial components of driving public schools. In my opinion sources of knowledge depend on human minds. The concerned bodies have to build rapport at the public and policy levels. There should be more dialogue about delimiting these problems and solving contemporary issues and concerns.

The reviews chosen for this have made a significant contribution to our knowledge of the subject in journals. The assessment also emphasized the value of cultural competence and the necessity for school leaders to comprehend and appreciate the cultural diversity of students, staff, and families. Thomas (2019); According to the study, school leaders had a significant narration on a strong school culture and the advancement of equality and social justice. The report also emphasized how crucial teacher support is and how continual professional growth is required to enable a cultural shift. *Organizational Culture and Leadership in Public Schools* (Yang, 2020), in this study, the relationship between leadership and organizational culture in public schools is investigated. At Pleasant School belief system and culture encourage academic accomplishment. These studies emphasized the crucial role played by head teachers in developing belief systems in public schools, creating a supportive learning environment, and encouraging academic success, equity, and social justice. The studies further indicated that the issue of empowering head teachers, fostering teamwork, and aiding them in their continuous

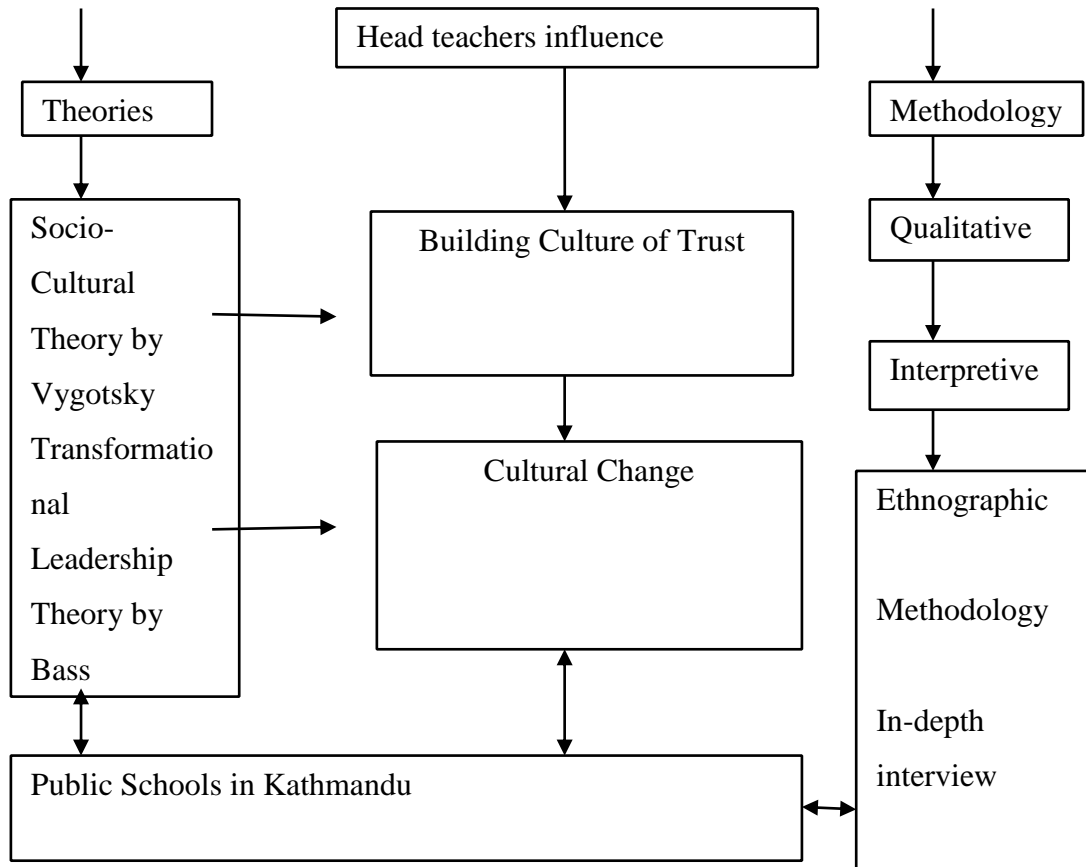
professional growth are all key components in introducing cultural change in public schools regarding trust-building culture.

While studies on this topic were few, related research emphasizes teacher trust and collaborative leadership. Based on empirical Transformational Learning Theory and Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, transformational leadership emphasizes head teachers' roles in school culture and academic performance. There is a time and content gap in the details of these topics. Insufficient empirical validation of theoretical frameworks and head teachers' culture change strategies and effects. The reports emphasized the need to empower head teachers and encourage collaboration to change public school culture and develop trust.

### **Theoretical Review**

The expectations and responsibilities of the head teachers in public schools are supported by several theories in leadership such as Transformational Leadership Theory and Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Leadership Theory. My interest was to examine how the head teachers contribute to building trust and changing the culture of the public schools in Kathmandu. The dynamics of trust-building in educational leadership can be explained through transformational leadership theory and Vygotsky's theory of socio-cultural theory, especially the one that places trust as a social capital. As a researcher, I hoped to know how the head teachers can help to instill a culture of trust and transform the culture of the Kathmandu public schools. In this theoretical discussion, I explored the different strategies and frameworks that the head teachers could use to support the culture of trust and development in the public schools. Transformative Leadership Theory was used as the theoretical foundation of the study. It contended that the development of trust and cultural change in public schools depends on transformational leadership (Poudel, 2020). These theoretical underpinnings give us a platform for understanding the dynamics of the head teacher's role in fostering trust and cultural change in public schools.

**Figure 1**  
*Conceptual Framework*



The above-mentioned diagram implies the theoretical framework of my research work. The conceptual framework represents a concise summary of my whole research. The research explored the influence of head teachers on the development of a culture of trust in public schools in Kathmandu. The study was conducted using an ethnographic research approach, which is based on a qualitative research design. I gathered data by conducting comprehensive interviews, engaging with the participants for an extended period of time, and maintaining sustained interaction. I believe that the influence of head teachers helps in building a culture of trust in public schools and helps to create positive change in the belief system in public schools. A theoretical framework also acts as the foundation for a research study because it is a *blueprint* or *guide* for the research (Grant & Osanloo, 2015). The researcher could get the proper guidance for his/her research work to move toward the right path to confirm the theory in practice (Khadka, 2017). Taking insight from the entire literature review, I

developed the procedures in constructing an understanding to explore the role of the head teachers in the influence of school culture in public schools, a positive culture of trust.

I have developed different themes created after prolonged observation, thick descriptions, reflectivity, and in-depth interviews with my research participants. Based on my thematic, empirical, and policy review, I constructed the knowledge for my research. My participants' stories through the prolonged observation help me to explore the influence of school culture on belief system in the community in terms of head teachers' influence in community connectedness, the influence of the teachers, and building a culture of trust. Transformative Learning Theory and Social-Cultural Theory provided me a clear lens for exploring why it is essential to know expectations from public schools. These theories are used in my research work, enabling me to think logically and encouraging me to act reflectively throughout my research work. The qualitative method is employed under ethnography with an interpretive paradigm to reveal head teachers, SMC chairpersons, teachers and parents' stories, experiences, and perceptions of school culture and its influence on the belief system of the community. I interpreted the findings of the study and analyzed them through the lens of Transformational Leadership Theory and Social-Cultural Theory.

### **Transformational Leadership Theory**

Transformational leadership is a flexible and powerful way to lead in education. It focuses on getting everyone to work towards a common goal to get students and teachers to do their best (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This leadership style, created by Bernard Bass in the 1980s, encourages followers to commit to a shared vision, which has created an atmosphere that is open to new ideas and changes within an organization (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders could be considered those who can motivate and get more out of their followers than they expected. This creates a culture of high expectations for students, teachers, and leaders alike (Leithwood, 1994). This way of thinking is all about inspiring, motivating, and helping others reach their full potential. It is a strong framework for making real changes in schools (Fullan, 2001).

Important parts of Transformational Leadership are the *Four I's*. There are four main parts of Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory that most people know about: *Idealized Influence*: Transformational leaders are like role models who show others the values and actions they want to see in them. Their honesty and dedication

make their followers trust and respect them (Bass, 1985). *Inspirational Motivation*: These leaders share a strong vision of the future that speaks to everyone in the school community. They involve teams in working towards shared objectives by providing them with feedback with lots of positive terms and thus providing the team with a sense of purpose and a sense of collaboration (Leithwood, 1994).

*Intellectual Stimulation*: Transformational leaders develop an atmosphere that makes people get creative, think and problem solve. This in schools implies assisting teachers to experiment with new methods of instruction that challenges the current mode of operation and explore new modes of student learning (Brookfield, 1995).

*Individualized Consideration*: This part is based on the ability of the Leader to identify and address individual needs, strengths and goals of the members of school community. According to Leithwood (1994), transformational leaders act as mentors and coaches who assist individuals in development through providing them with individual attention and learning opportunities. These four elements work together to help public schools' head teachers build trust and start change in the culture of belief system in public schools.

Transformational leadership is especially useful in schools because it can help both teachers and students do their best (Leithwood et al., 2008). These kinds of leaders give students and teachers a sense of direction and belonging, which makes them, feel valued and motivated in school (Kruse & Louis, 1997). Not only does this method help students do well in school, but it also helps the whole school community (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Transformational leadership encourages teachers to try out new ways of teaching by creating an environment of trust and support (Spillane, 2006). Research consistently shows that transformational leadership leads to better learning outcomes for students and more job satisfaction for teachers (Leithwood, 1994). In addition, this style of leadership puts more and more emphasis on a shared vision, shared responsibility, and the overall growth of everyone at all levels of the school (Fullan, 2001).

Ways to change culture and build trust in public schools. School leaders, especially head teachers, are very important for building trust and shaping the culture of the school (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). The principles of transformational leadership are a good fit for strategies that work for changing culture and building trust.

Building a Collaborative Culture through Transformational Leadership is to make schools better and build trust in the community. Transformational leadership

principles are closely linked to the steps that need to be taken. Transformational leaders build trust between employees and stakeholders by setting a moral example, encouraging teamwork, and working towards a common goal. One of the most important things that transformative leaders do is create a culture of cooperation in which teachers, parents, and community members feel valued and involved in the way schools are managed. A culture of collaboration encourages open communication, group transparency, and shared decision-making. All of these things are important for building trust. Transformational head teachers promote collaboration in Nepali community schools, where political influence and hierarchical decision-making often make it hard to improve school culture.

They do this by encouraging professional communication, helping teacher learning communities, and getting parents involved as partners in school improvement. Transformational leaders give teachers the power to make decisions, recognize their successes and encourage them to think about their work. This helps create an environment where people feel valued and inspired. This helps everyone at the school trust with one another. Schools in which collaboration is fostered are more robust and better equipped to support the long-term. Studies have indicated that mutual trust is the basis for both group action and shared objectives. This makes such educational institutions more adaptable. By working in an academic style, heads of schools encourage a team atmosphere between teachers, moving away from a departmental structure in which departments operate independently. Collaborative organizations schedule specific times for people to work together, and involve everyone with a vested interest in the outcome in the decision-making process (Kruse & Schieman, 1997). This method allows sharing ideas about teaching approaches, discussing the effective teaching methods, and the areas that need improvement, as well as discussing the collaborative lesson plans.

This makes lesson plans more cohesive and gives students a stronger sense of community. This kind of teamwork naturally creates an environment of trust and respect in leadership (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). For teachers, this means beyond general professional development, encouraging students to keep learning, and coming up with new ways to help students teach better (Spillane, 2006). This individual concern assists in building a good culture in school by ensuring that both students and teachers feel valued, heard and respected (Kruse & Louis, 1997). Empirical research

indicates that it has a great impact on the transformation of the culture and development of trust in schools.

A study by O'Donoghue and Leithwood (2021) looked into the Danish primary and lower secondary education sector. It was observed that school leaders who adopted a transformational style of leadership found it easier for teachers to learn a Learning Management System and to use it more effectively. The way in which we derive meaning, which takes into consideration previous experiences, values, and our beliefs to create a new understanding, impacts how leadership is exercised and how learning management systems are used. This indicates that transformative leadership can make teachers better understand the things, and it is required of them to apply new technology and approaches in the work and their everyday life. Besides that, case studies provided by the Learning Policy Institute (Darling-Hammond, 2020) indicate how various school redesigns and cultural shifts align with the concepts of transformational leadership. Such illustrations imply that the transformation of a school towards a better one does not only involve changing the programs. This necessitates changes in the interactions between teachers, the community and students with teachers and their thoughts about them. The fostering of this sort of environment is often down to leaders who encourage critical thinking and cooperation among staff so they can pool their knowledge.

In particular, school heads have to tackle issues beyond operational management to deal with social, cultural, and ethical issues in the school community. In public schools in Kathmandu, head teachers can transform their schools through leadership. These leaders inspire a culture where the community trusts them. This is particularly true in areas with numerous socio-economic groups, lacking resources, and beset by uncertainty from the general public. Transformational leadership theory provides a dynamic and depth vision in the study of the ways that the leadership of public-school head teachers apply the leadership styles of participatory, moral, and relational leadership in building and sustaining a culture of trust in the public schools. Within the theoretical prism, which regards the activity of head teachers as a radical one, they are perceived to have an impact on the school ethos and parent involvement, staff morale, and relationship with the community.

### **Socio-Cultural Theory by Vygotsky**

In Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, the social setting of a person is crucial to their learning process. The approach emphasizes that human cognition and learning are social and cultural, not individual. It implies that social and cultural factors are necessary to comprehend a person's learning. These factors affect people's learning via socio-cultural interactions. According to Scott and Palincsar (2009), learning involves interaction, negotiation, and cooperation. Teaching aims to help students engage in activities, conversations, and tool usage that align with their community. Vygotsky identified two periods of cultural development in individuals (Sewell, 2006). It first affects social interactions and then an individual's mind. Social experience transfer to individual learning occurs in the building zone, also known as the zone of immediate growth. The concept of zones of proximal development argues that instructional materials should aim to identify growing capacities and anticipate future autonomous learning outcomes (Scott & Palincsar, 2009). In schools, head teachers practice social norms and values every day, which they accept into their psychology and culture, and change for positive building a culture of trust. Culturally competent head teachers are able to create a welcoming, tolerant space that is supportive of diversity and promotes equality and social justice (National Education Association, 2021). Head teachers who can promote a positive organizational culture can enhance the performance and effectiveness of the institution (Schein, 2010). Through the perspective of social-cultural theory, trust-building can be explored (Putnam & Putnam, 1993). This strategy attracts focus on how social networks and relationships contribute towards building the trust in society. Head teachers in the school setting play a significant role as bridges in communicating with teachers, parents, students and other parties in the public schools. Such relations are necessary in the context of the creation of a shared social culture and trust. The Organizational Cultural Framework is an informative source of information regarding the impact of culture on institutional performance (Buttery et al., 2023).

In the context of Cultural Change Models, the head teachers may attempt to facilitate within public schools can be better understood by using theoretical frameworks related to cultural change, such as the Competing Values Framework (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983) or the Integration-Responsiveness Framework (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1988). These frameworks offer a platform on which to analyze the changes in organizational cultures in learning settings. Trust theories, including the

Dimensions of Trust (Mayer et al., 1995) and the Building Culture of Trust Model (Wahlstrom and Louis, 2008), are also utilized by the study to understand how trust is conceptualized and can be built and maintained by head teachers in public schools. In developing trustworthiness and culture change of public schools, the head teachers have to take key responsibility in fostering a pleasant environment. Thus, the formal and informal aspects of the schools are integrated. The schools; they attend are proudly regarded by administrators, teachers, and, students. Administrators, instructors, students, and parents are all unified by this shared opinion, which promotes convergence (Benjamin & Gard, 1993).

Effective head teachers emphasize on the importance of shared goals and learning objectives in the development of successful schools (Leithwood & Riehl, 2008). School leaders enforce the norms and values of the school through their everyday work through their words and interactions with other people. Head teachers have to win the trust and respect of the school for further cultural change. From this perspective, the head teacher's role in school leadership is not the only one that exists. There is also a tendency for stakeholders to work together to achieve a common objective. Narrowed procedures can also be used to describe school culture and leadership. The history and core values of the school society serve as the foundation for school culture, but the leader's fundamental role in the school also plays a role in its replacement and improvement. According to Deal and Peterson (2016), this component of the connection between leadership and school culture is related to whether or not the culture is changed for the better. The shared vision must be congruent with the school culture, which is the head teacher's primary responsibility.

As a result, head teachers and their staff may go from vision to action more easily. A shared vision and a cohesive culture make the vision more attainable. Public school head teachers must be involved in building trust in public schools and cultural change since it is a crucial component of educational leadership. New values, beliefs, and practices that are in line with the school's vision and mission must be developed as part of the cultural change process.

### **Policy Review**

Nepal's education policies lay down the foundation for enhancing school leadership, fostering community engagement, and cultivating a culture of trust within public schools. Several national frameworks specifically say that head teachers should help establish learning environments that are collaborative, accountable, and

accessible to all students. These policies show that Nepal's plan to improve education includes goals for building trust and improving the culture of schools, in addition to selecting leaders. Developing trust, transparent leadership, and decision-making processes, as well as developing a healthy school culture, are all clearly mentioned as elements of school improvement in the education policy of Nepal, and these are both local and constitutional mandates. The policies like SSDP, TPD, and National Education Policy reaffirm the notion that head teachers make certain that teachers collaborate the community is involved and the school governance is accountable. To this, the law of Nepal compels the head teachers to act as cultural leaders and trust-builders in their schools.

Numerous types of research are currently being carried out to support the expansion and advancement of the education sector. A few of these policies are particularly proactive. The National Education Policy of Nepal provides an in-depth and detailed analysis of the education system in the country. Recently, there has been a legislative framework for the public schools where efforts are made to improve the quality and access to education. My research is primarily focused on the particular policy rules that govern the duties and conditions required of the leaders in these institutions.

The new constitution of Nepal, issued in 2015 when the monarchical system ended, includes policies and rights for people. The Nepalese Constitution 2015, part III, section 31, recognizes education as a basic right for everyone. The constitution guarantees all students up to grade twelve the right to a safe and conducive environment for learning and skill development (Nepal Law Commission [NLC], 2015). Private school students are expected to follow the rules and regulations set by the founders or leaders. Students at community schools may not get an education as per government policy because of insufficient implementation. This system must be managed by the relevant government agencies or departments. Nepal's School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) aims to build human resources to lift the nation from least developed to middle-income by 2022 and 2030 (SSDP, 2016-2022). Achieving the objective requires a positive school culture for healthy learning environments. Without a supportive school atmosphere, students cannot achieve their goals and cannot trust in public schools until and unless they realize its better performance.

The Local Governance Act 2017 grants local governments over 20 education-related functions (NLC, 2017). By capitalizing on those authorities, local government

can benefit by reforming and adopting various modalities for getting public trust at local level.

Despite provisions in the Act and regulations, implementation is often lacking in schools, which is why building a culture of trust is necessary. As long as I have practical experiences as a head teacher, I have never seen local government oversight of school teaching methods, as well as influenced a positive building culture of trust in public schools. The local government statute mandates developing a learning environment, educating instructors, organizing extracurricular activities, and building a culture of trust in public schools. But I've never experienced it. National education and local governance regulations may aid in fostering a healthy school culture, but execution is lacking.

The Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) 2019, has the intention of offering competitive, technical, productive, and job-oriented education to all grades to address the needs of human resources in the country. The secondary grade education aims at providing education to everyone and producing a skilled, productive workforce in the country. The policy is supposed to enhance creativity and good behaviour of the workforce. As an educator, I see a lack of oversight by the relevant authorities to ensure instruction aligns with policy goals and objectives. The National Education Policy 2076 (2019) reveals that the federal government intends to amend the regulations and laws governing educational institutions, including their management, establishment, and quality assessment procedures (MoEST, 2019).

The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) (2023) of the government of Nepal established the current policy framework, which controls school education throughout Nepal. The School Improvement Program (SIP) identifies three essential methods to enhance school performance which include building community spirit for system development, maintaining leader accountability and providing students with equal educational opportunities. The program focuses on developing trust relationships while creating a positive school environment and requiring leadership team members to work collectively for public school enhancement.

The MoEST (2023) of the government of Nepal established the current policy framework, which controls school education throughout Nepal. The School Improvement Program identifies three essential methods to enhance school performance which include building community spirit for system development,

maintaining leader accountability, and providing students with equal educational opportunities.

The program focuses on developing trust relationships while creating a positive school environment and requiring leadership team members to work collectively for public school enhancement. School Education Sector Plan (SESP) promotes learning environments that are open to everyone, sensitive to gender, and friendly to students. This is important for a safe and welcoming school culture. It is perceived that the safety and well-being of children depend on the culture of trust in the educational process. Through SESP, the federal system grants local government additional authority to monitor schools. Head teachers have to be open in their operations and cooperate well with the municipalities to ensure that they represent the local stakeholders. SESP promotes learning collaborations and creative pedagogies. These items contribute to a more successful cooperation and the building of trust between the teachers and school leaders. Since it has been keen on the role of trust-based leadership, participatory governing, and effective relationships between schools and communities in facilitating cultural change in the open schools, the current study is especially relevant to the goals of SESP.

The education policy encourages schools to improve the quality of education in public schools via an effective plan. The policy includes a plan to guarantee that corresponding topic instructors are available. From my personal experiences of many years in public schools, the government's lack of policy execution and control has led to a culture of trust. Permanent solutions are still scarce for building a culture of trust; it is the harsh reality of Nepalese education. I coped as a researcher that current education policies and programs lack a focus on fostering a positive school culture in public schools. I aimed to discuss this problem with my participants. This policy assessment indicated that my study offers a structured approach to promoting cultural change and the development of trust in public schools in Kathmandu. The objective of these policies was to establish an environment that promotes trust and facilitates cultural change, hence improving the quality of education and promoting public involvement in these institutions. This was achieved by granting head teachers more authority and implementing a thorough strategy for cultural inclusiveness.

### **Research Gap**

I observed through research on school leadership and cultural change that I found in both domestic and foreign journals. As I was reading the research, I came

across the literature on three distinct topics: stakeholder perceptions of the school environment, the school culture as a factor in school effectiveness, and the role of school head teachers in promoting the positive school culture of public schools and cultural change more effectively. Current education policies and constitutions seldom address school culture and building a culture of trust in public schools. I discovered the gap here. To fill this gap, I proposed research using an ethnographic design and an interpretive approach to explore stakeholders' views and behaviours towards culture change and building a culture of trust. Public schools in Nepal should function as needed by their stakeholders' expectations to cope with contemporary issues and concerns on behalf of the betterment of public schools and the upcoming generation. In light of these concerns, gaps and the implementation of the cause-and-effect relationship, it is deemed urgent of the day to conduct a study on the process of improving school culture that would capture the majority of school culture constructs and school leaders' leadership qualities in the context of Nepalese public schools.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter explored the research regarding the role of head teachers in building trust and transforming the culture of public schools. As part of this study, the changing roles of school head teachers and their contributions to the educational culture have been looked at from both an international and a domestic viewpoint. The findings of the research indicate that a school's culture plays a significant role in the amount of trust that the community has in the school, the motivation levels of the teachers, and the academic performance of the students. Effective leadership practices create an environment where a team works together and is productive.

The chapter pointed out that there aren't many studies on Kathmandu's public schools; however, relevant research shows that trust, teamwork, and diversity in culture are crucial for making schools more effective. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory and its application to leadership suggest that trust and culture are built through shared social experiences and the opportunities that are presented to individuals. Transformational Leadership Theory also builds trust and changes culture. Nepal's educational strategy is inconsistent in its implementation and has some beneficial elements, but also some major drawback. This chapter concluded by highlighting the search gap, particularly the absence of ethnographic studies analyzing the influence of head teachers on the culture and trust of Kathmandu's schools. A conceptual

framework that incorporates theoretical viewpoints and reinforces the ethnographic research methodology is presented at the end of the chapter to address issues.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the methodological framework used in my study on how head teachers could facilitate the building of a culture of trust in public schools and encourage cultural change. It expressed the philosophical foundations of the study, including its axiological, ontological, and epistemological frameworks. Subsequently, I have talked about the research paradigm and design, focusing on an interpretative and ethnographic approach. This chapter additionally talked about the research site and participants, how the data was collected, and how the data was analyzed and given meaning. Finally, it discussed the ethical and quality standards that affected the study and ended with a look at my own position as a researcher.

My framework provided me with a structured approach to organize my study and ultimately conclude (Creswell, 2013). Head teachers face the difficult responsibility of building trust and bringing change to the culture in the public schools. Head teachers must act as leaders and foster diversity, inclusivity and respect in the institution of learning. Ethnographic research exploring the role of head teachers in building trust and facilitating cultural change could help public schools in addressing their challenges and capitalizing on opportunities, therefore enhancing educational outcomes and fostering cohesiveness in society. My research explored the role of head teachers in fostering trust and facilitating cultural change in public schools in the Budhanilkantha municipality of Kathmandu.

#### **Philosophical Premise**

I explored the philosophical underpinnings here. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), a research paradigm consists of three fundamental components: ontology, which pertains to the nature of reality; epistemology, which concerns the nature of knowledge; and axiology, which concerns the nature of values. A strong philosophical basis is essential for the successful completion of any research endeavor. In the context of my research, the use of the interpretative research paradigm and ethnography in this study plays a significant role in the development of my philosophical perspective on the worldview. According to Wills (2007), ontology involves gathering the numerous facts of cultures in multiple ways. Through careful observation and personal conversations with participants, including students, teachers,

and staff, I have attempted to interpret my study and carefully consider various perspectives on how community members understand public schools and interact with schools' cultural change.

### **Ontological Stance**

The study is based on the interpretative ontological approach, which acknowledges the existence of numerous perspectives and the role of subjective interpretation on the lived experiences of people (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By adopting this viewpoint, my study attempted to explore the socially constructed meanings that stakeholders, namely head teachers, attribute to the development of trust and cultural transformation within the unique setting of public schools in Kathmandu. Moreover, there is multidimensionality of reality. The study sought to observe the issues that surround the understanding of the concept and maneuvering of trust and cultural change within the education system by recognizing the numerous arguments and subjective experiences of individuals.

### **Epistemological Stance**

Epistemology refers to a philosophy that studies the nature, scope, and source of knowledge (Flick, 2018). In this study, the epistemology used was based on observation and logical interaction. The study adopted a constructivist perspective, which highlights the role of researchers in interpreting participants' viewpoints and acknowledges the subjective nature of the data gathered. From this constructivist approach, Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggest that the researcher has to take responsibility for how they interpret data. Research showed that head teachers acquire their understanding of change and building trust through classroom observations, interactions with staff and students, and their own reflections.

The study explored the varying perspectives and implementations of school culture among participants in their educational experiences. I focused on generating new knowledge derived from their experiences. Similarly, my epistemology focused on exploring different methods of acquiring knowledge, such as investigating, creating, and analyzing information without assuming it as a given, since my participants' understanding of school culture and learning differed. My research has tried to bring out the numerous facts and thoughts contained in the school setting, and the goal of enlightening the participants in the process that their views contribute to their understanding of these events. Data gathering and its analysis are guided by the

fact that the meaning constructed by the members was very important in determining our knowledge about trust-building and cultural change.

### **Axiological Stance**

The research's axiological orientation recognizes the intrinsic subjectivity of the research process and emphasizes the significance of transparency and reflexivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Values are studied in axiology. In axiology, the role of value and bias in research is explored. Axiology uncovers the construction and implementation of values in human existence. Human values are shaped by the community's norms, ethics, and ideals. I discovered their values and views towards participants throughout the study. My research explored various aspects of school culture and how learners prioritize their social environment in cultural change. This study involved me as an ethnographic researcher. My research attempted to sustain a culture of trust and consciousness among the head teachers who are leading the inquiry, while taking into account the researcher's values and their possible role in the study. In light of my prior experience as a head teacher and my implementation of several strategies aimed at improving underperforming public schools, I provided a subjective viewpoint to the research.

### **Research Paradigm and Design**

All researchers make use of the paradigm. It explains a researcher's perspective. Their opinion and thinking also come out. I employed the ethnographic study. I have researched the perception of respondents to learn about human behaviour and the way it is different from natural occurrences. According to ethnographic the perspective it is said that the reality is constructed by social actors and perspectives (Wahyuni, 2012). As a researcher, I explored subjective information from participants' experiences and perceptions in their specific situation. This paradigm used meaning-oriented methods, including open-ended interviews and participant narratives, relying on a subjective researcher-subject interaction. My research utilized an ethnographic research methodology to get a comprehensive understanding of head teachers in fostering trust and facilitating cultural change in public schools located in Kathmandu district. Ethnography is a study methodology that utilizes participant observation, interviews and artifacts in studying a practice. Ethnography allows studying the dynamics of culture and situational complexity in the context of education (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Utilizing ethnographic research in a school setting, this project used the principles of ethnographic studies. Research into a society involves observing it over a long period of time with a view to gathering information on how people live their lives. It concentrates on the significance of behaviour as well as social interactions. The research presented here explores the methods by which head teachers foster trust and the resultant effect on the community's perception of the school in Kathmandu. The research by Knoblauch (2005) was; conducted its research by using focused ethnography. This is an ethnographic technique best suited to identifying problems inside a defined time period that are intense but short. Focused ethnography is often used in educational contexts, when a researcher wants to learn about specific practices, e.g., trust-building and cultural leadership, but not the entire school culture. Wolcott (2008) argues that focused ethnography is very appropriate in a situation where a researcher has a certain interest in a certain social phenomenon.

The main goal of this study was to find out how head teachers influence relationships, trust, and cultural change. All these are things that should be discussed face-to-face with individuals in real learning environments. Spradley (1979) points out the basic components of ethnography, which include knowing what people mean in their own world, which is important in why visiting the schools, talking informally, and observing the leadership behaviour are important. This research has employed focused school ethnography by relying on the works of some of the most prominent scholars including Hammersley, Atkinson, Spradley, Knoblauch, and Wolcott. This ethnographic approach allowed me to study how head teachers in Kathmandu's public schools build trust and shape school culture using a combination of long-term involvement, multiple interviews, natural observation, and comprehensive description.

The research design used in this study was qualitative research design incorporating ethnographic approach to conduct an in-depth investigation on the leadership practices of head teachers and how they contribute to cultural change and creation of trust between the public schools in Kathmandu. My study involved thorough observation and open-ended interviews to get insight into participants' viewpoints to understand head teachers' roles in building trust and cultural change in public schools in Budhanilkantha, Kathmandu District. I have used ethnographic methods for conducting participant observation strategy, where I observed and interacted with head teachers, SMC chairperson, faculty members and parents. This

qualitative study should be aimed at investigating the leadership behaviors and complicated social phenomena that have a positive impact on the school culture within the framework of an interpretive paradigm. It allowed me to gain rich and detailed insights into the building culture of trust building culture of trust cultural change initiated by head teacher. Ethnography focuses on cognizing cultural practices, belief systems and values of the school's public. This observational design was aimed at capturing the lived experiences and perceptions of head teachers involved in engaging in building a culture of trust and cultural change in the public schools. The natural attitude that I failed to see agreements, actions or social systems as constantly produced situations is disapproved of by the distancing methods. Using the literature review, I specialized in exploratory data analysis for this research.

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

A study site is a location where a researcher conducts research and collects the necessary data. To choose the study location and participants, I have used purposefully selected participants. Choosing participants with a particular goal in mind is known as purposefully selecting selected participants (Cohen et al., 2007). The use of strategy is essential to completing any task. My study site was two secondary-level public schools in the Budhanilkantha municipality of Kathmandu district, which had diverse natures in their operation of modality and geographical location. To gather information for my research, I used an ethnographic approach, which involved conducting in-depth interviews, prolonged engagement, and thick description of observations with head teachers of public schools, the chairperson of the SMC, teachers, and parents. I furthermore analyzed existing literature and documents to gain a comprehensive understanding of the practice as a whole. I further took care of some photos and field notes. It is common practice in qualitative interviewing to pay attention to nonverbal communication because it helps the researcher understand what respondents mean beyond the words they express (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

During the interview, I paid attention to their body language, including their facial expressions, and this helped me gather more data for my research through use of interviews. Open-ended, in-depth interviews were the main way to get rich, descriptive data because they let respondents say what they thought and felt in their own words (Seidman, 2013). Taking notes was another method I have applied to my studies, which is observation. It is a crucial instrument that researchers often utilize. It

took me more than merely seeing, and there were several ways to collect data via observation. According to Kawulich (2012), the majority of research conducted in ethnographical and sociological studies uses participant observation, a popular methodological strategy in ethnography. In order to get data from the field, I have taken field notes in addition to interviews and observation. I often wrote down my reflections and observations on the on-the-spot acts, behaviours, and other casual conversations with a notebook and pen, while doing the field research. I have done prolonged engagement and thick descriptions of taking data in my research sites. I took pictures with consent to gather data. I then went into more detail in the field note and created a narrative that included my thoughtful observation and a representation of the individuals.

I realized that choosing research participants is one of the most important phenomena. A convenient approach is used to choose schools, head teachers, SMC chairpersons, teachers, and parents connected to public schools considering the geographic area. The selection of the number of respondents in ethnography depended upon the specific objectives of the researcher, their preferences for data collection, their management of field text, and the constraints of time and resources at their service (Patton, 1990). However, it assisted me in gathering information from a specific set of individuals who were engaged in the same field and had comparable cultural practices in their daily lives. In order to fulfill my research objectives, the participants for this study were chosen from two public schools of eight participants in total, including head teachers, SMC chairpersons, teachers, and parents each from schools in Budhanilkantha Municipality of Kathmandu district.

### **Data Collection Process, Tools, and Techniques**

Ethnography is the study of individuals, groups, and their way of life in relation to previous culture, current status, and future potential in community schools (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). The ethnographer explores the implicit significances that the group members assume, and thereafter explores the novel comprehensions for the readers or external individuals, so reparation is crucial for data collection and completing any task. In my research, I utilized the ethnographic approach to gather information. This involved carrying out in-depth interviews and observations in public schools to collect data related to the research objective for about three months in my study sites. In addition, I supervised the organization of field notes and captured some images. During the interview, I carefully watched their body language,

including their facial expressions, such as a crimson face and sweating while replying. This allowed me to gather valuable data for my research.

### **Interview**

In my research, interviews were the most important and insightful data-gathering approach. Boyce and Neale (2006) argue that interviews are valuable for obtaining comprehensive insights into an individual's ideas and behaviours, as well as for exploring deeply into innovative topics. In qualitative studies, interviewing is a popular and successful data collection approach (Yin, 2014). For successful qualitative interviewing, at the start of each interview, I have informed the interviewee of the study's goal and confirmed the recording of the interview.

The interviews were ethnographic in nature and were conversational, semi-structured, and sensitive to the context. The interviews were not strictly formal or informal; instead, they were guided conversational interviews. This is widely used in the ethnographic studies since it can be flexible yet a series of questions can be followed. This approach enables head teachers, teachers, parents, and SMC members to discuss the own experience in a natural way and without being shy about their experience with school culture and building trust. The participants were also requested to develop in details on those issues they regarded as important although an interview outline was used to ensure that the crucial topics were covered. Moreover, this broad framework allowed creating more depth of setting and authentic narrations. My research consisted of multiple interview rounds, with two to three interviewers speaking to the participant in each round. The number of rounds, as well as the number of people involved in a round, was determined by the response of the participants. The importance of the head teachers to the research was to ensure that they participated in the study in three rounds of interaction. These rounds consisted of a formal guided interview, a subsequent clarification interview, and an initial meeting to build rapport. I conducted two rounds of interaction; one to confirm the themes that emerged and another to explore them as member checking. Member of SMC and parents, depending on how thorough the first interview was and how much clarification is needed; there could be one or two rounds

This multi-phase interaction enabled the refinement of emerging topics and triangulated data. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, depending on the participant's role and availability. The interviews with head teachers usually lasted longer about 75–90 minutes, while the ones with parents and teachers were shorter

nearly 45–60 minutes, but more focused. Follow-up interviews usually lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. Interviews were conducted in Nepali and audio recorded by taking prior consent using a digital recorder and a secure mobile application. Field notes were also taken to record contextual information, emotional expressions, and nonverbal cues. An audio recording contained Nepali transcription, which was then translated to English where necessary. Notes were enlarged instantly after every interview to ensure that they were accurate. The digital files containing data would be confidential as they would be stored in a password-protected place.

Interviews took place in open areas, staff rooms, head teachers' offices, and other natural school settings. Interviews were also conducted at the home of people where they felt more at ease. This was aimed at creating a free atmosphere in which individuals had the opportunity to share their experiences without being looked down on. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, that they had the option of participating in the study and that they had the right to quit whenever they wanted. Written and oral consent were received before the recording took place. The pseudonyms provided privacy. A flexible, multi-round, conversational interviewing approach and close recording and documentation were employed in this study to ensure that the voices of all the stakeholders were precisely recorded. This due process is what renders the ethnographic information more reliable, natural, and holistic.

### **Observation**

Observation is another research method that is used in my study. This research used participant observation as the main tool to understand the natural behaviors, relationships, and practices in the schools within the public in accordance with the ethnographic approach. Spradley (1980) defines participant observation as a research method in which the researcher engages in the routine activities of a setting while simultaneously observing and documenting the events that occur. It enables the researcher to see past the surface narratives and come to the deeper meanings, values and norms of the school culture and practices that foster trust. DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) state that participant observation enables the researcher to engage with the environment in real time, as opposed to solely through recorded narratives, thereby augmenting the validity of ethnographic research. I was able to concentrate on the behaviours of head teachers in establishing trust and their patterns of speaking to individuals, leading, and getting along with other teachers, students, and individuals

in the community. The researcher acted as a participant-observer in the field, and the participants were aware of their purpose for being there (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). I participated actively in the school by attending school events, staff meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and staff assemblies. I learned the day-to-day practices of leaders and managers by observing them at work. I also spent time speaking with teachers, students, and parents in informal settings and was present in staff rooms to learn about interpersonal relationships, communication and the level of trust within the organization. The research was carried out in two Kathmandu public schools, which were picked for specific reasons. These schools were all distinct in terms of their size, the style of leadership used, the level of academic achievement and the variety of the community.

The six-week period of observation included two school visits per week, although this could be adjusted in line with the school's schedule and accessibility. Many different things caught my attention, for instance the methods by which head teachers formed policies, the methods they used to communicate with their teaching staff and the students, how they dealt with grievances and disputes between teachers, the manner in which teachers cooperated as professionals, parental involvement in school functions, the way in which they ensured teachers were held accountable without resorting to either fear or coercion, students behaviour, the students' motivation and their sense of belonging, and the influence that events or activities held in the community. At the end of each day, I kept a detailed record of the events I had observed in my notebook, which I later supplemented with my thoughts on those events. I used organized observation checklists, handwritten field notes and memos, analytical notes that captured questions and interpretations, and reflective notes. I then coded and checked the interviews to verify the findings.

The interactions, leadership and cultural aspects that build up trust within a Nepalese public school were the main subject of my research. Through moderate participant observation, interactions and leadership styles were observed in a number of different contexts. Observations in the field offered greater depth and authenticity than interviews because they provided insights into the daily dynamics of a school that a series of interviews could not provide.

### **Artifacts and Documents**

I also gathered records and artifacts that are representative of each school's culture. In ethnographical research, researchers often use and interpret written and

material culture as a kind of text in order to understand the social norms, ethics, political relationships, and philosophy of a society; they are also the source of factual information. The documents in an organization should be observed for their meaning as well as what they indicate about the organizational culture (Atkinson, 1990). In doing so, researchers can discover information on the social norms of the organization as well as the way the organization is structured. Hammersley and Atkinson (2019) claim that documents function as inscriptions of practice, providing significant insights into how organizations reflect themselves and the continuous evolution of cultural patterns.

This study has used ethnographic approach as an analytical tool to observe artifacts and documents, which relate to their relational, cultural, and symbolic meanings in the public schools. I collected and studied School SIPs, annual progress reports, school profiles, notice boards, school rules, codes of conduct, minutes of SMC and PTA meetings, student and teacher attendance records, activity calendars, program photos, and documents related to school events from two of the schools where I carried out my research. All of these artifacts were looked at as both administrative records and signs of school culture and ways to build trust.

To triangulate data from observations and interviews, we had to use artifacts and papers. Emerson et al. (2011) state that ethnographer's can more effectively contextualize participant perspectives within institutional frameworks and elucidate their narratives through documentary sources. For instance, the SIPs showed what the Head teachers thought were essential to teacher development, community involvement, and being open. The documentation of attendance and disciplinary documents indicated the presence or absence of trust-based accountability. This interpretative method ensured that artifacts were analyzed both descriptively and culturally, highlighting the head teachers' impact on the procedures and organizations that build up trust. Ethnographical lens transformed documents and artifacts into valuable cultural resources that assisted us in learning about how community schools establish trust, convey their beliefs, and regulate relationships. These materials were helpful in getting a deeper understanding of the cultural factors that determine the public schools in Kathmandu and helped us to verify the field information of different sources. I used these artifacts and interviews and observations to keep on interpreting patterns and themes, and reaching conclusions that were relevant to the study purpose.

### **Researcher as Insider**

I was an insider in this ethnographic study as a head teacher of one of the Kathmandu schools, which is a public school. Having the same professional culture with my participants helped gain contextual insight, exposure to daily practice, and sensibility to the norms that are not explicitly stated in the context of the public schools. Nevertheless, such proximity demanded purposeful reflexivity in order to reduce the bias. I was highly aware that I should separate my administrative role and my role as a researcher by explaining my intentions to the participants and not acting evaluative when interacting in the field. During extended interaction, I kept a reflective journal in order to critically analyze how my experiences, beliefs, and background as a leader could comprehend interpretations. Such practice of bracketing assumptions allowed me to be aware and conscious of the real voices of participants. Time management was also significant when doing ethnographic work. I made observations and interviews during my free time that is out of my official schedule, on weekends and during my school breaks, so that my professional work would not be undermined. The ability to attend meetings, informal talks and everyday activities, through the ethnographic perspective, enabled me to see what happens in practice and not what happens in paintings after an administration. My insider position led to trust and openness, whereas endless self-reflection enhanced credibility, neutrality, and ethical rigor in the collection and interpretation of data.

### **Meaning Making**

Qualitative research is non-quantifiable and strongly related to words, sounds, feelings, emotions, colours, and other components. Qualitative research generates a significant volume of data, making it crucial to effectively manage and organize the data promptly (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). As an ethnographic researcher, I used prolonged observation, notes from interviews, and documents to explore the main themes that described how students perceive school cultures and learn. I established a good relationship with the participants to gather this information. The primary methods used for data gathering are prolonged observations, thick description, in-depth interviews, the study of artifacts, and to a lesser extent, non-participant observation. As an interviewer and participatory observer, I did fieldwork to gather the life stories of the individuals involved in my study. Next, I converted the participants' stories into written form. I rigorously reviewed the text many times in order to do a preliminary exploratory analysis (Creswell, 2013). I focused on

interpretations that align with my research inquiries. Identifying themes enhanced the nuance of a tale and contributed to a deeper knowledge of individual experiences. When analyzing the significance of the themes, I relied on theory and other pertinent literature to enhance the depth and complexity of my discussion.

### **Quality Standards**

Researchers must develop rigorous standards while doing educational research. Consequently, each research study needs to provide a comprehensive description of quality standards. Researchers must not only develop a conceptual framework for their research writing but also proactively consider the ethical concerns that may emerge during their investigations (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, adhering to quality standards involves permitting others to evaluate the quality of my research project based on unbiased standards. The research's level of quality is assessed based on its accuracy, authenticity, and trustworthiness.

In the course of my research, the participants were encouraged to express their perspectives or personal experiences pertaining to various circumstances, and more clarifications were offered anytime they encountered any ambiguity. This study is carried out in real-life environments that allow for immediate investigation of causes and processes, while avoiding the need for perfect control over what are considered unnecessary aspects (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). I engaged in prolonged engagement and persistent observation, clarifying the researcher's interest, conducting member checks to ensure the trustworthiness of data and interpretations with field members, and employing triangulation of various methods such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, personal history, and documentation (Chian & Green, 2018). Moreover, I support the information to increase its credibility (Flick, 2018). Credibility is also a concept of ethnographic research, meaning the evaluation of the validity and trustworthiness of the research findings (Creswell, 2013). Ethnographic research that uses qualitative methods demands a rigorous approach to guarantee the trustworthiness of the findings. My research used ethnographic methodologies to ensure the results were as accurate and truthful as possible. Key ethnographic tools used in this project were thick description, the attempt to recreate the scene studied (lifelike), a self-awareness of the researcher's own biases (reflexivity), and building relationships that last over time (long-term engagement). Involvement in two participating schools over a period of twelve weeks served to enhance the credibility of the project. Having made several visits, I established a rapport with the subjects

and thus observed their daily routines, noting how these individuals interacted with one another naturally.

The key focus for these ongoing monitoring visits was interactions among teachers and head teachers, parent involvement, and staff collaboration. For verification purposes, I used a technique called triangulation to validate the findings, combining data from interviews, observations, documents, and artifacts. My approach was designed so that the expectations that I had wouldn't influence the views held by participants. The documentation consisted of a field notebook, transcriptions of the interviews, coding notes and an analytical report. These papers show how, over time, our interpretations have evolved through their being available in the public domain. My research has provided sufficient contextual information for readers to evaluate the applicability of the results to similar public school settings in Nepal, even though not intended for generalization.

### **Positionality**

As a researcher with experience in public schools, I understand that my perspective is formed by observing the influence of established belief systems on community perceptions, leadership behaviour, and educational practices. I acknowledge my propensity to believe that these belief systems are gradually developing in Nepali public schools, and that these changes are crucial for promoting better school culture, trust, and collaboration for future generations. This perspective, shaped by my professional experience, could influence my interpretation of the results. For this reason, I kept thinking about the research process to make sure that the participants' opinions had an influence on the findings. Head teachers play a role model for the positive change of culture in the public, as I practiced sending my own children to my own school and trying to uplift the values and belief systems of public schools in society. It can be taken as one of the catalysts for change to get a belief system in public schools. In society, relevant, accurate, updated, meaningful, and scientific trends and patterns should be plotted, especially in public schools, as an expectation of cultural change and building a culture of trust in society.

My positionality was insider even though I must be always conscious while collecting data, as a researcher exploring head teachers' roles in trust-building and cultural change in Kathmandu's public schools. As an insider, I recognized that cultural background may affect data interpretation. Transparency, reflexivity, and cultural sensitivity are essential throughout research (Smith, 2005). Journaling

regularly reveals and resolves prejudices. Member verification validates results and ensures research participants' voices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). My social, cultural, and political background may impact the study process and interpretation of the results, but I was aware of my role and intervention and did not repress participants' voices.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Research studies must be conducted ethically, with careful consideration of ethical principles. Ethics in ethnography often occur during fieldwork since it generates knowledge from the field. Madison (2012) said that ethnographic ethics raises the moral and ethical issues of fieldwork. In field research, the researcher actually talks to people. In my ethnographic research, respect was shown to the individuals and locations concerned, their dignity was recognised, their worth was respected and their confidentiality was safeguarded. When conducting a study, consideration should be given to the welfare of participants. This includes the right to privacy, being guaranteed anonymity, ensuring no risk to participants or society as a whole and gaining the consent of the individuals involved. The researcher is responsible for safeguarding the participants and their identities. Throughout the research, confidentiality was maintained and the participants' identities were protected to ensure their welfare. In addition, steps were taken to keep the research open and transparent. The participating schools and university concerned, with their head teachers, had given their consent initially. Those participating in the study were told at the start what it involved, with it being stressed that their involvement was entirely voluntary and they could stop at any time. Verbal and written consent were obtained. Interviews and observations commenced after head teachers, teachers, parents, and SMC members submitted consent forms.

Anonymity was ensured for the participants. Pseudonyms were used for participants and schools in transcriptions, field notes, and reports. In the observation, convenience and consideration of convenience were observed as the participants were informed. No pictures or objects of sensitivity were taken without consent. Participants who agreed to be recorded were the only ones who were interviewed. The ethical consideration about KUSOED that I have taken into account is the ethical consideration. Handwritten records were done for participants who did not wish to be recorded. They were enlarged immediately after each visit to the school to ensure that the notes were correct and complete.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter explained the methodology of the research, including the role of head teachers in establishing trust and cultural change in public schools. The work characterized the philosophical background of ontology, epistemology, and axiology in an interpretative paradigm and ethnographic design. The research was carried out in two public secondary schools within Budhanilkantha municipality, involving eight purposefully selected participants, comprising head teachers, SMC chairpersons, teachers, and parents. The data were collected by means of in-depth interviews, participant observation, field notes, and artifacts, and subsequently analyzed thematically to explain participants' lived experiences and interpretations. To ensure the quality of the data the researcher used prolonged engagement, member checking, a form of member checking called reflexivity, and methodology triangulation. In this study, I have acknowledged that was simultaneously a participant and observer and made it clear how these two roles affected the research. This was crucial for ensuring the integrity of the work and for facilitating a reflective examination of the research process. In this study, every consideration was taken with regard to ethics so that the reliability of the data collected was guaranteed. This included obtaining informed consent from participants and assuring confidentiality.

## CHAPTER IV

### LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND TRUST FORMATION

This chapter explores in detail the data collected during my field visit in my study sites, which looked at how head teachers in Kathmandu's public schools help to build a culture of trust. During my early visits to the school, trust emerged as a central concern. I obtained data on a very diverse group of individuals including; head teachers, teachers, parents, and the chairperson of the School Management Committee (SMC) two public schools within Budhanilkantha Municipality in Balkumari School and Panchakanya School. I conducted this analysis by use of interviews, observations and focus groups discussions.

The study was focused on how head teachers' leadership styles affected the trusting culture of these schools and encouraged cooperation and the setting of a community among all the people involved. The data suggested an important meaning that showed how essential it is for schools to build trust, such as getting stakeholders' involvement, working together with parents and teachers, being open about things and happenings in the schools, and using effective leadership strategies. This chapter presents the results in a way that is relevant to the main research question. The chapter looks at how trust is built, the challenges that come up along the way, and the ways that people handle those problems through the observations and perspectives from the view of the participants. I also explored how theories of leadership, the community's expectations, and cultural factors work together to create a culture of trust in schools.

#### **How I Approached the Field**

In the ethnographic research, commitment, preparation, and adaptability were equally essential factors. I explored the numerous and multi-faceted ways for collecting data, experiences, feelings, emotions and real situations in which trust is built in two public schools in the Budhanilkantha Municipality as part of my research. The names of these schools are Panchakanya School and Balkumari School. These schools were located in areas characterized by a wide range of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, making them ideal for exploring the leadership styles of head teachers and how those styles influenced the culture of trust in each school.

When I first visited Balkumari School, I passed a private school, which is about one hundred meters ahead in distance from Balkumari School. I thought it

might have a lot of challenges to get trust from parents in public school, competing with private schools. Thinking this, I reached my participant school. It was cold and pleasant in the first hour of school time. I reached the school compound, and I tried to open the school's gate, but it was locked, so I blew the horn of the motorbike. Then, after a while, the school's security guard came and opened the gate, and he asked the purpose of visit. I told him I wanted to meet the head teacher, and then he asked for a little bit of information about me. He showed me the head teacher's room on the top floor of the three-story building. It seemed the building was newly built. I thought head teachers should be easily accessible to visitors; it would be better to stay on the ground floor so that even elderly-aged and disabled visitors can easily meet the head teacher, so that a trust-building culture can be practiced. When I was going to visit head teachers, I saw students were wearing purple-coloured house uniforms with jackets that looked matching with them.

On top of the school's name board, there was written "*We Put Students First.*" I thought that students are given more priority than others. I listened here; students' soft talking sound made the school grounds feel nice as they were moving here and there, gathering in the courtyard for their morning prayers. During that time, the teachers were standing on the boundary and talking to one another in a casual way while keeping an eye on the students. As I was going to his room, the head teacher was in the school's not-so-wide school grounds. Mr. Indra Bahadur Rai, the head teacher, welcomed me with a big smile and an authoritative handshake. He said *Namaste* and *Welcome to our school* with excitement. His willingness to be sincere influenced my involvement there.

The red-colored buildings, which were built decades ago, revealed indications of getting older but were well maintained; a new yellow three-story building seemed recently completed, and the principal's room was there. I saw the early childhood development center in the western part of that building. In one corner, I saw a newly established PlayStation corner for children in the eastern part; some small children were playing and enjoying it over there. A four-story building was under construction. I thought that building construction was happening speedily in the school. They had decorated the walls of the classrooms with different pictures. In the class and on school premises, motivating slogans, student projects, and colorful charts, as well as a house-wise notice board where students created different articles, poems, songs, drawings, and jokes, were seen on the school's wall. I was amazed seeing all these

students work; maybe it was to engage the students and make their learning effective. After a while, the morning assembly started, and it was conducted by grade eight students. I thought it was a good initiative and platform for students for the development of leadership practices in the school.

Some of the parents were coming and leaving their children in the assembly. In my opinion, it would be better if some parents stayed for a while in the morning student assembly to observe school activities and their children's involvement in the assembly, or the head teacher could have requested them to stay for a while in the assembly to observe their students' activities in the assembly. After some moments the morning assembly started. All the students were actively participating in the morning assembly; they were singing the Morning Prayer and the national anthem in a melodious way *Saiyong Thunga Phulka Hami Eutai Mala Neplai, Sarbabhaum Bhai Failile Ka Mechi Mahakali*.

Most teachers were watching the students and helping them keep their lines straight. I suppose it would be better if the class line captain initiated and managed those tasks to promote leadership and responsibility among the students. After a moment, the assembly concluded, and all the students moved to their respective classrooms. I introduced myself to the teachers, and we went into the head teacher's room and discussed the interview and other school activities.

Similarly, my first visit to Panchakanya School was very memorable and interesting. Before reaching the school, I passed the very renowned national-level school, Budhanilkantha School on the way, and I was approaching my participant school. I passed another two private schools, so I was thinking that because of these private schools, it might be a very big challenge for the head teacher to build a trust-building culture in public schools. After a while, I saw a dark red four-story school building on the upper side of the main road. I approached the schools. I met a school's teacher outside the school's gate and then asked her to meet the head teacher. She asked about my visiting purpose and the reason for visiting the head teacher. My inner thought interacted with me: how can we build up trust in public schools if parents and visitors do not easily have access to meet the head teacher, I thought, might be kind of bracketing the community. I became reflective, and then, after a little bit of interaction with her, she showed me the way, and I entered the school.

The school's limited playground and congested school, which were cared for by both staff and children, were testimony to the collaborative culture that existed

there. Mr. Ram Lama, the head teacher, welcomed me with a big smile. He was a little more reserved than Mr. Rai, but he equally offered me complete cooperation for the assignment. To win the participants' trust and confidence, rapport-building was crucial. After a short introduction and communication with the teacher and some available teachers, after a while, I was given the opportunity to watch some classes and had short casual interactions with some parents and teachers available nearby in the account section. After that, I gradually started to do open-ended interviews with my participants in both schools. I attempted to fully integrate myself into the everyday routine of the school. I ensured my presence didn't interfere with the activities' natural flow by maintaining a subtle posture during these conversations.

At Panchakanya school, I attended a parent-teacher meeting in which everyone present was seated around a round table. Then, the head teacher came, and all the parents stood. Then the head teacher went and sat in the first row of the meeting hall. After that, he immediately greeted all the attendees, and then he started to give his speech. I was waiting for his speech to finish, as he spoke for about an hour without asking anyone for their input. I wondered how we could build trust in school if we only speak and do not listen to others. If we only talk and do not engage with others, how can they participate? During my engagement in the field, I believed that this strategy could hinder the growth of a culture of trust in public schools. I witnessed the scenario when parents and teachers were on a meeting and heard him deal with the matter concerning behaviour and academic performance of the students. One parent stood up and stated, *the fact that we are being heard here is encouraging. We feel like we belong to the school because of it.* Such instances underscored the existence of trust in the school-community relationship.

The interviews formed the backbone of my data collection process. I engaged in a series of interviews and conversations with head teachers, teachers, parents, and chairpersons of the SMC in a semi-structured way. These conversations often turned into stories, with lots of personal stories and thoughts. One particular interview with a parent, Chiranjivi Pokharel, provided plenty of valuable information: *I have always believed and supported public schools in my community.* He was convinced that Balkumari School was the best choice for his children. He said that the teachers were very committed to their jobs in the classroom. They were ready, focused, and very serious about what they had to do. Within the same context, he characterized the head teacher's decision-making process as transparent and open. He was however not afraid

to talk about the chronic problems in my long journey in the field, including the cases of miscommunication between school officials and the parents, which he viewed as a common phenomenon, rather than an isolated affair.

Teachers also openly expressed their perspectives. In the context of Balkumari School one teacher Shrijana, Parajuli, who has been teaching the social studies subject for more than two decades, emphasized the value of leadership in building trust. She described that her Head teachers is always approachable and supportive. *It gives us a sense of security and motivates us to do our best.* The head teacher at Panchakanya School reflected on the delicate balance of maintaining authority while fostering trust. Mr. Rai shared, *“Most of the time, I have to share all the information and happenings in the school, but I always explain my decisions to the staff and parents, which reduces misunderstandings and increases my leadership confidence.”* Both schools served as small representations of larger forces in society. During repeated visits to the school, I also came to know that students from all kinds of socioeconomic backgrounds, including children of daily wage workers and small shopkeepers, attended Balkumari School.

Students were busy engaged in group work in the active classroom environment and debating on different topics. Teachers work hard to achieve a balance between good academic standards and a healthy and supportive learning atmosphere. I was taught and sensed that Panchakanya School emphasized a lot on extracurricular activities. The constant communication with the neighborhood, sporting events and cultural programs has brought the school closer and more significant relationships with the neighborhood. Although a wall in the main corridor featured photographs from recent events, providing visual evidence of the school's vibrant culture, the school's location on the side of the road makes it impossible for students to play freely. In the tea time discussion in the staff room, which often revealed concerns not raised in formal meeting from participants' reflections provided some light on the challenging process of trust-building culture in public schools. Parents often linked trust to transparency and unambiguous communication. One parent said, *we feel respected and valued when the school keeps us informed and involves us in decisions.* Teachers focused on how trust is built through leadership. They appreciated head teachers who provided leadership without supervision. One teacher mentioned:

*Our head teacher gives us the opportunity to try out different teaching techniques, ideas, and strategies in the classroom. In addition to making us feel highly trusted, this level of autonomy instills in us a strong sense of responsibility and pride in our work.*

Despite these efforts there were certain challenges and problems that remained. A few parents expressed in both schools concerns about the limited resources and occasional delays in problem-solving issues. During my observational visit to the schools, I regularly used to interact with teacher in one staff meeting. It was unforgettable to me because: *Trust is easily broken; it grows slowly through consistent actions, but can quickly weaken after one mistake*, when one teacher mentioned the statement.

### **My Reflection on the First Field Visit**

The first impressions at both schools were more than just observations; they were tangible, instant indicators of each school's underlying culture of accessibility, openness, and community involvement.

### **Head Teachers in Public Schools: Their Multiple Roles and Everyday Challenges**

The first field visits to Panchakanya and Balkumari Secondary Schools immediately revealed that head teachers in community schools shoulder a multiplicity of roles that extend far beyond conventional administrative duties. In practice, head teachers occupy many roles at once. They act as instructional guides, representatives of the wider community, negotiators between competing expectations, caretakers of school culture, and protectors of the school's public image. These conflicting roles were not merely administrative nuisances, but they influenced the school ethos of the Trust. The ability of the head teacher to manage the competing demands was construed by teachers, parents, and other stakeholders as an indication of their competence and reliability. Instead of using flashy leadership tactics, how such mundane events were handled in both schools including the decision to address issues, the swiftness with which they were received and judgments made, seemed to build trust. In the transformational leadership point of view, these are examples of leadership that is more than power to be presence and responsive. On the socio-cultural front, these interactions were collaborative meaning-making processes, and trust was constructed through frequent involvement.

As I considered while doing my observation, trust is gradually built by leaders' responses to common pressures rather than extraordinary occurrences, and

leadership in public schools is lived through continuous interaction. These moments made visible the demanding nature of leadership in the public education system of Nepalese schools, where paperwork, regulations, and official tasks are constantly woven into everyday relationships with teachers, parents, and students. Head teachers are required to move back and forth between paperwork and people, rules and relationships. How well they manage this balancing act shapes the way trust develops, is tested, and is maintained within the school community.

### **Head teachers Engagement in Shaping and Sustaining School Culture**

From an ethnographic perspective, school culture did not appear as a theoretical idea but as something experienced in everyday life. It was visible in routine interactions, the use of space, and the unspoken rules that guided behaviour. During my first visits, I began to see how head teachers actively influenced this environment through their physical presence, the way they communicated with others, and how open or approachable they chose to be. Observation notes that I have found my visit to Panchakanya School is that: *A teacher approached me with a friendly tone and asked Sir, who are you looking for? Her openness suggested a culture accustomed to welcoming visitors and engaging with the community.*

Likewise, my observation note what I found at my first visit to Balkumari School is that *I waited outside a locked gate for several minutes before the gatekeeper arrived. He asked several questions in a cautious tone before unlocking the gate. The heavy sound of the lock echoed an atmosphere of guardedness and control.*

These contrasting interactions were not incidental. They reflected deeper cultural frameworks and the leadership styles that influenced them. The presence of the Head teachers around the school compound, their frequent informal talks with the teachers, and the cordial relationship with parents promoted a culture of openness. Conversely, the Balkumari school Head teachers more encouraged a more organized, rule-based culture, which was orderly at times, inadvertently placing obstacles in the way of trust and approach. The initial impressions provided a framework for analysing the subsequent discussions.

### **Nitty-Gritty Practices of Trust Building Culture**

Small yet significant daily activities seemed to create a gradual and multi-tiered process that led to the establishment of a culture. The ethnographic evidence pointed to three closely connected areas where trust was built, reinforced, or put under strain. Patterns of communication played a significant role in determining how people

(teachers, parents, and students) perceived themselves to be heard, valued, and seriously considered. In an example of Panchakanya School, during a parent-teacher meeting, the head teacher talked nonstop for nearly an hour explaining how the school was progressing and their future steps.

From my observation note, it triggered me that; *The Head teachers spoke for a long time without asking any questions or interacting with parents. Parents paid quiet attention. Based on their passive behaviour, it can be noticed that they were used to such one-way communication.*

As a researcher, I was wondering at the start of this exchange: even though offering knowledge is a sign of accountability, the lack of interactive listening impedes the building of trust. It upholds its hierarchical standards rather than encouraging partnering collaborations. On the contrary, informal contacts did not lead to the creation of trust as much as the outside conversation of shorter length, greeting, or joint laughs, and showed less of the warmth of relationships. The symbolic meaning of the physical presence of the head teacher in open spaces in both schools was important. A proximity to teachers as well as students enhanced the accessibility perception.

As my observation notes, I found in the morning assembly that the head teacher walked along the student lines, quietly adjusting uniforms, nodding in recognition to teachers, and offering short greetings along the way. Instead of being imposed by official authority, these usual, frequently overlooked behaviours suggested that connections were being fostered by everyday attentiveness. The two schools used different communication approaches, which shaped how their staff members understood trust and built relationships. The information display system at Panchakanya School operated continuously to prevent confusion while keeping parents updated about school events. The school displayed its operations, which created better relations between students and their parents. The parents felt comfortable to approaching teachers and the head teacher because of this transparent approach.

At Balkumari School, however, there were communication gaps, which made parents rely more on informal communications and second-hand explanations. This indecisiveness gradually destroyed confidence and sometimes led to indecisiveness and silent anger. These seemingly unimportant managerial activities were not neutral, at least in ethnographical terms. They actively contributed to relationships because

they encouraged trust and openness or prevented the development of uncertainty and misunderstanding. These differences in procedural transparency affected procedural transparency views as perceived by parents. Following extensive and continuous observation, transparency came to be not just a bureaucratic requirement but a practice of relations indicating integrity, responsibility, and respect.

### **Meaning-Making through Immersive Field Experience**

The preliminary stage of the fieldwork slowly helped me to become more conscious of the how is formed due to the mundane activities, institutional practices, and daily communication between individuals in the school. At the same time, the same experiences helped me be more mindful of my role in the research process because it was brought back to my mind that what I saw and how I perceived it was based on my role as a researcher. I was informed that my perception of things and what I could see was influenced by my professional and personal experience in Nepal in the public school system. As opposed to that, I talked to various perspectives in a reflective approach in a bid to have a greater insight into the social and cultural processes happening in the field. With time, I learned that it is not the big steps that create trust and consequently, it is the small, consistent steps that do. Every little thing mattered, whether the school gate was open or closed, a teacher smiled warmly, the head teacher took time to listen, or the notice board was kept current. Collectively, they influenced how the school community experienced, understood, and maintained trust daily. These everyday practices accumulated into broader perceptions of school credibility and legitimacy. Observations and narratives from these initial visits served as the basis for concept analyses in subsequent sections. These experiences gave me the lived foundation needed to understand the complex realities of trust, culture, and leadership in Kathmandu's public schools.

### **School Culture in Building Community Trust**

As I spent time at the two schools that were the focus of this study, it became more and more clear that the school's culture is a key factor in how much trust and engagement communities have with the schools. In this setting, culture extended beyond everyday routines and internal norms to include deeper values and beliefs that reached beyond the school's physical boundaries, through regular visits to the schools, talking with parents and teachers, attending meetings, and reviewing school documents. I was able to observe how the school functioned in daily practice. The school's level of openness, friendliness, dedication, and commitment to common

values was a major factor in how well or poorly it got along with the people who lived nearby. If school leaders created a positive and cooperative environment, the community responded by trusting and getting involved.

In the course of my study, when I visited Panchakanya School, I found the environment of cultural roots and respect. I was warm and friendly right away. The school and the community were extremely experienced if they were in a similar space. Mr. Lama, the head teacher, had created a place where interactions and being involved were normal. For example, parents were not only welcome to contribute to the discussion; they were also required to do so. I observed this openly at multiple parent meetings when problems were spoken about freely, and solutions were worked out collectively. A teacher gently questioned a planned assessment schedule during a staff meeting. Mr. Lama didn't ignore the suggestion; instead, he fostered a group discussion and then changed the schedule based on what everyone agreed on. This short moment spoke a lot. Working together, this is what I learned about this school. It seems that all people know that their voice is important, even parents and teachers, and even children. The leadership is formed through discussion and not through the power of command. This mode of operation was cherished by parents whom I interviewed. One mother of a grade nine student mentioned:

*We participate in the process as well as receive updates on choices and modifications. We become more powerful, feel like we own something, and collaborate more effectively as a result of our involvement, which makes us crucial to the growth and success of the community. We think people are aware that we are present.*

A lot of indicators of an inclusive culture at this school included the use of bulletin boards full of student-created artwork and parent notices, friendly policies, and school growth plans, which included suggestions of community meetings. Individuals could rely on each other due to the aspect of mutual respect and a sense of openness in school. However, the cultural tone in Balkumari School was very different and strong with the focus being on responsibility, caring, and making things better by acting collectively. Due to Mr. Rai, the school grew to be a place where well-being and health are as important to students as education. I could see that teachers would frequently ask about families, moods, and problems that students were experiencing beyond the school environment. This particular care created a feeling of emotional comfort in the whole community. During one of the community

participation meetings, Mr. Rai fully disclosed information and problems dealing with school performance. He sought input on the part of the community, and the community responded respectfully, and not only that, but also in an engaging and supportive manner. As mentioned by an old parent:

*He not only presents an example of success, but he also openly discusses the challenges involved. His honesty and self-knowledge are also real, as he does not hide behind the curtain of presence, and since he is open to both good and bad, this openness causes us to trust him and makes him authentic.*

In the days that followed, I looked through school records and noticed that the meeting's recommendations had led to real progress, such as becoming welfare volunteers to teach students about cleanliness. This promise from leaders to follow through generated a cycle of trust: being open led to support, and support led to action. The environment at this location presents itself as both truthful and peaceful to me. Trust requires more than words because you need to demonstrate it through open communications active follow-up and genuine concern for others. The school culture received its direction from Mr. Rai because he led through his trustworthy and reliable approach to leadership. The belief existed that teachers would maintain their promises while leaders also upheld their commitments. This culture of responsibility wasn't hard to cope with; it was inspiring and very valued.

Tones of Panchakanya School and Balkumari School were different; one focused more on involving others, while the other was more concerned with people's emotions. But they both said the same thing: school culture is a reflection of leadership. The head teachers at both schools demonstrated values that emerged from the way staff members, students, and community members interacted with each other. The organization demonstrated its values through daily practice of respect and transparency and commitment. The evidence showed this through several essential behavioral patterns. At Panchakanya, people respected their time hence meetings were initiated and ended on schedule. At Balkumari, knowing was a praised thing in the community, and this message was sent that emotional intelligence was as important as making good grades at school. One of the members of the SMC chairperson told me:

*We trust the school not just because of what they say, but also because of what they do every day, how dedicated they are, and how they keep coming back*

*year after year with the same commitment to our children's growth, learning, and well-being.*

It emphasizes that trust must be established intentionally based on being fair, transparent and on sharing responsibility. It is this that makes changes in education attain permanence and success. The experience of attending these schools completely changed my understanding of what trust means. The evidence showed that trust develops through genuine actions rather than through elaborate systems or perfect organizational structures. The organization develops through cultural growth, which involves how staff members receive treatment, what opportunities become available and how the organization keeps its promises. People understand that culture exists beyond its background role because it serves as the primary space that determines whether trust develops or disappears. I thought that *Trust isn't preserved in a policy or a person; it exists in society*. It is mentioned in each meeting, movement and conversation. It is easy to trust the culture founded on such standards as transparency, understanding, diversity, and inclusiveness.

### **Transparency and Accountability in School Operations**

The community built trust in public schools through their practice of openness and their commitment to responsibility. The head teachers who cooperate and share their plans, strategies, progress, and challenges with the community while taking responsibility for results created trust with community members at Panchakanya School and Balkumari School. The study looked at the use of open decision making procedures and accountability in leadership in the two institutions. I examined the impacts of these behaviors on the level of confidence of all the involved stakeholders. The open culture in the organization at Panchakanya School was seen in its decision making process as well as its observance of all elements within the organization to make their objections. I also attended many parent meetings and SMCs since I was visiting the place frequently. Mr. Lama had provided the headmaster with financial reports and student achievement outcomes and strategic plans to expand the school. He issued printed reports which presented financial expenditures as well as resource usage in such meetings. He asked parents and SMC members to assist him in reviewing and providing feedback on all documents.

I noticed Mr. Lama in the midst of his presentation giving an explanation on the spending of extracurricular programs after a committee member raised their problem during one of the SMC meetings. Not only did he provide a clear explanation

of the expenditures, but he also provided the receipts and the activity reports to demonstrate that the money was spent properly. I observed that Mr. Lama did not make any defensive correlation in his statement. His frankness enabled people to trust him even more. He employed facts rather than authority in order to make his case. This incident demonstrated that openness is effective in reducing stress and generating trust. Teachers said the same during the interviews. One teacher said,

*We are always kept up to date on all important issues, such as changes in policies, training funds, and detailed reports on how well teachers are doing. This keeps things open and lets us make informed decisions that will make the school a better place for everyone.*

We believe we maintain control while receiving the recognition we deserve. The school displayed its monthly reports, academic calendars and audit updates through its notice boards, which were accessible to everyone. Students at the school possessed knowledge about the situation. The head teacher presented updates about the ongoing school renovation project during the morning assembly. The process maintained continuous updates for all participants, including students who took part in the assignment. The main objective at Balkumari School involved both knowledge dissemination and teaching students to become accountable for their decisions. Mr. Rai established a system of accountability through his practice of conducting regular, important dialogues with school personnel and local community members. During a staff meeting, there was a talk about how fewer eighth graders were showing up to school. This was one of the most interesting things that happened. Mr. Rai didn't blame the students or the teachers in any way. Instead, he publicly admitted there was a problem and recommended that teachers and parents work together to find possible solutions by forming a joint task team. Mr. Rai made the following statement at the meeting;

*Problems will not disappear when you choose to ignore them because they will only create obstacles that block your path to progress. Our problems become solvable when we share our truth while we dedicate ourselves to working together through honesty, and patience, and teamwork.*

Parents appreciated this honesty. One mother shared during an interview:

*Mr. Rai never hides anything, even when things are hard or things go wrong. That honesty makes him stand out. He communicates to us openly and shares*

*information with us before decisions are made. This openness is why we still trust him.*

The documents also fully showed this way of thinking. There was a public notice at the main gate that talked about how the school did each year and what might be improved. I looked over the notice and read it. Along with a list of achievements, it also had a list of challenges, such as the need for more cleanliness and the goal of getting more women involved in the scientific community. Also, the practices that were followed gave a sense of duty. One teacher stated:

*It's not about blaming others or looking for mistakes; it's about being honest and humble about where we fall short. Such a mindset leaves room for improvement whereby all people desire to improve, and no single individual has to work hard.*

The head teacher would often walk into classes to look at how the teachers were doing their jobs, not as a critic but as a coach. Teachers had to present reports on how their students were doing every week. People thought that these things were helping rather than monitoring. While they implemented different methods, both schools followed the same basic guideline: others feel more confident when they see leaders accepting responsibility for what they say and do. During the Panchakanya School, it was shown by the use of organizational tools like participatory planning and open budgets. In the school of Balkumari, individuals demonstrated their loyalty to it by being truthful and doing community business daily. In both scenarios, individuals never feared answering to anyone; such was the way things were. Having reviewed the documents, it became clear that all institutions have their own regulations to monitor, provide feedback, and report. Of greater interest is the fact that these procedures were actually being practiced rather than being documented in the policy. The clear trail of openness was achieved with the help of such tools as announcements, school meeting minutes, and open displays of goals and outcomes.

In one meeting SMC chairperson of Balkumari mentioned:

*They are sincere even where the truth hurts; they do not only say what we like. The transparency of that openness enhances credibility. It demonstrates their regard for us as participants as well as parents. We still fully support them because of this.*

The school's cultural environment taught me that accountability and transparency existed as practical principles that staff members actively implemented.

School leaders built their credibility through three essential elements, which included integrity and humility, and a collective feeling of duty. The team did not need trust because they earned it through their practice of being transparent and their ability to keep their promises.

### **School Discipline and Its Reflection in the Community**

The way public schools enforce discipline at Panchakanya School and Balkumari School determines how local communities view these institutions, according to my detailed research at these schools. The purpose of classroom discipline was extended beyond maintaining classroom order because it served as a manifestation of the core values that the school promoted to show that the school supported safety, fairness and mutual respect. The way schools managed student conduct through established rules and scheduled activities, and personal connections between students and staff members, directly affected how students developed their moral values and what the public perceived about these schools.

In Panchakanya School, their discipline was not administered in a hierarchical manner. Rather, it was an interdisciplinary approach that involved parents, teachers and students. Mr. Lama, the Head teacher, worked hard to create an environment that was good for working together to solve problems and understand each other. During my stay, I saw two children arguing with each other one day. Their teacher wasn't shouting at them; instead, she gently pulled them aside and led them through a brief, meaningful talk to help them see things from one another's points of view. Later, both children's parents were asked to come to school, not to blame anybody, but to talk about how they might help that day. That discipline here feels more like mentorship than management. It's not only about managing behaviour; it's also about building relationships and shaping young minds. Parents I interviewed spoke positively about this approach:

*The school does not immediately place blame when something goes wrong. Instead, they work with us to jointly find a solution. In the school community, this collaborative approach encourages a strong sense of trust and shared responsibility while making us feel appreciated and respected.*

One thing that remained unclear was how committed the school was to being open and honest. The School Management Committee and the parents worked together to establish their Code of Conduct. It was easy to read and plainly posted. This openness gave the school a strong image of fairness and inclusiveness in the eyes

of the community, which made others feel like they were all responsible for what happened

A culture of discipline that was based on emotional care and personal responsibility was something that I observed at Balkumari School, *Respect and Responsibility* was the name of an initiative that was initiated by Mr. Rai, the head teacher of the school. The program was observed throughout the school setting, on posters, at school assemblies, and in the classroom lessons. One of the classes that I witnessed, and a student who caused an inconvenience during the session, was not punished harshly. Instead of that, the teacher applied a calm tone and encouraged the student to think about the consequences of their actions on other individuals. After that, the teacher involved the student in a peer discussion group to promote accountability and empathy.

In one of the meetings with the teacher and the parents, I observed that we complimented the behaviour of the students as much as we complimented their academic achievements. Mr. Rai himself had publicly recognized the students who had shown any improvement in their attitude and discipline, and one of the parents replied, saying:

*Punishment in this case does not appear like punishment but like guidance. It is an element in the way our children can learn better choices, the consequences of their actions, and become better citizens. They are not afraid of it; it's a good part of their development.*

I found that there were clear processes in place for dealing with behaviour reflection notebooks, counseling sessions, and follow-ups that involved both parents and occasionally respected community elders. This was found when I reviewed the records that were provided by the school. These strategies enhanced the school's reputation in the eyes of the larger community while also contributing to the maintenance of a supportive learning environment that was supportive. As I progressed through my observational training, I became aware that there was an opportunity for me to develop. When students make mistakes, they are reminded that they are still appreciated, even though they are not perfect. Beyond the confines of the school, this profound concern creates a lasting respect in the community. Although the two schools made full use of different methods, both demonstrated that the internal affairs of the school are closely related to its culture. The Panchakanya School emphasizes democracy and students' participation; however, this is not the

case in the Balkumari School. Here, the students are taught to be mindful of their emotions and to have consistent behaviour.

The objective of corporal punishment at these schools was not merely a form of student punishment but rather the development of a character that was well disciplined and responsible. Its impact was not limited to the classroom either. Children from these schools, who are often seen in public, display good manners. They helped elderly people, spoke properly, and interacted with confidence. The things they do show the cultures that are present in the schools, and the community trusts them. As one community elder said to me:

*We understand the school by observing the students, not just by reading reports or attending meetings. Their confidence, morality, and manners represent the values that they are taught. Their actions reveal many things about the leadership and culture of the school.*

During my research, I was able to realize that discipline is not a set of rules that are very strict, but a mirror of the inner processes of school. When discipline is founded on care, justice, and teamwork, it becomes a powerful tool in the building of trust not only between students but also between the school and the community it serves. The trust that is given can have either a positive or a negative implication. In essence, it is actually our kindness to all human beings and our concern for their welfare that is the true foundation of trust, rather than the wish to exert power over others. As one thinks about this concept, several points stand out. In my time at the school, I came to understand discipline to be what keeps the school's tradition going. Trust in an institution is fostered when its leaders combine honesty with compassion.

### **Leadership Practices and Development of Trust**

During my time in the field, I realized that the level of trust in schools by the community does not happen randomly. I can understand the needs of the children based on my direct observations of classes, contact with teachers, parents, and community members. The daily operations of the schools are conditional upon the measures undertaken by the leadership group. The main factors that have contributed to the development of confidence in both Panchakanya School and Balkumari School are associated with the consistent presence of the head teachers, their fair dispute resolution, listening, and sharing school decisions. One remarkable incident that I witnessed in the Balkumari School was a leadership practice. One day, the head

teacher at Balkumari School conducted a discussion about future school programming during a staff meeting. Mr. Rai said:

*Your voices matter, sincerely looking across the room. He then asked all of the teachers to express their thoughts and opinions. Let's work together to create plans because real progress occurs when everyone respects one another and works towards the same objective.*

This participatory method of leadership practices established the foundation for my interpretation of his leadership style, which emphasized collaboration and inclusivity in the school. It is one of the ways to win building culture of trust in of the school. I learnt this by observing. In the school, these behaviours weren't different from the regular routines that people followed; instead, they were built into how people interacted with each other, made decisions, and helped each other.

I found a culture of openness and shared leadership in the Panchakanya School. It was during the start of the terminal examination, there was a staff meeting that I attended a staff meeting. At, that meeting, all the teaching and non-teaching staffs were present. I was at the meeting before starting, five minutes after Mr. Lama, the Head teacher of Panchakanya School, arrived at the meeting setting agendas later on, gradually other teachers and staff came, and the meeting started with a review of the last staff meeting. It shows that one of the conscious and proactive leaders was because he was open and appreciated the involvement of everyone in the school community. He made sure that everyone had a chance to express themselves, whether it was in a casual conversation in the school yard or a formal meeting with the staff. He made an environment where people didn't just think they were being listened to; they truly felt like they were being heard. He desired teachers, parents, and the School Management Committee to give their opinions. I remember being at a staff meeting to talk about modifications to the curriculum that were being suggested. Mr. Lama did not provide the team a set agenda; instead, he asked for their opinions and let them have a free discussion. In response, the teachers gave useful feedback, and some of their ideas were later used in the program's fresh content. A teacher said what many individuals seemed to believe:

*He doesn't just want us to do something because it's a formality or because we have to. When he says, "What do you think?" He really wants to know what we think and values our input, which shows that he respects our ideas and points of view.*

The mindset of acceptance also included how problems were resolved. After two staff members disagreed about their job responsibilities, Mr. Lama advised them to engage in a calm and led discussion about it. He wasn't encouraging them about finding a solution; rather, he assisted them in talking about it. Upon solving the issue without complications, neither teacher felt insulted upon exiting the classroom. I observed that the leaders' power comes from their ability to be humble. Mr. Lama helps people feel like they are all responsible for something by stepping back and letting others take charge. It's not about control; it's about working together. Mr. Rai, the Head teacher of Balkumari School, enjoyed a leadership style that was just as powerful, but he demonstrated it differently. Everyone at school respected him because he was frequently calm and steady. He showed what is known as "visible leadership," which means being fair, open, and always available. I often saw students and parents simply stopping by his office to greet him, thank you, and he always gave them a warm greeting when they did.

The teachers gathered at a meeting where a teacher expressed their concerns regarding the sharing of school learning resources. That experience really had a lasting impact on me. He didn't dismiss that comment, however. The person was courteous in their response, acknowledged the issue, and suggested a way of recording the resources in the future. A number of teachers said that small acts made them trust his leadership even more. One teacher eagerly said:

*He maintains a patient and open listening attitude during all conversations including those that become uncomfortable and contain challenging feedback. He actively participates in difficult conversations and faces facts but his direct approach to handling problems earns him our deepest admiration and confidence.*

Decisions taken by Mr. Rai which had a variety of consequences, were implemented with greater transparency. During my term on the school management committee, the chairman informed us about the school's financial situation and its future developments. He clarified all his points in a way that was easy to grasp and sought input from the participants on how to make things even better. The fact that the school was more open to new ideas meant that local leaders felt more inclined to get involved, and the school consequently performed better as a result. I observed many similar things in the leadership practices at both schools that helped build trust. Leaders who demonstrated honesty and involved others in important decisions while

showing steady behavior and quick action during difficult times received positive feedback. The interview responses and meeting documentation from teachers and parents showed they experienced respect and received information and active participation during the process. The positive statements developed into actual institutional trust between the organization and its members.

The issues made me understand that trust develops through leadership positions and extensive authority does not create it. The development of this quality occurs through time as people perform specific actions. School leadership effectiveness grows when leaders demonstrate humility instead of authoritarian behavior while maintaining transparency and using dialogue instead of issuing commands. The observations I made during my fieldwork revealed that leadership emerged from individual members rather than from top-down leadership. Head teachers who maintain honesty and show care for their students transform their educational institutions into institutions which students trust. The two schools I visited allowed me to witness how leadership styles create distinct emotional environments throughout the educational facilities. Leaders who demonstrate inclusion and transparency and maintain fairness through their actions will naturally develop trust with their followers. The school identifies itself through this particular aspect. The community now views the school as a trusted ally that extends its role beyond being an educational facility to become a reliable partner for children who live in the surrounding area. With the help of this kind of leadership, the schools in Panchakanya and Balkumari were converted into places of trust, where individuals felt that they were seen, listened to, and appreciated. With regard to each of these groups, this was the scenario.

### **Cultural Change in Public Schools**

The contemporary subject of Cultural Change in Public Schools came up when I was working at two public schools, Panchakanya School and Balkumari School. After weeks of observing, discussing to head teachers, teachers, parents, and members of the School Management Committee, reviewing over internal documents and records, it became obvious that both schools will be going through an ongoing but significant change in culture. These changes don't happen all at once or in the same way. They occur due to shifting ideals, collective leadership, and greater attachment to their surrounding community. What once was a strict, top-down space is increasingly becoming a more open, participatory, student-centered space in which

individuals are listened to, and relationships are valued. In his regards, what I found is that the cultural setting in Panchakanya School is changing slowly but surely. In the past, this school had a strict hierarchy where decisions came from the top, and there wasn't much space for discussion. However, now there is a new voice of openness, engagement, and appreciation of each other. Mr. Lama, the Head teacher has played a large role in this shift, but not by foisting it upon others. Instead, he has welcomed it.

The staff meetings I attended showed that all teachers, including those who joined recently, felt at ease to contributing their thoughts to the group. A young teacher proposed an original method to conduct student assessments. The proposal received so little attention that it generated interest, which led to a team discussion about its content. The current practice of community involvement operates through a system that differs from previous times because preservation meeting records demonstrate that single individuals controlled all decision-making processes. As one experienced teacher told me:

*It used to be all about getting advice and following orders from the top. Now, it's about sharing ideas, seeing things from different points of view, and making plans together. We don't just follow anymore; we think we're really working together to make a significant difference.*

The cultural change extended its impact to areas that went beyond the staff room. Parent meetings evolved from their original purpose of information sharing into spaces that families used to discuss all matters including school infrastructure and extracurricular programs. The parent conference revealed to me that the new interest had been properly documented. People were laughing, telling tales, and being honest with each other. The lines that separate educational facilities from local communities have started to fade away. The process of discussion and shared ownership continues to gain momentum, although participation issues remain a challenge. The school operates under a new system that combines democratic decision-making with relationship-based management.

The educational environment at Balkumari School now focuses on emotional support and community development as its core cultural values. The school used to focus mainly on maintaining discipline, while students needed to achieve high academic grades. The school has developed a child-focused, community-oriented culture since Mr. Rai became the leader. People can easily notice the evidence that proves this transformation. The school walls display posters that display two

messages: *Respect Our Rule* and *We Put Students First*. The educational spaces maintain their bright atmosphere while providing students with engaging environments that promote their active participation instead of requiring them to follow rules. The students at the school practiced mindfulness during their morning assembly, while they also shared stories that demonstrated their ability to show empathy and compassion beyond their academic achievements. This is what the teacher said during our morning meeting:

*The old idea of discipline required that people were supposed to be quiet and to follow whatever they were instructed to do without a question. The term has now been used to denote a person who is an active participant with the aspect of attention and awareness. Our approach to student interaction involves listening to their opinions while offering empathetic guidance and promoting responsibility instead of enforcing strict obedience.*

The school needs to establish better connections with its community through this cultural transformation. Parents are now participating in school activities, and they assist in organizing events that take place outside the school. We were obligated to attend an extraordinary event where a local elder told us about his knowledge of environmental protection, incorporating his native knowledge with the educational concepts we learned. The entire society seemed to be brought together at that instance through the school. The school provides education while actively listening to its students. The mission extends beyond curriculum delivery because it requires the restoration of community values. The educational institution faces two main challenges because it lacks sufficient funding, and parents base their educational standards on their personal learning experiences, yet the institution continues to advance toward inclusive education and community-oriented learning.

The cultural transformation of Panchakanya or Balkumari resulted from multiple factors that cannot be attributed to any particular event or policy. The process advances through time by making small changes which occur gradually. The display would also appear in student-led assemblies and newly designed areas. Sometimes it manifests when a parent is asked to share their thoughts in front of the class or when the Head teacher stops by to ask a teacher what they think. School improvement plans together with meeting minutes serve as internal documents that demonstrate how the organization has made student input, teacher collaboration, and family involvement more important. The small yet ongoing changes indicate that society now sees public

education as an environment that serves educational purposes and community development, communication needs, and social connection.

The cultural transformation at both schools became apparent through direct experiences instead of official declarations. The greetings bring kindness while meetings remain transparent, and children receive respectful treatment. The story develops through normal daily events, which eventually create an extensive narrative. The fieldwork revealed multiple small moments that together formed a powerful visual representation of this gradual transformation. Mr. Lama achieved the transition from hierarchical to shared voice structure through his purposeful repeated behavior at Panchakanya School. Mr. Lama regularly used the school messenger group to share meeting details with teachers, who then received his aggressive requests for feedback before official discussions began. The teachers received appreciation through this small action, which motivated them to take an active part. Rajan Takuri, who serves as SMC chairperson explained that projects such as well construction and rainwater harvesting require teamwork according to him:

*The work requires both of us to perform our tasks independently. We support each other throughout our journey by distributing work responsibilities and by exchanging both our challenges and our achievements. The spirit of cooperation and mutual effort between us enables us to achieve our shared goals while building a stronger bond between us.*

The community transitioned from receiving orders from above to working together as a group, which resulted in bettering their physical environment through collective property management. Mr. Lama achieved two important goals by entering the community to speak with the Tamang people through their native language and traditional customs which helped him build trust through his approachable nature and his understanding of their cultural background. The school operations at Balkumari School demonstrated the cultural change that brought emotional support and community participation into daily activities. The staff members felt comfortable discussing their problems because Mr. Rai provided friendly and accessible leadership which one teacher described as excellent listening abilities. The government showed its commitment to transparency through direct listening which focused on people's actual experiences of being heard instead of following policy guidelines. The programs *Ramilo Shukraba* (Fun Friday) and CSN school leader teacher received positive feedback from parents including Chiranjivi Pokharel, because they assisted

with teacher deployment and project implementation. The programs operated as extracurricular activities, which created a community network that extended academic learning by establishing the school as a central part of daily life and health in the community. Mr. Rai transformed the internal culture through *administrative socialism*, which made staff members take responsibility and study their individual characteristics in detail, and recognize team achievements, while he minimized his personal recognition. There was less emphasis on individual authority and more collaboration.

The process of cultural transformation occurs through slow and human-oriented changes, which I discovered. The behavior appears through our physical conduct, our social bonds with others, and our ability to learn from different viewpoints. The two educational institutions continue their development journey, while their educational approaches have evolved from authoritarian to collaborative and from punitive to supportive. The team works to transform their work methods while they rebuild public school confidence and pride through their efforts in one classroom and one community at a time. The development of genuine power shifts, together with mutual value commitment, leads to a strong, enduring trust relationship that emerges from ongoing positive small-scale actions.

### **Discussion**

The following section analyzes and interprets the ethnographic data that was presented earlier. The previous chapter explained what occurred during field immersion at Panchakanya and Balkumari Schools by detailing all observed events. The following section examines these results through the lenses of Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT) and Social Constructivist Theory (SCT) and existing research about school culture and trust development. The research aims to study how leadership actions, community interactions, and daily school activities created the meaning of the event. Creswell (2013) explains that ethnography requires researchers to study behavior while they also need to understand cultural practices within their actual environments.

#### **Society Creates and Negotiates Trust**

A significant finding from the fieldwork is that trust in public schools is not a permanent attribute; rather, it is a relational, dynamic, and socially constructed phenomenon. According to Bryk and Schneider's (2002) study on relational trust, trust at both schools emerged from daily interactions represented by respect, competence,

personal regard, and integrity. The ethnographic context revealed that an additional cultural dimension of trust was shaped by local values such as *Ijjaat* (respect), *Sachchai* (honesty), and *Jimmedari* (responsibility). The views of parents on teaching methods were shaped by the National Curriculum and national assessments.

According to social constructivist theory, trust emerges from dialogue and extended interaction between people (Vygotsky, 1978). When head teachers create a working environment where all members of the school community are encouraged to contribute, to discuss openly, and work together in solving problems, trust becomes a shared value within the school rather than a characteristic of the leader alone. This foundation of trust is constructed by the way parents and teachers interact with each other, the discipline methods used by teachers, the clarity of school rules and policies, and the availability and emotional support provided by school administrators

### **Head teachers as Cultural Leaders rather than Administrative Managers**

The fieldwork showed that the head teachers' most important contributions were cultural, even though they both had a lot of administrative work to do. They were more interested in understanding, relationships, and symbols than just technical skills. Transformational Leadership Theory is close to this. It says that leaders should show their values, inspire people with their vision, and promote teamwork (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Repeated observations showed that the head teachers' actual presence at assemblies, classroom rounds, and casual courtyard exchanges were symbolic signs of leadership. Fullan (2001) explains that leaders create powerful messages that people detect through their observations of their behavior. Mr. Lama showed friendliness by means of his easy dealings he had with teachers and parents in Panchakanya School which meant he was ready to interact with them. It was assumed that Mr. Rai was truthful and trustworthy due to his ability to remain calm when the Balkumari School incident happened. Moral authority in the little things was shown, and this is what helped teachers and students, and parents to build trust between them.

Both head teachers did interpretive work to help parents and staffs understand the changes, problems, and shared goals at school. Their leadership involved narrating stories, elucidating concepts, and reconciling diverse expectations. This aligns with Schein's (2010) assertion that leaders are the primary guardians of organizational culture. Meaning-making revealed that head teachers in Nepali public schools are not just in charge of managing the school; they are also cultural leaders who establish the rules, values, and identity of the school.

### **School Culture as Basis for Trust and Learning**

Ethnographic immersion showed that trust cannot be understood independently of school culture. Culture manifested in routines, rituals, displays, language, relationships, and norms of behavior created an environment where trust was developed or diminished. The discipline came out to indicate that there were various cultural climates initially: The open gates, approachable teachers, and numerous informal contacts in Panchakanya School indicated that it was a friendly and open school. The school's security guard, working as a gatekeeper was, watchful, careful, and the organization at Balkumari School was formal, which indicated a safe and well-organized culture. These symbolic components showed how each school really felt about trust, safety, and getting involved in the community. This supports what Deal and Peterson (2009) articulate that culture can be seen in everyday actions and symbols. Both schools had stopped using punishment and started using relationships to discipline. Students were taught how to solve their problems; think about how they acted badly, and understand what would happen if they did. This was a way of doing things that was based on caring instead of punishing. This kind of punishment made students feel like they belonged, made the school look better to the public, and made the community more aware of the students' character. These kinds of discipline show how important SCT is for learning through social interaction and shared norms (Vygotsky, 1978).

### **The Way to Build Trust by Taking Small Steps that Lead to Big Changes**

The ethnographic data indicated that trust was cultivated through minor, regular actions, micro-interactions that developed in robust cultural narratives. Trust was not just one thing; it was a set of actions and systems. Everyone at Panchakanya could see the minutes of the SMC meetings, the schedules for tests, and the school's financial information. Parents and teachers liked how open the school was: *They tell us everything, even when things are not going well.* As mentioned by the SMC Member. Bass (1998) said that transformational leadership should be open and honest, which made credibility and legitimacy stronger. Both head teachers often asked teachers and parents to speak up during meetings. Mr. Lama told the junior teachers to take the lead in changing the curriculum. Mr. Rai often told parents how their children were doing. Leithwood and Mascall (2008) articulate that working together makes people feel more responsible and trusting. This kind of openness resembles that. Teachers often described the head teachers as *always available, calm,*

and *fair*. These emotional traits made the workplace more predictable, which helped coworkers, trust each other more. Consequently, trust has been established by continuously performing well on minor tasks rather than taking on large-scale initiatives.

### **Change in Culture is Progressive and Situational**

The cultures of both schools were slowly changing. These changes did not happen all at once. They happened over time through many conversations, new habits, and small acts of leadership. At Panchakanya, meetings went from being run from the top down to being run from the bottom up. At Balkumari, assemblies turned into events that were all about the students. Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) are correct in claiming that cultural transformation requires time, collaboration, and alignment between beliefs and actions. Constructivism believes that cultural change emerged from the collaborative efforts of teachers, parents, students, and leaders, rather than being imposed by a higher authority (Wenger, 1998). In real life, it was clear that people were going from being suspicious to trusting, from being in charge to working together, and from being alone to being part of the community.

### **Understanding Trust in Public School Leadership**

Social and organizational constructs were identified through analysis of a variety of sources such as observations, documentation, and interviews. These constructs were based on trust which is culturally derived and based upon relationships and situations, not technology. True, leadership is about commanding loyalty, not merely giving orders. It relies on the team leader's willingness to listen, be fair, and demonstrate integrity. The credibility of Nepal's state-run schools can only be restored if parents get involved. School culture serves as the most effective indicator of interpersonal trust because it determines how people interpret both actions and intentions. The development of trust occurs through mechanisms that Social Constructivism Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory explain. Research indicates that public schools need trust as an essential element that develops through leaders who demonstrate ethical behavior and build relationships while upholding community values and promoting shared accountability.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter revealed and outlined the results of an ethnographic research done in two state schools in Budhanilkantha Municipality. The research indicated that the school culture is of critical significance in promoting relationships and creating

trust among teachers, students, parents, and the community. The research established that relational discipline, together with ethical leadership, open management, and decision involvement create essential conditions for building trust. The chapter demonstrated that public schools experience deep cultural transformation through three essential elements, which include shared beliefs, consistent leadership actions, and proper treatment of people. The research shows that public schools need purposeful leadership methods that promote equality, open communication and team solidarity to develop student trust instead of depending on random events. The research adds new knowledge to existing studies about school leadership and trust development and cultural change in Nepalese public educational institutions through its analysis of ethnographic data, which uses Socio-Cultural Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory.

The research results demonstrate that head teachers' regular school activities create public school trust more effectively than official educational policies do. The development of trust depends more on small yet regular actions, which include greeting parents with respect and financial transparency, classroom attendance and prompt complaint resolution, and fair treatment rather than official documents and strategic plans. This argument is based on earlier research in Nepali public schools that showed that trust is built through relationships, rather than written rules. Therefore, trust-building should be considered as an ongoing, relational leadership initiative integrated within the educational setting.

Head teachers are cultural mediators who help the community understand what public schools are and what they mean to them. The research results show that head teachers at Kathmandu public schools serve as cultural mediators because they translate and manage the school-community bond. The school leadership determines how parents, teachers, and students view the school's reputation, together with its credibility and educational values. The research shows that head teachers directly shape the cultural story which schools present to their community through their actions. Head teachers lead the transition of schools from hierarchical systems that follow rules to collaborative environments that depend on trust between staff members. The organization achieves this through three main strategies which include promoting teacher professionalism, implementing group decision processes, demonstrating collective organizational values.

The research results demonstrate that transformational leadership creates substantial effects on public school culture through its foundation of moral conduct, collective participation, and defined objectives. The public school community will regain trust through transformational leadership approaches, which include developing a common vision and involving all stakeholders in choices, providing teachers with increased autonomy, and establishing organizational frameworks. The claim contributes to our understanding by demonstrating that cultural changes occur in Nepali public schools with limited resources through leadership that promotes interpersonal accountability and shared responsibility within the school community, rather than merely through modification to the school's structure.

## CHAPTER V

### REFLECTION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter reflects on the researcher's ethnographic journey and explores the two roles of participant and observer. It also discusses how important it is to be reflexive when trying to understand trust and leadership in public schools. It ends with the assertion that trust is the key component of a strong school culture and a sustainable change. During my observation, I learned that openness and honesty, responsibility, relational discipline, and being a leader who invites participation are some of the ways one can establish trust. Another key cultural change agent is teachers since they are able to make their classrooms welcoming and help students collaborate. Here we also discuss its implications on future research, policy makers, school management committees (SMCs), parents, as well as teachers in schools. It emphasizes that trust must be established intentionally based on being fair, transparent and on sharing responsibility. This is what contributes to the permanence and success of change in education.

#### **Reflection**

As a researcher, by getting experience in public education, carrying out this ethnographic study helped me to think about and change my everyday activities while gaining insights into the educational system. It was easier for me to fit in because I was already used to being in a classroom. Nevertheless, I also understood that I had to put my own ideas aside and be open to what other people had to say. This tension between being familiar with the subject and being an outsider created what Emerson et al. (2011) call the dual presence of the ethnographer: they were both a participant and an observer, always negotiating how close or far away they were.

It was unforgettable for me when the first impression I had upon visiting Panchakanya School and Balkumari School for my observation was one of friendliness and acceptance for me in both schools. At the moment, I felt very happy because Head teachers, teachers, students, and even parents were happy to meet me. Sometimes I was part of the social rhythm of the schools, like when I ate lunch with staff, talked to students on the playground, or listened to parents at meetings. In those cases, I felt like I was part of what Spradley (1980) called the everyday life world of the people who were taking part. But the role of observer, or someone who questions

and interprets, never really went away. I maintained a rigid routine, which included recording field notes and inquiring about observed events, and I paid close attention to both unspoken moments and conflicting statements and nonverbal physical cues. I watched staff meetings, which supported inclusive leadership, to study how team members participated during these events. I observed which team members actively participated in discussions while others stayed quiet, and their suggestions went unnoticed by others. The research required careful analysis because ethnography functions as a hermeneutic, method which needs interpretation to understand its results. According to Geertz (1973), ethnographic understanding requires more than information collection because it needs detailed descriptions to understand how people interpret their actions and symbols, and collective meanings.

The understanding of trust emerged from sources that included policy documents and formal interviews. Rather than emerging from formal sources, trust became visible through sustained and attentive observation. I have observed it in little, deceptive situations: a teacher speaking with a student in a calm voice after the lesson, a parent who comes to the head teacher without even an appointment, or a head teacher who decides to listen to a person instead of telling him what to do. These daily experiences showed the way the trust was built and perceived in the school setting. Every situation has its cultural interpretation based on the individuals who are involved in the situation and the external conditions. I also attempted to reflect on how my cultural background and experience in the profession influenced what I saw and how I perceived these interactions in the process. At first, according to my experience of education, I was predisposed to understand the concept of trust as it is applied to organizations, i.e., the presence of clear rules, timely communication, and performance goal measurability.

This, however, changed as I increased my interest in the field. I also understood that trust in such school communities was not achieved by the formal systems only, but by daily interactions and emotional ties. Parents would always tell how they felt appreciated when teachers would take the time to explain in a patient, nonjudgmental manner. Teachers, in turn, expressed trust in school leadership not only because head teachers fulfilled their professional responsibilities, but because they showed care and behaved consistently over time.

My changing confidence in leadership and trust guided me to employ the transformational leadership theory and social constructivist theory as the guiding

frameworks as the study continued. Initially, I thought that people felt trust in the head teachers because of their official position, their authority over disciplinary measures or their headship in the school. Nevertheless, a more in-depth involvement in the field showed that the situation was different. The most trust was reached when the head teachers were just, modest, and understanding as to how their behavior was viewed by other individuals. This result closely corresponds to the variables of Transformational Leadership Theory introduced by Bass (1998), namely, the individualized consideration, wherein the leaders have an understanding of individual needs of the people, and idealized influence, wherein the leaders instill an impression of trust by treating the people fairly and honestly. The theories have assisted me in interpreting practical observations in theory.

Over repeated visits, I came to learn that trust wasn't a fixed thing; it grew every day through the interactions between parents, students, teachers, and head teachers. This is very close to social constructivist theory. It states that the meaning and social reality are not fixed, but they are constructed together through relationships, discussions, and common activities (Gergen, 2009). The adoption of this perspective allowed me to understand trust as a societal, relational, and dynamic process, as opposed to an individual personal feature of leaders. I used the two theories since they are the most precise in explaining both of the elements of my findings, which include transformational leadership theory as the means of creating trust and social constructivism as the means of interaction between people that contribute to creating and maintaining trust.

My ethnographic journal became a place for me to think critically. I wondered more than once if my being there had changed the dynamics I was trying to observe. For example, did teachers talk to me more politely? Did head teachers start to act more in front of me? These worries are similar to what reflexive ethnographers like Davies (2008) has mentioned: researchers are never neutral tools; our presence always changes the field in some way. I saw this stress not as a problem, but as a part of the truth of ethnographic research. In addition, the schools themselves were not fixed places. They were living in changing ecosystems that were shaped by people's actions, cultural history, economic conditions, and policy frameworks. The more time I spent in classrooms, staff rooms, and community spaces, the more I realized that trust wasn't something you could measure; it was something you had to feel, interpret, and experience.

In this way, the field served as a mirror that not only showed me how public schools build trust, but also made me think about my own views on leadership, public education, and change. I was touched by how powerful the teachers who taught in low-resource schools were and the parents who in some way attempted to improve schools even despite not being good readers or writers, and students who managed to be disciplined and hopeful even in tough times. This study transcended the scope of an academic exercise and contributed something significant to my practice as a professional, as well as to my personal knowledge. It helped me realize that one cannot build trust in a vacuum but rather in a relationship and through living in community. It was also revealed in the study that the head teachers who lead with empathy and true concern are not just administrators, but they do indeed create the culture of the school. Also, reflexivity in ethnographic studies is not merely a technical mandate.

It is an approach of conceptualization of construction of knowledge and responsibility to ethics. It implies that the researcher must own the field, continue to ask questions regarding what is known, and be open to changing due to the process. According to Van Maanen (2011), ethnography is as learning to see as it is learning to say. In this view, trust to me seemed not only in what people did, but also how they were towards each other. As a researcher and observer, I can now have a better understanding of the multi-affectedness of daily school life since the concept of leadership is articulated in various ways based on the cultural context. This close engagement showed that effective head teachers were successful not simply because they followed established theories, but because they acted as cultural interpreters. They could borrow wider educational practices and remake them to suit their own school cultures, making them feel significant and relevant.

### **Conclusion of the Study**

This is the basic assumption of this study that trust is the key element in a healthy school culture, which is not only justified by the results but also proved to be the moving factor in sustainable educational change. This study of head teachers' leadership practices in Kathmandu shows that trust does not develop by chance or remain a secondary outcome of leadership. Rather, it emerges through conscious effort and ongoing human interaction. The head teachers observed in this research drew on widely recognized leadership ideas, but they applied them in ways that made sense within their own local settings. In this way, they could have made a positive

change in their school communities that would have been meaningful and long-lasting. The study came up with five core concepts: community engagement, transparency and accountability, relational discipline, participatory leadership, and cultural change. These factors do not operate separately. Instead, they are connected and complement each other to establish and support a culture of trust in the schools.

The move towards community integration being the norm involved a change from institutional care to community involvement. With community involvement, schools developed into outward-facing institutions, rather than being inward-looking, as head teachers opened them to the public. Gradually these leaders, who were part of the community, broke down long-standing barriers between the community and the school by engaging in the community's life and encouraging open dialogue for the betterment of the public schools.

The presence of the head teachers in showing their sincerity in the form of commitment assisted in the cultivation of the feeling of association and belonging to the community. This effort went far beyond image-building or public relations. It involved the careful formation of a shared identity and marked the first and most important step toward establishing trust. Trust, however, did not emerge automatically. It was constructed deliberately and with transparency and responsibility. The head teachers have realized that trust should be gained with time. The open-door policy they have adopted, regular public meetings, and access of school information, including financial records and the results of student performance, among others, made sure that the trust was based on facts, not speculations and gossip. Such transparency had a strong force to suppress suspicion since the stakeholders could easily understand that the school was under management in an honest and responsible manner.

The school's management felt that the confidence of both the students and the teachers was boosted by moving from a strict, hierarchical system of discipline to one that relied on relationships. This shift was a significant change in view because it changed the attitude of control to empathy and restorative practices. Rather than focusing on the consequences of the misbehavior of the students, the head teachers turned their attention to the underlying causes of the problem and made efforts to repair relationships that had been spoiled. In this way, the students slowly became respectful and more responsible in their actions. This change was felt not only by the school itself, but also it had a strong message to the rest of the community that the

school was interested in an individual student, rather than a student who should be disciplined. This made the community trust the school's values and mission even more.

The findings also suggest that effective leadership grows out of participation rather than rigid hierarchy. Head teachers not only shared power with the staff in formal participatory practices, but also in all-day relational interactions. They gave the teachers intellectual liberty and professional autonomy, which began to make them not only direct work, but rather move beyond it. They instead instilled a feeling of trust and collective responsibility among employees. This feeling of empowerment was far beyond conformity to rules, and this was integrated into the school culture. It has provided an area where everyone would feel different and be trusted to make the school successful. These practices combined to the extent that there was a complete cultural change where the school was no longer dominated by a rigid top-down system but instead a truly collaborative and child-centered model. Leadership behaviors resulted in the observable shift, such as an institutional seclusion into a valuable engagement, and mistrust to confidence.

The research indicates that schools will achieve enduring transformation through value-based leadership, which involves active power distribution among their educational community. The research demonstrates that trust development requires continuous dialogue and mutual experiences between leaders and their followers, while leaders who follow values create an environment of success at educational institutions.

### **Implications**

This ethnographic study shows that trust in public schools is a relational and cultural phenomenon formed by regular interactions among head teachers, teachers, parents, students, and members of the community rather than an unchanging organizational component. Stronger trust results through leaders who are open, involved, and responsive to others' concerns, as well as from a school culture that values fairness, open communication, and respect for others. The findings of the study have significant implications for education policy, leadership practices, school management, parental involvement, and future research.

#### **Implication for Head teachers**

The research shows that head teachers maintain wider control to establish trust-based environments throughout their educational institutions. The school values

become visible to teachers and parents through their daily student contact, their decision-making methods and their constant involvement in school activities. A school environment built on trust starts when head teachers maintain open communication while they support teacher collaboration, planning and handle parental concerns with respect, and maintain consistent words and actions. The research indicates that head teachers need to perform duties that go beyond paperwork because they must demonstrate effective relational leadership through active listening, fair treatment, and humble behavior, and understanding of others. The practice of transparency, which includes budget disclosure, and policy, student progress information, and teacher and parent communication and open-door policy, helps to decrease confusion while building trust between stakeholders. The core of Nepalese public school leader development programs should focus on building trust, according to these findings.

### **Implication for Teachers**

A key insight from the field was that head teachers are very important for developing and maintaining a culture of trust in public schools. Daily, teachers contribute significantly to the development of trust in the institution. According to the findings, teachers who feel trusted and appreciated by school leaders show greater willingness to collaborate with colleagues, explore innovative teaching practices, and actively engage in solving school-related problems. Teachers who care about students create clear boundaries and treat parents and students with respect, helping to establish a positive school culture. In the process of promoting a collaborative culture, schools can encourage their teachers to work together. They can help them in developing the ability to collaborate, share information, evaluate learning, and to keep parents informed about progress and decision-making. When teachers portray themselves as cultural facilitators by helping to resolve problems with their colleagues and by welcoming the parents, they can gain the trust of both teachers and parents in their school. Students also appreciate such teachers who demonstrate justice and fairness towards them.

### **Implication for Parents**

Parents play a vital role in the building and maintenance of the trust between communities and schools. A strengthened relationship between parents and teachers is reported in the study when the parents are encouraged, and parents are more educated and involved. Members of school management committees assist in guaranteeing that

school decisions made are in keeping with the standards of the local community by attending school functions school events, and the School Management Committee (SMC) meetings. As a result, schools have to promote parent involvement through structured means, including frequent forums for consultation, informal gatherings, classroom discussions, and culturally sensitive community events. Involved parents assist the school in creating a pleasant atmosphere by modeling respect and reliability for their children, in addition to encouraging them to learn at home.

### **Implications for School Management Committees (SMCs)**

SMC directly affects the community's perception of the school and its authenticity. According to the report, SMC also fosters a culture of trust and accountability by cooperating, communicating honestly with stakeholders, being open about budgets, and supporting school-related initiatives. From another perspective, even when SMCs have the best of intentions, poor or irregular communication can lead to miscommunication or mistrust. For this reason, SMCs should hold frequent public meetings, maintain accurate records, and employ participatory government techniques. SMCs would achieve better results in connecting schools to local communities through their ability to plan, direct and express their community work activities. The support they provide enables head teachers to sustain their organizational changes, which affect operational methods and human conduct.

### **Implication for Policy Makers**

Building trust is not the responsibility of certain schools; as result, it indicates that large, entire policy frameworks also play a crucial role. Local and federal policies should support collaboration between communities and schools, transparent decision-making, and a voice for all. The leadership training programs should be in the form of development of relational skills, which involve communication skills, dispute resolution skills, ethical leadership practice, and creation of cultural awareness. Accountability systems will be improved through the introduction of the policies favoring the budget transparency and community monitoring and the periodic parent-school meetings will reduce the stakeholder suspicions. Trust should be the primary foundation of the Nepal public education system in the development of schools since this will generate long term and significant educational changes.

### **Implication for Future Research**

The findings create an opening to the future study of trust in education. The research questions that need to be addressed are the changes in the trust-building

practices over a period of time, the impact of leadership change on trust relationships, and the social and cultural context of Nepal and its impact on trust development. The question that research should explore is how various institutions in Nepal create trust relations based on their unique practices in their social and private and community-managed educational institutions. Researchers should also explore how policy implementation and everyday interaction practices collaborate, or how teacher autonomy, students' involvement, and family involvement influence a school's long-term culture. These sorts of studies would enable us to better understand how to enhance public education by fostering trust.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has discussed the two roles played by the researcher as a participant and an observer thus stressing the significance of reflexivity in conducting the study of trust and leadership in the public schools. The research established that trust serves as the essential base that enables schools to build their culture and achieve sustainable educational development. The trust is built by the organization as it engages with the community, practices open communication is focused on accountability, practices relational discipline, and the style of leadership that incorporates involvement of the participants. The research showed that head teachers played a crucial role in leading cultural changes in the belief system in public schools because they promoted open communication, team collaboration, and cultural acceptance. The research findings have specific effects which affect head teachers and their staff members, their students, their parents, School Management Committees and policymakers, and researchers who will study this topic in the future. The presentation demonstrated that education will experience enduring improvement through the development of trust among all participants who share responsibility while maintaining open communication, and plays a significant role in building culture in public schools in urban areas like Kathmandu's public schools.

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## APPENDIXES

### **Consent Letter for Research Study**

**Title of the Study:** Head Teachers' Contribution in Building Culture of Trust in Public Schools in Kathmandu: An Ethnographic Study

Researcher: Hare Ram Khatri, M. Phil scholar of educational leadership programme,  
Kathmandu University

Dear Head Teacher/SMC Chairperson/Teacher/Parents

You are invited to participate in a research study that aims to explore head teachers' contribution in trust building cultural of public schools. Contribution of head teachers play vital role for cultural transformation in trust building culture of public schools. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to explore how head teachers' leadership practices contribute to the culture of trust within public schools in Kathmandu and to understand the methods they use to build and sustain trust for coming generation.

#### **Study Procedures**

If you agree to participate in this study, I will be frequently visiting in your school and prolong observation in your school for about a month. You will be asked to take part in an interview lasting approximately 60-90 minutes. The interview will consist of questions about the head teacher's leadership practices and their impact on the culture of trust within the school. Explain about your choice in detail and answer some open-ended questions. Additionally, with your permission, the interview may be audio-recorded for accuracy in data collection.

#### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research is optional. You may leave the study at any time without penalty or loss of rewards. Withdrawing will erase your data and exclude it from the research.

#### **Confidentiality**

We promise to keep all gathered information private. Your name and any other personally identifiable information won't appear in any papers or presentations

that come out of this study. Only the researcher will have access to the safely stored data. To maintain confidentiality, audio recordings will be transcriptions and then erased.

**Risks and Benefits**

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. Although there are no direct benefits to you, your participation will provide valuable insights into leadership practices and trust-building in public schools, which could inform future educational practices and policies.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact the researcher,

Sincerely,

Hare Ram Khatri,

Department of Educational Leadership, Lalitpur, Kathmandu University

I have read the information provided. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation. Your insights are valuable to the success of this research.

## Research Guiding Questions for Participants

The purpose of these questions is to collect extensive perspectives from many stakeholders about the head teacher's contribution in fostering a culture of trust in public schools in Kathmandu.

यी प्रश्नहरूको उद्देश्य काठमाडौंका सामुदायिक विद्यालयहरूमा विश्वासको संस्कृतिलाई बढावा दिन मुख्य शिक्षकको योगदानको बारेमा धेरै सरोकारवालाहरूबाट व्यापक दृष्टिकोणहरू सङ्कलन गर्नु हो।

### Interview Questions for Head Teacher

1. What does "trust" mean in the setting of your school?  
तपाईंको विद्यालयको सेटिङमा "विश्वास" को अर्थ के हो?
2. Could you talk about some of the things you do as a leader that you think help build trust in your school? के तपाईं एक नेताको रूपमा तपाईं केहि चीजहरूको बारेमा कुरा गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ जुन तपाईंलाई तपाईंको विद्यालयमा विश्वास निर्माण गर्न मद्दत गर्दछ?
3. How do you make sure that the way you make decisions is clear to everyone? । तपाईंले निर्णय गर्ने तरिका सबैलाई स्पष्ट छ भनेर तपाईं कसरी सुनिश्चित गर्नुहुन्छ?
4. What ways do you get teachers and workers involved in running the school to build trust?  
शिक्षक र कर्मचारीहरूलाई विद्यालय सञ्चालनमा संलग्न गराएर विश्वास निर्माण गर्न के-कस्ता तरिकाहरू दिनुहुन्छ?
5. What do you do about disagreements or problems that might make people less trusting in the school community? तपाईं असहमति वा समस्याहरूको बारेमा के गर्नुहुन्छ जसले मानिसहरूलाई विद्यालय समुदायमा कम विश्वास गर्न सक्छ?
6. How do you make sure you can talk to children, workers, and parents clearly? तपाईं बालबालिका, कामदार र अभिभावकहरूसँग स्पष्ट रूपमा कुरा गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ भनेर कसरी सुनिश्चित गर्नुहुन्छ?
7. What do you use to figure out how trustworthy people are in your school? तपाईंको विद्यालयमा कतिको विश्वासयोग्य व्यक्तिहरू छन् भनेर पत्ता लगाउन तपाईं के प्रयोग गर्नुहुन्छ?
8. Could you tell me about a trust-building project you've made that worked well? के तपाईं मलाई विश्वास निर्माण गर्ने परियोजनाको बारेमा बताउन सक्नुहुन्छ जुन तपाईंले राम्रोसँग काम गर्नुभयो?
9. How can you make the school a place where everyone feels welcome and supported so that everyone can trust each other? सबैले एकअर्कालाई विश्वास गर्न सकोस् भनेर सबैलाई स्वागत र समर्थन महसुस गर्ने ठाउँलाई तपाईं कसरी विद्यालय बनाउन सक्नुहुन्छ?

10. In terms of building trust, what part do feedback and self-reflection play in how you build trust as a leader? विश्वास निर्माण गर्ने सन्दर्भमा, प्रतिक्रिया र आत्म-प्रतिबिम्बले तपाईं कसरी एक नेताको रूपमा विश्वास निर्माण गर्न खेल्छ?

**Interview guidelines Questions for School Management Committee (SMC) Chairperson**

1. How would you describe the relationship between the head teachers and the school management committee? प्रधानाध्यापक र विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिबीचको सम्बन्धलाई कसरी व्याख्या गर्नुहुन्छ ?
2. In what ways do the head teacher's leadership practices contribute the culture of trust in the school? कुन तरिकामा प्रधानाध्यापकको नेतृत्व अभ्यासले विद्यालयमा विश्वासको संस्कृतिलाई योगदान पुर्याउँछ?
3. How does the school management committee (SMC) support the head teacher in fostering a culture of trust? विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति (SMC) ले प्रधानाध्यापकलाई विश्वासको संस्कृति विकास गर्न कसरी सहयोग गर्छ?
4. Could you provide some examples of successful trust-building initiatives led by the head teacher? प्रधानाध्यापकको नेतृत्वमा सफल विश्वास निर्माण पहलका केही उदाहरणहरू दिन सक्नुहुन्छ?
5. How are decisions communicated to the school community to ensure transparency and trust? पारदर्शिता र विश्वास सुनिश्चित गर्न विद्यालय समुदायलाई निर्णयहरू कसरी सूचित गरिन्छ?
6. What role do parents and the community play in the school's trust-building efforts? विद्यालयको विश्वास निर्माण गर्ने प्रयासहरूमा अभिभावक र समुदायले कस्तो भूमिका खेल्छन्?
7. How does the head teacher address and resolve conflicts or trust issues that arise within the school? विद्यालय भित्र उत्पन्न हुने द्वन्द्व वा विश्वासका समस्याहरूलाई प्रधानाध्यापकले कसरी सम्बोधन र समाधान गर्नुहुन्छ?
8. How do you measure the effectiveness of trust-building practices in the school? विद्यालयमा विश्वास निर्माण गर्ने अभ्यासहरूको प्रभावकारिता कसरी मापन गर्नुहुन्छ?
9. In your opinion, what are the most significant challenges to building and maintaining trust in the school? तपाईंको विचारमा, विद्यालयमा विश्वास निर्माण र कायम राख्नका लागि सबैभन्दा महत्वपूर्ण चुनौतीहरू के हुन्?

10. How does the head teacher's leadership style impact the overall trust culture in the school?  
प्रधानाध्यापकको नेतृत्व शैलीले विद्यालयको समग्र विश्वास संस्कृतिलाई कसरी प्रभाव पार्छ?

#### Interview Questions for Teachers

1. How do you perceive the head teacher's role in creating a culture of trust in the school?  
विद्यालयमा विश्वासको संस्कृति सिर्जना गर्न प्रधानाध्यापकको भूमिकालाई कसरी लिनुभएको छ ?
2. Can you describe specific actions or behaviors of the head teacher that have contributed to building trust within the school? के तपाईं प्रधानाध्यापकको विशेष कार्य वा व्यवहारको वर्णन गर्न सक्नुहुन्छ जसले विद्यालय भित्र विश्वास निर्माण गर्न योगदान गरेको छ?
3. How does the head teacher ensure transparency in school operations and decision-making?  
प्रधानाध्यापकले विद्यालय सञ्चालन र निर्णय प्रक्रियामा पारदर्शिता कसरी सुनिश्चित गर्नुहुन्छ?
4. In what ways does the head teacher involve teachers in school governance and decision-making processes? विद्यालय प्रशासन र निर्णय प्रक्रियामा प्रधानाध्यापकले शिक्षकहरूलाई कुन-कुन तरिकामा संलग्न गर्छ?
5. How does the head teacher handle conflicts or trust issues among staff or between staff and students? प्रधानाध्यापकले कर्मचारीहरू वा कर्मचारीहरू र विद्यार्थीहरू बीचको विवाद वा विश्वासका मुद्दाहरूलाई कसरी ह्यान्डल गर्नुहुन्छ?
6. How does the head teacher communicate with staff to promote a culture of trust? विश्वासको संस्कृति प्रवर्द्धन गर्न प्रधानाध्यापकले कर्मचारीहरूसँग कसरी कुराकानी गर्छ?
7. Could you provide examples of successful trust-building initiatives led by the head teacher? के तपाईं प्रधानाध्यापकको नेतृत्वमा सफल विश्वास निर्माण पहलहरूको उदाहरण दिन सक्नुहुन्छ?
8. How does the head teacher's leadership impact teacher collaboration and morale?  
प्रधानाध्यापकको नेतृत्वले शिक्षकको सहकार्य र मनोबललाई कसरी असर गर्छ?
9. How are feedback and suggestions from teachers addressed by the head teacher?  
प्रधानाध्यापकले शिक्षकहरूको प्रतिक्रिया र सुझावलाई कसरी सम्बोधन गरिन्छ?
10. How would you describe the overall trust culture in the school, and what role does the head teacher play in it? विद्यालयमा रहेको समग्र विश्वास संस्कृतिलाई तपाईं कसरी वर्णन गर्नुहुन्छ र यसमा प्रधानाध्यापकको भूमिका कस्तो हुन्छ?

### Interview Questions for Parents

1. What actions do you think the head teacher should do to help the school community trust each other? विद्यालय समुदायलाई एकअर्कालाई विश्वास गर्न मद्दत गर्न प्रधानाध्यापकले के गर्नु पर्छ भन्ने तपाईंको विचारमा छ?
2. Can you provide examples of how the head teacher's leadership has contributed the trust building culture in the school? प्रधानाध्यापकको नेतृत्वले विद्यालयमा विश्वास निर्माण संस्कृतिलाई कसरी योगदान पुर्याएको छ भन्ने उदाहरण दिन सक्नुहुन्छ?
3. How does the head teacher ensure transparency and open communication with parents? प्रधानाध्यापकले अभिभावकसँग पारदर्शिता र खुला सञ्चार कसरी सुनिश्चित गर्नुहुन्छ?
4. In what ways are parents involved in school decision-making processes to foster trust? विश्वास बढाउन विद्यालयको निर्णय प्रक्रियामा अभिभावकहरू कुन तरिकामा संलग्न हुन्छन्?
5. How does the head teacher address conflicts or issues that could affect trust between the school and parents? विद्यालय र अभिभावकबीचको विश्वासलाई असर गर्न सक्ने विवाद वा समस्याहरूलाई प्रधान शिक्षकले कसरी सम्बोधन गर्नुहुन्छ?
6. How does the head teacher communicate the importance of trust to the school community? प्रधानाध्यापकले विद्यालय समुदायलाई विश्वासको महत्त्व कसरी बताउनुहुन्छ?
7. Can you share any experiences where the head teacher's actions have strengthened your trust in the school? प्रधानाध्यापकको कार्यले विद्यालयमा तपाईंको विश्वासलाई बलियो बनाएको कुनै अनुभव बाँड्न सक्नुहुन्छ?
8. How are parents encouraged to participate in trust-building initiatives at the school? विद्यालयमा विश्वास निर्माण गर्ने पहलहरूमा सहभागी हुन अभिभावकहरूलाई कसरी प्रोत्साहन गरिन्छ?
9. How does the head teacher's leadership impact your overall perception of the school's environment? प्रधानाध्यापकको नेतृत्वले विद्यालयको बारेमा तपाईंको समग्र धारणालाई कसरी प्रभाव पार्छ वातावरण ?
10. What modifications, if any, would you recommend to further improve the school's culture of trust? के परिमार्जनहरू, यदि कुनै छन् भने, तपाईं विद्यालयको विश्वासको संस्कृतिलाई अझ सुधार गर्न सिफारिस गर्नुहुन्छ?

<b>Three-Month Working Plan for Ethnographic Study on "Headteachers' Contribution in Building Culture Trust in Public Schools of Kathmandu"</b>	
<b>Objective:</b>	To explore and understand the contributions of headteachers in building a trust culture within public schools in Kathmandu.
<b>Duration:</b>	Three months (90 days)
<b>Locations:</b>	Two public schools in Kathmandu Valley in Budhanilkantha Municipality: Balkumari , School Budhanilkantha-11 and Panchakanya School Budhanilkantha-4
<b>Participants:</b>	Headteachers Teachers Parents School Management Committee Chairpersons
<b>Month 1: Preparation, Entry, and Initial Data Collection</b>	
<b>Week 1: Preparation and Entry</b>	
<b>Day 1-5: Preparation</b>	
	<b>Literature Review:</b> Review the literature on trust building in schools and ethnographic research methodologies.
	<b>Instrument Design:</b> Finalize interview guides, observation protocols, and consent forms.
	<b>Logistics:</b> Arrange necessary permissions, transportation, and establish contact with the schools.
<b>Day 6-7: Initial School Visits</b>	
<b>Introductory Meetings:</b>	
	Meet with school authorities (headteachers, teachers, committee members) to introduce the study.
	Obtain formal permissions and consent from participants.
	Schedule interviews and observation sessions.
<b>Week 2-3: Preliminary Observations and Interviews</b>	
<b>Day 8-21: In-School Ethnographic Observation</b>	
<b>Initial Observations:</b>	
	Begin regular observation in both schools.
	Focus on general school activities, interactions, and leadership practices related to trust-building.
	<b>Field Notes:</b> Record daily observations with a focus on the role of headteachers in fostering trust.
<b>Day 8-21: First Round of Interviews</b>	
	<b>Headteachers:</b> Conduct semi-structured interviews to understand their perceptions, strategies, and experiences in trust building.
	<b>Teachers:</b> 4-5 interviews per school, exploring their views on the headteachers' role in trust-building and school culture.
	<b>Parents:</b> Interview 3-4 parents per school to gather their perceptions of trust and the school environment.
	<b>School Management Committee Chairpersons:</b> 2 interviews with committee heads to

## Working Action Plan

discuss their perspective on school trust culture and leadership.
<b>Week 4: Data Review and Initial Analysis</b>
<b>Day 22-28: Data Review</b>
<b>Transcription and Field Note Organization:</b> Transcribe all interviews and organize observation notes for initial analysis.
<b>Preliminary Data Coding:</b> Begin preliminary coding of interviews and observations to identify emerging themes and patterns.
<b>Adjustments:</b> Based on initial findings, refine interview questions and focus areas for further data collection in the following months.
<b>Month 2: Deepening Data Collection and Focused Study</b>
<b>Week 5-6: Continued Observations and Focused Interviews</b>
<b>Day 29-42: In-Depth Observations</b>
<b>Focused Observations:</b>
Continue daily observations with a focus on specific events and behaviors that relate to trust-building (e.g., staff meetings, parent-teacher interactions, disciplinary practices).
Pay special attention to critical incidents where trust is built or broken within the school community.
<b>Day 29-42: Follow-Up Interviews</b>
<b>Headteachers:</b> Conduct follow-up interviews to delve deeper into specific strategies and experiences that were previously mentioned.
<b>Teachers and Parents:</b> Conduct additional interviews with any new teachers and parents to gather more diverse perspectives on trust-building.
<b>School Management Committee Chairpersons:</b> If applicable, gather more data from committee members to clarify their role and contributions.
<b>Week 7: Community Engagement</b>
<b>Day 43-49: Focus Groups</b>
<b>Teachers' Focus Groups:</b> Facilitate discussions with groups of teachers to validate initial findings and gather collective perspectives on the headteachers' role in building trust.
<b>Parents' Focus Groups:</b> Organize focus group discussions with parents to understand the community's trust in the school leadership.
<b>Week 8: Data Consolidation and Mid-Point Review</b>
<b>Day 50-56: Consolidation</b>
<b>Complete Transcriptions:</b> Ensure all interview transcriptions are complete.
<b>Further Coding:</b> Analyze data using thematic coding to identify major themes related to trust-building practices, behaviors, and cultural factors.
<b>Mid-Point Review:</b> Conduct a mid-point review of data collected to evaluate progress and identify areas requiring more attention during the final month.
<b>Month 3: Final Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting</b>
<b>Week 9-10: Final Data Collection and Clarification</b>
<b>Day 57-70: Final Round of Observations</b>
<b>Focused Observations:</b> Observe any specific rituals, events, or patterns identified during earlier analysis that require further exploration.
<b>Headteachers' Leadership:</b> Pay attention to the headteachers' role during key events (e.g., exams, disciplinary matters, staff meetings) that are crucial for trust-building.

<b>Day 57-70: Final Interviews and Clarifications</b>
<b>Headteachers, Teachers, Parents, Committee Members:</b> Conduct final interviews for clarification of themes or ambiguities. Ensure the collection of any missing or incomplete data.
<b>Week 11: Data Validation and Participant Feedback</b>
<b>Day 71-77: Validation and Member Checking</b>
<b>Share Preliminary Findings:</b>
Present preliminary findings to participants (e.g., headteachers, teachers, committee members) to validate insights and ensure accuracy.
<b>Feedback Collection:</b> Collect feedback from participants to adjust any misinterpretations or gaps in the data.
<b>Week 12: Final Data Analysis and Reporting</b>
<b>Day 78-85: Comprehensive Data Analysis</b>
<b>Thematic Analysis:</b> Complete coding and categorization of data for final analysis.
<b>Patterns and Insights:</b> Identify patterns, contradictions, and key insights related to trust-building by headteachers.
<b>Day 86-90: Report Writing</b>
<b>Drafting Final Report:</b> Prepare the final report based on the findings from the study, highlighting key contributions of headteachers in trust-building within public schools.
<b>Presentation Preparation:</b> Create a presentation or summary of findings to share with the schools and stakeholders.
<b>Methodology Overview:</b>
<b>1. Ethnographic Observations:</b>
Daily observations of school routines, leadership behaviors, and teacher-parent interactions.
Focus on the headteachers' involvement in key trust-building moments.
<b>2. Interviews:</b>
Semi-structured interviews with headteachers, teachers, parents, and committee members to explore personal experiences and perspectives.
Follow-up interviews and focus groups to validate initial data.
<b>3. Focus Group Discussions:</b>
Group discussions with teachers and parents to gather collective insights and validate emerging themes.
<b>4. Document Analysis:</b>
Review school documents, reports, and minutes of meetings to contextualize observations and interview data.
<b>Ethical Considerations:</b>
<b>Informed Consent:</b> Ensure written consent from all participants.
<b>Confidentiality:</b> Maintain the confidentiality of all participants.
<b>Cultural Sensitivity:</b> Be sensitive to the cultural context of the schools and participants.
<b>Feedback and Transparency:</b> Share findings with participants to ensure transparency and accuracy.
This three-month working plan allows for a comprehensive ethnographic study of headteachers' roles in trust-building culture in Kathmandu of public schools, ensuring depth and accuracy through multiple phases of data collection and analysis.

## Research Site Schools

### Some Photographs of Panchakanya School of Different Activities



Some Photographs in Balkumari School of Different Activities

