ETHICAL LEADERSHIP OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS OF NEPAL:

A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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This dissertation entitled *Ethical Leadership of School Principals of Nepal: A Narrative Inquiry* presented by *Bipin Sherchan* for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Education (Educational Leadership) on April 30, 2021 and approved by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for the candidature of any other research degree to any university.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late mother Ganga Sherchan, Head teacher Mr.Bishnu Prasad Sharma and my friends Robert Lovett and Priya Lovett from the United States of America. Their inspiration, expectation and trust on me turned out to be a magnetic energy to achieve this academic height. Their dreams for my higher degree got cemented in my mind as a strong blessing and inspiration. With this force, I succeeded in completing my MPhil journey.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Bipin Sherchan for the *Master of Philosophy in Education (Educational Leadership)* presented at Kathmandu University School of Education on 30 April, 2021.

Title*: Ethical Leadership of School Principals of Nepal: A Narrative Inquiry*

Abstract Approved

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Ethics, the conscious reflection of moral beliefs has been living with me as ambivalent since my childhood. I have a realization that it is the heart of moral society which determines the fate and future of the society. It is the study of right and wrong, good and bad. As I was oriented, education is a synonym of ethical efforts. Similarly, educational personalities are considered as exemplary figures of ethical intelligence. Among them, educational leaders are even more concerned because they are authorized persons who represent the motive of education. Therefore, I honor them as a living book of ethical knowledge. But unfortunately, they are criticized for their unethical activities. Research also reveals that they have low moral clarity in their performance.

I wonder how it could be. Why are they confused? If it is so, then how can we expect moral and ethical awareness from education? Ethics has been considered as a tool of professional development of leadership. Various studies are carried out for

effective ethical leadership but I came to realize the dearth of research in the area of lived experiences of leaders. As I assume, their lived world may torch the light in this ambivalent phenomenon. With these queries and expectations, I carried out this study as my ethical responsibility.

Drawing the concept of ethical leadership, this study explores the lived experiences of school leaders (principals) in their world of leadership. The main purpose of this study was to explore how school principals have experienced ethical leadership, how they narrate their lived experiences on principles of ethical leadership and why they have actions. This study is fabricated with a narrative approach under the interpretive paradigm. Four principals were purposely interviewed from the institutional schools of the Kathmandu valley as my research participants. Their narratives depicted three principles of ethical leadership. They were (i) ethics of care, (ii) ethics of justice, and (iii) ethics of critique. Adopting the procedure of recording, transcription and translation of the information, twelve stories were selected from the various stories. I have unfolded the stories under the three themes.

Then after, I have gone through analyzing, interpreting and meaning making processes to construct my understanding of each theme. While doing so, I draw the epistemological beliefs on the meaning of ethical leadership and quality of ethical leaders as my constructed meaning. Moving forward, in the process of theoretical discussion, my explored meanings were discussed with literature and developed with value-based leadership theory. The quality standards of the study steered through temporality, sociality and spatiality of the narrated events. I was alert and sincere on ethical consideration in every step of the study.

This study may spark some knowledge of truth as we are living. The knowledge constitutes multiple realities as I pass through. Now, connecting with the

reality of the study, ethical leadership has multilayered dimensions and abstract ways to deal with. Treating every individual as a unique human being is a fuel of ethical leadership. Accepting and respecting the realities of each member is a strong and organic thread of effective ethical leadership. Here, being specific, ethical leadership is a process of valuing the individual dignity aligning with institutional value and social values. When people feel loved, cared, secured and empowered, then they will be capable and competent enough to distinguish right from wrong and good from bad. Humility, care, love, responsibility, honesty, plan, challenge and motivation are explored as qualities and characteristics of an ethical leader.

The current research may have a deep value on developing the ethical value-based school environment and nurturing the moral society. It also sheds light on the existing phenomena of ethical consciousness, premises and practices in educational leadership. It may also stand as a mirror of effective ethical leaders. I have set three implications for my study. First, valuing humanity rather than applying the complicated strategies in effective leadership practice. Second, rules and policies required to address the voices of concerned people. Eventually, it shows the ways to further study in exploring the ethical strength in social/cultural beliefs, and indigenous knowledge. In general, it inspires to value human dignity for the overall prosperity of the moral society.

………………………….   April 30, 2021

Bipin Sherchan,

Degree Candidate

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

DOE	Department of Education
KUSOED	Kathmandu University, School of Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCP	National Planning Commission
SEE	School Education Examination
SEDP	Secondary Education Development Program
SLC	School Level Certificate
SMC	School Management Community
SSDP	School Sector Development Panning
SWC	Student Welfare Council

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of this chapter, I have articulated my experienced world which inspired me to conceive this study as my academic responsibility. In doing so, I have presented my own story of my childhood, my head teacher, my mother, social/cultural beliefs and ritual activities. Those lived experiences are the seed of my inspiration as well as motivation for this journey. In the second phase, I have disclosed my position in this research with the introduction of research territory. I have raised my queries as a problem statement which I explored. Furthermore, I have articulated the purpose of the study in brief. I have set the research question to sketch the dimension and direction for my inquiry. After this, I have addressed my rationalization on the importance of this study along with delimitation of the study. Finally, I conclude this chapter articulating the organization of the dissertation and essence of the chapter.

My Inspiration of the Journey

This journey begins with my own story portrays the germination of the word "ethics" in my life. Then, inspirational energies experienced from my "living book" as a head teacher, my social /cultural beliefs, ritual practices and my mother's unfulfilled desires are presented.

Threads of My Inspiration: The Story: "The Hope"

"Be a Better Person than a Great Person". That moral voice stamped in the small mind of the primary school going village girl named "NITI". The girl was super excited and proud as she had gained big "knowledge". She did her best to read, write

and memorize those words. For her, those words were just a part of bookish knowledge which had to be written in a school exam. As time flew, she entered in her young age. That voice also changed in its nature. Then she perceived that as a "motto" of her life because she knew the literary meaning of it. Now, she is in the middle age of her life and is living with her own insights of her existence. But till now she is not getting proper meaning of her "knowledge", or the "motto" in her life. She keeps asking herself "why"? She is scared of polluted practices of "being great" and "being better" in society. Her fractured mind and heart are striking and challenging her. She does not know what to do? When to do it? But she has a hope that the journey begins very soon, and she will get answers to her questions.

Raising the curtain, I want to reveal that this is my living reality and the "NITI" is me. This story represents my nested world from where my inspirations are rooted. Next inspiration is connected with my head teacher "Mr. Bishnu Prasad Sharma". His warmth, presence, humbleness and down to earth approach of life taught me about the ethical world.

I am quite sure; he was the person who injected these words in my mind when I was in class four. It was the day of "Bal Divas" (4th Bhadra). That day was the very auspicious day of the school. The school was decorated with many beautiful flowers and colorful paper made flags. All we students (around 60-80) were restless. I was even more excited and happy with my red ribbon and new tailored school dress. For that day, I had to recite a poem for the "poem competition program". So, holding the piece of paper of the poem, I had been going near my head teacher again and again without noticing how busy he was. I kept asking how I could do better. I did so because I was very comfortable with him, and I knew he would help me do my best in the competition. During the same visit I made, he looked at me, and said smilingly,

"Bipin", try to be a better person than a great person". These two words "better" and "great" clicked me surprisingly. That moment, I perceived his words as the chunks of knowledge which the teacher tries to disseminate to students. But slowly, the fragrance of "goodness" as an ethical knowledge opened my mind with its significance in human life. Then I was inspired to begin academic study on the discourse of ethics.

My second inspiration bloomed with my social, cultural and ritual practices which shaped my thought toward the worth of co-existence of human beings and nature. Then I came to realize that some special strength is needed to study, so that things would get organized based on the respective places. Then they may generate harmony in this society.

I frequently allude to my childhood if anyone asked me why stressing persistently on the discourse of ethics and ethical issues! Growing up in a small village named "Kobang" in Mustang, I have always found the ranges of Dhaulagiri and Nilgiri as the symbols and witness of the moral and ethical strength of my village that is irrigated with the flow in the *Kali Gandaki.* There was a time when we used to collect pebbles and shells fearlessly amidst hundred villagers who were living in harmonious relationships even in many difficulties and scarcities. The major instinct that bound them with each other was simplicity, love, care, mutual respect, trust, justice, peace and inclusiveness. They had lived with moral values and ethical values of the community. All people were guided and encouraged to generate ethical standards in the society from their own respective positions. I have grown up seeing moral and ethical values as the leading mechanism of my semi-literate community, and the reflection allowed me to look back into a little girl who had figured out that

performance of the individuals is the influencing force of the social environment and ethics is the heart of the moral society.

Keeping the eyes on my indigenous cultural beliefs and ritual practices, the value of moral and ethical awareness are at the center and always prioritized. Various ritual activities are performed aiming at creating, maintaining and developing the moral and ethical strengths. Similarly, it also targeted to eradicate the unethical vibration so that everyone could breathe with ethical strengths. Therefore, the credit goes to my cultural beliefs which have been formed as a foundation of my knowledge on love, compassion, respect, service, honesty, prevention, protection and justice indeed. My village is the place of origin of 'Thakali' ethnic community to which I belong. In my community, I have seen many cultural, ritual and religious practices being performed and the purpose of most events are directed toward generating a moral society by creating ethical individuals.

Among the many cultural events, I mention one of my favorite ritual ceremonies of community named "FALO" in the Nepali language "Kumar Yatra". It occurs once a year (Bhadra Sukla Tihi) and it still continues. There are various ritual activities for three days. Among them one of the acts called "MHANG KHYAWA" in the Nepali language "Bhut Bhagaune". The mini statues of different "BHUT" (Ghosts) are made of flour dough. The image of ghost is perceived as a symbol of negative energies and unethical vibration. Therefore, it gets fired and thrown into the rivers forcefully. Many young men and children run after fired BHUT saying "Go… Go"…. NEVER COME AGINE". During that time "DHUNGBA" (the Bhddhist Lama) play the musical instrument praying for purified atmosphere. Every one cheers for ethical victory with louder voices for an hour.

Furthermore, I still ponder upon the social perceptions regarding the geographical properties of the villages. All landscapes such as Dhaulagiri Range, Annapurna Rang, Kali Gandaki River, bank of the rivers, cave, snowfall, waterfall and flora and fauna are symbolized as deity figures. Because of these social identities, people feel proud of being protected and blessed on the one hand but on the other hand they become alert to being inspected at every moment. As a result, people are doing their best to adopt the right things with good intentions. From these social perceptions, what I learn is that code of conduct, character and custom of individuals are essential to build a moral and ethical society.

Regarding the school leader, as I experienced, the personality and performance of my head teacher "Bishnu Prasad Sharma" is remarkable. I am learning a lot from him. It is also very true that whenever I am in problem, frustration and ethical dilemmas, I find him in front of me. His virtual presence holds my hands and paves the way to move forward with a volume of energies. Unfortunately, we have not been in contact over the three decades. His humble and pleasing personality was just enough to create and transmit the positive vibration in my mind. As I remember, I used to feel secure and protected in front of him because I knew he was superior to any others at school. Because of him, now I am seeking further studies and a higher degree. These reflections assure that the head teacher's character and conduct influence the entire life of the students so I was inspired to study to explore the living world of the head teacher (principal).

Unfolding the keen interest on territory of the research, it is also germinated from my own experiences. I have an emotional attachment with which I want to reveal now as my third and last inspirational key. As I mentioned earlier, I belong to a middle class family living in "Mustang District". For me, institutional school was

like a "stars of the sky". I did not care. I was fine with my public schooling but my mother wanted to send us (me and my elder brother) to institutional school in "Pokhara". I still remember her wrinkled face when she talked about institutional schools and our future. Besides that, I also heard a painful voice saying "sorry" for not sending us to a good school. I don't know till today why we never enrolled in an institutional school but her desire remained as a nail in my heart forever because she is no more in this world. It hurts me almost every moment. From this reflection, I can feel that she had a strong belief in institutional school that would provide good education in the English medium. Along with that, good education would nurture us with moral and ethical values so that we may live life with good manners. Her desires inspired me to navigate the living world of institutional school as territory of my study so that she could visit this world through my eyes.

Now with the wave of the time, I have got an opportunity to pursue my study in educational leadership. In this regard, I came closer to the world of the educational domain of our country. Beside this, during my study I would be staying in Kathmandu valley so that I could get closer to the world of institutional school and lived experiences of school leaders. Then I figure out that this is a good opportunity and the right time to study pertaining to my unset queries on ethical consciousness. So, I decided to navigate my journey on this topic with a clear and strong commitment. I was pretty sure that the hope of my head teacher and mother would stand as my enduring motivation till the end of the study.

My Position as Researcher

Here, I aimed to clarify my position as a researcher. I am not experienced in any professional leading position till today. In this concern, I can place myself as an outsider researcher, who does not share the same characteristics such as culture of

research topic (Mercer, 2007). But my lived experiences from ordinary village girl to MPhil scholar in Kathmandu University and my motherhood could set a foundation to explore the meaning from every angle of lived experience by research participants. My world of four decades encountered multifaceted ethical issues in every juncture of my life. With various positions such as a school girl from a remote area, struggling college student in Kathmandu, house wife and mother of three growing children and member of "Thakali Sewa Samiti" of Kathmandu have added the energies to my investigation. The lived experiences of leading the Student Welfare Council (SWC) of School of Education of Kathmandu University from as the vice-president made my study even more lively and productive. Furthermore, as I set an aim of becoming an influential leader in my future, the aim has shaped my stance as an active researcher.

In this research, I explored the problems and issues for continual improvement (Creswell, 2014) of ethical standards in the school leadership. As I accept, all researchers have different lenses to narrate and interpret the phenomena. As an academic researcher, I maintained an interpretive viewpoint to understand the existence of ethical leadership through the experienced narratives of the principals. My explored meaning on ethical leadership was constructed from my epistemological beliefs of interpretive research.

Introducing My Territory

Ethics has been considered as a heart of moral society that determines the fate and future of the society. Morality is a set of beliefs and practices about how to live a good life, whereas ethics is a conscious reflection on adequacy of moral beliefs. Education is an ethical effort (Glulan 2015). Therefore, educational personalities are respected as creator and carrier of this ethical consciousness. Ethical concerns are considered highly imperative in schools because ethically rich education is supposed

to cultivate the foundation of society with care, honesty, transparency, equity and integrity and empowerment. Therefore, I have sketched my study territory with understanding on ethics, social context of Nepal, and contribution of education, role of school leaders and ethical practices of with a short briefing of Institutional School of Nepal.

Ethics is concerned with what is necessary to live a moral life. It is the study of moral principles that shapes and guides individual or group behavior with respect to what is right or wrong morally as well as legally. It is concerned with human character, conduct, and associated mental and social phenomena (Becker, 2017). It can be also perceived as the integrity of humanity as Starratt, (2004) stressed. According to him, it is also the investigation of norms that promote the fullest and deepest humanity of the community. Here, the code of conduct that helps to distinguish what is right and what is wrong (Ghanem, 2018) is known as ethics. The subject matter of ethics is a broad and comprehensive phenomenon but one thing is true that everything which is immoral and against human dignity is unethical intention and activities. The developments of ethical sensitivities are the webs of prosperous society because the nature of relationships among people (Ouma, 2017) is ethics. Therefore, it is urgent to adhere to ethical intelligence to pursue the success of the entire development activities of the current social context.

Our country is stepping toward the federal society with a hope that education will put the lights on these steps. All the Nepalese including me have faced many political, economic and social obstacles in recent days still standing as challenges for everyone and in every sector. As I perceive, deficiency of ethical competence of people and moral ground of the society is serious among the several causes. Now, the time has come to put our ethical efforts on sustainable development and harmonious

atmosphere in the society. It would be possible if we could cultivate the moral and ethical intelligence in all individuals. It is true that many development forces are gearing up with their best with pure attention for the better future of the nation. But without clarity on ethical values, results will turn into confusion and chaos. These are the scenarios of our context and for sure no one can deny it. Having said so, I have a strong belief that without a strong ethical foundation, real success cannot be pursued at any cost. In this point, Bhattari (2010) shares that ethics is a more responsible factor for generating hindrance in the course of all areas of development, especially in the field of education. Therefore, the education system needs to stand with ethical strength. Every educational personality is expected to be sincere to cultivate, develop and transform the ethical sensitivities in the society. Only then, we will be on the track of sustainable development and harmonious society.

It is a universal truth that education is the foundation of the healthy webs of society. The character, conduct and custom of people constitute these webs. The personal attitude, intention and attributes of the people drive the social movements. In this way, the outcome of educational performance reflects in society in many ways. I believe that excellent education excavates, nurtures, shapes and sharpens the innate qualities which lie in every individual and energize moral society because education is a process of purification (Singh & Garg, 2011) of the society. Furthermore, it has been respected as a key means to transform a society (Carney & Bista, 2009). But no productive education can be imagined without effective, authentic, transformational and ethical educational leaders because educational leaders play a role of a change agent (Mullen, 2003), and carry a transformative praxis (Freire, 2010). Therefore, a deep study regarding the leader is required.

Furthermore, education has huge challenges to meet the demands of a complex and changeable society. Education is the long-term process to shaping, molding, controlling and directing the social peaceful and harmonious culture of the society. The quality and germinating process education is required to be sound with moral and ethical properties. With these beliefs, the investment and supervision in the educational sector is increasing continuously. The Government of Nepal (SSDP, 2016-2023) set the vision of education to contribute to the development of self-sustainable, innovative and value oriented citizens for the socio-economic transformation of the nation. Here, my concern is the moral and ethical standards of people and society needs to be prioritized while working on educational development. I do believe that education bears the responsibilities to teach values which are essential to democracy and good citizens as opined by Coombs (2005). A part of this, school has an obligation to foster the students to become persons who act in a morally correct way (Gardelli, 2014). Therefore, ethics is operating energy to address the good aspects of realities of the demand and identify the right properties even in complexities.

Now, looking at the relationship between ethics and education, I understood that these are two facets of the same coin. One cannot be meaningful without the other so they are interrelated by nature (Ahmed, 2016). Ethics is concerned with doing right and good things; the same is the purpose of education. The history of education begins with the improvement of humankinds. Education is an act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. Education prepares students to realize what is right from wrong, virtue from vice, good from evil, and justice from injustice. Furthermore, students will be capable of evaluating different moral standpoints and living with them. I am worried that without

ethical sensitivities, education could be even more destructive for society. So, education is required to prepare the students not only to dare, but to defend the truth and reality (Vairagya, 2012). In addition, the educational environment requires deriving with love, care, trust, transparency, responsibility, honesty and so that we get closer to a harmonious, ethical, disciplined citizen and society as all we are dreaming.

Here, I like to present my perceptions and beliefs toward the importance of educational leaders (principals) pertaining to ethical awareness and influences. Education cannot serve the society if educational leaders cannot perform being ethical leaders. Various studies suggest that educational leaders often encounter situations that are problematic and challenging not because of technical problems, but because of human problems and serious human consequences involved in the situation. Personal and professional attributes of principal are determining factors in cultivation of ethics. In our society, the social position of teachers has secured a prestigious position since ancient times. They are taken as representative of "God", the symbol of truth who does no wrong in our Hindu philosophy (Dhakal & Koirala, 2005). Therefore, they are expected to behave with the principles of human beings. Keeping the eyes on legal provision of the federal nation, SSDP (2016- 2023) set the objectives and strategies to maintain the high level of morality in teacher's professional development. Principal is the driver of the schools and institution and leads every school stakeholder toward the shared goals.

Marching toward the role and responsibilities of principal, Eyal et al. (2011) elaborate that principal is not only the driver of the values, beliefs and ethics of the school community but also the actual designer. He or she holds only one highest, supreme position, legitimized power and authorized leadership in schools. They are masters in the anchoring position of schools. They stand with an exemplary

personality in the school and society for the entire lifetime. Every single word and step has the potential to influence others. Therefore, character, conduct and custom of principals are important to be studied to add the knowledge on ethical phenomena embedded in education. In this study they are the source of information. They are also expected to stand as a carrier and agent of my obtained knowledge of this study.

Moving forward I want to share my understanding on the quality and attraction of the institutional schools in our society. Along with this, I also reveal my personal attachment to it because I believe that institutional schools are not only performing better but also carrying the meaning of education. In this concern, Upadhaya and Sah (2019) explore that "it is widely believed in Nepal that English-medium institutional schools provide a much better quality of education than community school" (as cited Douglas, 2019, p.72). Therefore, it is seen as a "Dream Icon" for all students, parents and society and its charm is even blooming. The English language as a medium of instructions is also a major attraction. As a result, it is considered as "a crucial factor that parents consider while shifting their children to institutional school from community schools" (Tiwari, as cited in Hayes, 2018, p.27). Parents receive a huge message and impression of English as a "magic bullet" for individual prosperities as well as wider economic development (Brown as cited in Hayes, 2018). Because of all these perceptions, all parents blindly believe that sending their children to institutional school secures the future of family. I am also one of them. I am sending my three children to the institutional schools of Kathmandu with a big expectation of their prosperous life. This hope is forcing me as well as encouraging me to struggle in Kathmandu being away from home. Sacrificing all beauties and duties of the village of Kobang, Mustang I am living in Kathmandu for better education for my children.

In conclusion of my territory of the study, I highlight my understanding of my research area. I agree that education is the prominent property to uplift the quality of the society full of rationales. But education can serve the society if only it cultivates the worth of ethical values. School leaders are the central figures to generate, protect and promote ethical awareness. They advocate our identity and demonstrate how we can live better as a moral citizen. They are expected to be a living example of ethical intelligence but if they are aware and responsible for it, then various confusions can be removed. As a result, school education only produces certified people but not human beings. Therefore, I entered into the lived world of school leaders to explore their ethics.

Statement of the Problem

Educational system has been purifying and transforming the society toward a prosperous society. The prosperity is pillared from ethical properties such as love, care, respect, peace, compassion, justice, transparency, freedom, equality and equity in the society. It means the education bears responsibility to elevate all these attributes to transform the society. In addition, education is perceived as a menace of generating, creating the human and conveying the value proposition of the society to the next generation (Ghanem, 2018) indeed. With this hope, the investment in education is growing rapidly globally, even in our country. Now, concerning my problem, I feel our education system is vacuumed with practice of ethical principles. So, I am curious to know how educational leaders experience moral / ethical phenomena in their leadership and how they live with their ethical responsibility.

There is remarkable progress in the education system in Nepal in a short time span. This statement makes it even more clear; "Nepal had made good progress in recent years toward achieving all targets set as a part of global education for all

agendas" (Brown as cited in Hayes, 2018, p. 25). Various plans and policies are being implemented to enhance the quality of education. Here I have a query if our education system is gearing up without carrying out the purpose of education. Is our education perceived as an object rather than ethical effort? Furthermore, let's be honest to answer these questions; "is our education serving the society with moral and ethical richness"? Is education producing ethical human resources?

From ancient times, the Nepali society has also had a strong belief that principals will do no wrong because they are representatives of "God", the symbol of truth as per Hindu philosophy (Dhakal & Koirala, 2005). They are respected and expected as an exemplary figure of moral and ethical values. Bhattari (2010) also advocates that principals are supposed to create an ethical and healthy climate in the surrounding. They are expected to cultivate love, care, integrity, fairness and equality in the school community so that it may transform into the society. But unfortunately, they are not performing as they are expected. In addition, I came to realize a big gap in between our expectations and their performance.

On the one hand, principals are honored as a role model of the society but on the other hand, they are increasingly criticized for their unethical activities. Previous studies highlight indigestible and unacceptable behaviors of institutional school principals (Wagle & Lammichhane, 2006). Similarly, Sapkota, (2008) claims that school principals have a low moral clarity in their performance. In the research, Bhattarai (2015) identified that the head teacher did not demonstrate optimal care and justice to exercise their professional obligation fully. Regarding this issue, the Government of Nepal also revealed the poor quality of professional development among teachers as major challenges for the immediate future (National Planning Commission, 2013). Research studies (Bhattarai, 2010) remarked that the

phenomenon of ethics within a school has not received a greater attention from the policy makers while teachers are in the stage of dilemmas regarding this notion in practice. Now, I doubt, are principals incompetent in their position? Do they live with the gravity and volume of their ethical abilities?

Looking at the global scenario, I understand there is also a problem in between ethical responsibilities and principal leadership. As I acknowledged, school leaders are expected to stand as role models. Therefore, ethical leadership models ethical behavior to the community (Ouma, 2017) but there is no satisfactory result. Various studies reveal that leaders have moral intentions, but their incompetence creates unethical outcomes (Ciulla, 2005). Principals as leaders might confront complex, multidimensional and dynamic moral issues in everyday practices (Hellmich, 2007). Ethical manners stand as complex and challenging in the current context (Erich, Harris, Klenowski, Smeed, & Spina, 2014). In Anil and Fatih (2017), there was a negative relationship between the ethical leadership behavior of the principals and the motivation levels of the teachers. Now, I question if this is because of ignorance towards the moral and ethical premises. So, my concern is how principals are facing, motivating, dealing and leading with ethical standpoints. Do they have any prospects and practical alternatives to get rid of these unpleasant complexes? Now, my concern is to explore how school principals perceive to prepare them as moral agents.

Drawing all these confusions, I came up with these three levels of understanding as problems of my study. The first one is if there is any problem in between   perception, practices and influences of ethical values in educational leadership. Second is ethical principles perceived as contents of knowledge rather than living daily activities. The third is school leaders are found confused and immature to live with ethical sensitivities in their personal and professional life. These

problems struck my mind and soul, and then I prepared myself to dive into this research on the living world of principals who are renowned as actual designers (Eyal et al., 2011) of the society. Similarly, Pade (2015) suggests leaders have to have a strong set of values, morals and ethics. Furthermore, I belong to the same area so I have taken it as my ethical responsibility to explore the knowledge in this area. In addition, there is a dearth of research works on ethical leadership in Nepal. Therefore, I am interested in this area of study.

<div align="center">**Purpose of the Study**</div>

My study explores the lived experiences of school principals with the purpose of uncovering the reality of ethical leadership of school principals of Nepal. Along with this, it also draws the quality of school principals as they perform from an ethical point of view.

<div align="center">**Research Questions**</div>

The question of this study is how principals live with three ethical principles: ethics of care, ethics of justice and ethics of critique in their world of   leadership. So, I have set only one research question.

1. How do school principals narrate their experience pertaining to ethical leadership?

<div align="center">**Rationale of the Study**</div>

Ethical leadership has been an area of interest as much as a responsibility for scholars around the world. So, this research carries a significant value to add the knowledge on it. It sheds light on the ethical premises of the educational leadership of progressive country as ours. As it is based on narrative inquiry, it may contribute to exhibit and interpret the principal's inner feeling and non-executed voice on professional life regarding the ethical values so that it will enhance the professional

development of the school principals as well. It helps the principals to understand

moral issues which are required to boost their "ethical responsibility" (Starratt, 2003,

p.100). This study can also contribute to diagnosing the gap between perceptions and

practices of ethical values and minimizing them. This study explores contemporary

ontological premises of ethical scenarios which enhance as well as alert the

educational scholars and leaders.

As a scholar of educational leadership and management, I have a wish to live

and lead with an optimal level of humanity rather than pre-written policies and

profitable goals. So, I believe that this study will drive me closer to that wish with

various human responses.   Concerned personalities will be informed and alerted with

the recent complexities of dynamic society. As a result, they will update their

policies and strategies toward the moral value-based school environment and culture

which ultimately reflect in the society.

Additionally, this study may provide an opportunity to assemble and share

information that could assist school head teachers, school principals, coordinators,

educators, school supervisors, policy makers and future researchers in appreciating

the ethical issues pertaining to school leadership. There is a dearth of research works

on ethical leadership in Nepal. Therefore, I am interested in this area of study.

Delimitations of the Study

This study uncovers the experiences of the school principals on principles of

ethical leadership. The only case-based experiences are studied from an ethical point

of view. The personal character, virtue, conduct and professional role are only the

core areas of this study. Regarding the principles of ethical leadership, my study is

limited only to three principles. There are multiple ethical paradigms, ethics of self,

ethics of discomfort, ethics of spirituality (Starratt, 2004), ethics of community

(Furman, 2003), ethics of profession (Wood and Hilton, 2012) in leadership domain. But these were excluded and limited to the original three principles (Starratt, 1991), ethics of care, ethics of justice, and critique. Furthermore, this study focused on the professional dimensions of principal from secondary school of the Kathmandu Valley.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation has been   organized into six chapters. Chapter one consists of the introduction of the study including my inspirational journey, my personal stories that create the scene setting for my study connected with ethical consciousness since my childhood to date, problem statement, purpose, rationale and delimitations of the study including one research question. In chapter two, I went through literature introducing ethics and ethical leadership. Research theory, empirical studies, research gap and theoretical understanding are mentioned in this chapter. In chapter three, I have presented my research methodology that includes my philosophical consideration, research paradigm, information gathering and meaning making process. The quality standards and ethical considerations are also presented at the end of the chapter. I have portrayed the portfolio of my four participants in chapter four. The episode of narrated stories of participants is displayed under three themes. In the end of the chapter, I have summarized my understanding of perceptions and performance of my participants. Similarly, in chapter five I have highlighted theoretical discussion. My generated meanings are also presented in this chapter. Finally, I have placed the conclusion, implications and my reflection in chapter six. I have concluded my dissertation with a display of references which paid a valuable contribution to my study.

Chapter Essence

In this chapter, I articulate my conceptualization of the phenomenon with a closer look at my past and present experiences. I was excited to begin this chapter with a series of events of my childhood. Most of them were strongly rooted from my social, cultural beliefs and practices for the sake of moral and ethical values. The concerns of my head teacher and my late mother toward me and my upbringing are also vividly alive as my inspirational forces. I felt proud to disclose my inspirational experiences which sparked my interest on this research journey. I also elaborated my position as a researcher accepting that I do not have any professional experiences. Then, I portrayed my territory of study in detail centering on the statement of the problem of this study. I also articulate the purpose of the study with a single research question for the study. In addition, I also articulate the rationale of the study, justifying why I was interested in the area of inquiry. I set the content of delimitations of the study. This chapter concluded with the organization of the dissertation. The next chapter accounts for the selected literature review related to ethics and ethical leadership.

CHAPTER II

REVIEWING LITERATURE: EXPLORING THE TERRITORY OF THE

PHENOMENON

In this chapter, I moved on to the literature review related to ethics and ethical leadership in the educational sector. I highlighted various studies carried out by national and international scholars on this topic which guided and kept me closer to my issues of inquiry. I seek connection on ethics, ethical leadership and its underlying pillars of care, justice and critique. As a researcher, I collected thematic and theoretical ideas on the concerned topic through literature review. Review of related literature provided me with a scenario of ongoing issues. It also helped me to gather scholars' understanding. After reviewing literature, I became able to sketch the gap which I believe needs to be addressed. So, in this chapter I have described the literature review regarding ethics, ethical leadership, principal as an educational leader and   three paradigms of ethical leadership. Empirical studies on related topics are presented including the context of Nepal. The research gap is also explained briefly at the end of this chapter. Finally, the theoretical framework of this study concluded the chapter.

A Brief Overview of Ethics and Ethical Theories

The word morality and ethics create warm and positive vibrations to almost everyone. It secures, energizes, and motivates people toward humanity because it advocates for progress of human value and dignity. There may be confusion in the use of the words' ethics and morals'. Morality is a set of beliefs and practices about how to live a good life, whereas ethics is a conscious reflection on the adequacy of moral

beliefs. Ethics is a set of concepts and values while morality is the behavioral expression of the concept and values. Therefore, it concerns moral and behavioral requirements. To this end, ethics can be perceived as doer of morality. Now, concerning ethics, it is a formal study of moral conduct. In general, ethics is the study of what is right and wrong. It refers to practice of conduct that indicates how people ought to behave based on specific values and principles that define right and wrong. In summary, there is no universally accepted definition to define ethics. It is about the right and wrong actions and intentions in our dealings with others. It is concerned with interpersonal and social values and the rules of conduct that derive shared values.

Entering in to the definitions by various scholars, I understand ethics as the conscious reflection of moral beliefs. It is considered as a code of values and moral principles, which guides individual or group's behavior with respect to what is right and wrong so it is often regarded as a very personal matter (Northouse, 2013). It is something intimate, a confidential matter that an individual and his conscience share (Mihelic, Lipicnic, &Tekavcic, 2010). It is also perceived as a set of moral principles as well as a theory or system of moral values. Furthermore, on definition of ethics, "it is concerned with the kinds of values and morals of an individual and society find desirable or appropriate" (Northouse, 2013, p. 425). Similarly, Saldana (2015) defines that "Ethics are a set of personal principles for intrapersonal action and interpersonal conduct, rooted in obligatory codes and the individual's value, attitude, and belief system" (p. 80). It is the study of the principles and methods for distinguishing right from wrong, good from bad and just from unjust (Reeder, 2011). It is concerned with the kind of relation one has to oneself (Foucault, 2020).

The term 'ethics' is derived from the Greek word called 'ethos'. This refers to the custom and conduct of an individual. In this regard, it is concerned with moral

character and behaviors. Conventional customs and norms of a given culture according to Northouse (2013) are considered as an ethics. Ethics is also the code of values and moral principles, which guides an individual or group's behavior with respect to what is right and wrong. In addition, Bhattarai (2010) further adds that ethics deals with standardized abilities to distinguish right from wrong. Similarly, Ahmed (2016) clarifies that it is also the study of peoples' rights and duties, the moral rules that people apply in making decisions, and the nature of relationships among people.

Starratt (2004) is a pioneer of the ethical leadership framework in educational leadership. He opines that "ethics is a study of the underlying beliefs, assumptions, principles and values that support a moral way of life" (p. 5). He expands on this definition by describing ethics as the investigation of norms that are constructed and chosen by members of a pluralistic, democratic society. Ethics is considered pragmatic norms to guide the conduct of people's lives, norms that coincide with fundamental virtues that promote the fullest and deepest humanity of the community (as cited in Brown, Bessestte & Chan, 2006). For me, this personal matter also has to be regarded as an essential topic for study.

The question may arise how   and who could examine and clarify the others' perspectives and performance of what is right or proper conduct? But the fact of the matter is that ethics is a broad and comprehensive phenomenon, and there are no expressed views for worldly recognized ethics. In this question, Landau and Osmo (2003) reveal that ethical considerations are also not fixed, and they may change constantly according to changing trends. It can be seen that some scholars even consider ethics as a study of moral values as well. So, it varies from region to region,

country to country, but one thing is clear that everything which is immoral and against dignity is unethical.

Concerning the development of ethical theories, the history dates back two thousand years. It begins from ancient Greece and is still growing to the post - modern theory. Starting with Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and several thinkers contributed to develop the various views on ethics and ethical domain. Traditionally the human good, human justice, virtue and their connection and freedom were discussed as ethical qualities. In the process of development, theories developed with two different broad dominoes. One is theory about leaders' conduct and another is about character (Northouse, 2015). Ethical theory deals with conduct divided into two kinds. The first one stresses on the consequences of leaders' actions. This is known as teleological theories. Ethical egoism and utilitarianism come under this theory. The second one puts emphasis on the duty of the leaders. This theory is known as deontological theories. The deontological class of ethical theories state that people should adhere to their obligations and duties when engaged in decision making as well as when ethics are in play. This means that a person will follow his or her obligations to another individual or society because upholding one's duty is what is considered ethically correct.

From the discussions above, I came to realize that ethics is a broad, comprehensive and complex phenomenon which has a clear concepts and fundamental principles of decent human conduct. It includes study of universal values such as the essential quality of all individuals, human or natural rights, obedience to the law of society and culture, human relationship, decision making and so on. It is also strongly connected with morality. It is also being used as a synonym of moral values as well. Connecting to my research, ethics in schools is defined by Frick

(2011) as the thinking and reasoning behind the actions leaders make daily.

Nowadays, encroachment of the multi-colored outer world has overshadowed the inner world of individuals. So, the personal innate qualities of individuals have to be valued with proper understanding of definition and territories

Ethical Leadership in Education

Leadership is the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth.

Burns, 1978

In general, leadership as an art of persuading others performs as a leader who sets goals. As I acknowledged, leadership is a process, whereby an individual influences the group of individuals to achieve the common goals as framed by Northouse (2013). It clarifies that "influencing others' ' is the central idea of the leadership. Without motivating people, they will not be influenced. So, in order to get closer to motivation, moral values are required to be adopted. In other words, moral properties such as love, care, compassion, respect, honesty and transparency are the attributes to motivate people. Therefore, ethical leadership is defined as a human centered relational activity (Ehrich & Knight, 1998) which generates the right energies and creates a good environment. So that leadership will be effective and purposeful.

Now excavating the attraction of ethics in the leadership domain, I felt it is the heart of leadership which beats for humankind. Ethics advocates what is right and wrong in the course of morality in leadership. Ethics is in general the code of conduct that helps to distinguish what is right and what is wrong. In addition, ethical awareness nurtures the working culture and performance of the organization with moral intelligence. Therefore, ethical sensitivity is considered as a core dimension of ethical leadership. Sendjaya (2005) suggests that ethics is a crucial component of

leadership that its absence could turn transformational leadership into a disastrous outcome. From the professional point of view, ethics is regarded as a magnetic tool of professional development of effective leadership. It can be argued that ethical principles help school principals to solve their conflicts and dilemmas (Ghanem, 2018). Therefore, I believe, leadership with ethical sensitivity will nurture the inner as well as outer dimensions of an individual.

Here, having a concern with ethical leadership, I want to go through meaning, definition, historical context, development and importance on education. The interest in ethical leadership from academics and practitioners has grown enormously in recent years Ethical leadership is perceived as a social, relational practice concerned with the moral purpose of education (Angus, 2006). It is perceived as process of influencing people through principles, values and beliefs that embrace what we have defined as right behavior. That way, it incorporates the concepts of fairness and respect for others (Bawden, 2000/2003; Northouse, 2013). Starratt (2004) defines ethical leadership as "the attempt to act from principles, beliefs, assumptions, and values in the leaders' espoused system of ethics" (p. 5). For Ghanam (2018),"ethical leadership is a style of leadership that demonstrates management in the context of normative conformity in personal activities and interpersonal relationships, and aims to increase such referrals by directing them to two-way communication, empowerment and moral thinking"(p. 17). Ethical leadership is characterized by "ethical characteristics" and "ethical values". Similarly, Marrella (2001) outlines motivating ethical behavior in others as a central leadership challenge, noting that "character development is part of education" (p. 24). Similarly, Yukl (2006) highlights that leadership is a process to achieve the shared goal but practicing unethical or weak behavior by the leader loses credibility and effectiveness of this

process as well as outcomes. Here, as I assume that educational leadership is an area which provides opportunities to build human character and intelligence. The horizon of school leadership is boundary less. The effects and influence of ethical leadership can be reflected through character and behaviors of individual and entire social movements. Therefore, it holds precious responsibilities to generate a moral society.

 Ethical leadership is characterized with ethical values in the management function as to decision making, behavioral ethics, communication, coordination, leading, planning and organizing, thus ethical leadership plays a great role in the institutions, and the values that education principals have are determined by determining educational policies and philosophy, trying to implement these policies through oriented programs, selecting, developing and evaluating staff, rational use of resources, and creating a healthy school culture. Leadership signifies a relation between a principal and his/her followers within a situational and institutional context so it can be viewed in terms of healing and energizing powers of love, recognizing that leadership is a reciprocal relation with followers (Mihelič et al., 2010). Ethical leadership is a construct that appears to be ambiguous and includes various diverse elements (Yukl, 2006). Such an ethically led school can serve as a model for ethical leadership to other schools and even the community. Ethical leadership cultivates credibility and respect for the leaders and the organization. Ethical leadership builds trust and makes it easy to lead an organization. People find it easy to follow an ethical leader because they know they can always trust him to do what is right

Keeping an eagle eye on historical upbringing of ethical leadership, it is rooted from our cave –dwelling days. It is being updated with every juncture of development from human civilization. During the past thirty years, there has been a rise in to research in ethical leadership in education (Cherkowski et al., 2015). The study of

leadership ethics dates back to Plato (427-347 B. C.) and Aristotle (384 322B. C.) who were attributed to the development of ethical theory (Northouse, 2013). The ethical theory that rooted from the word ethics represents customs, conduct or character, provides a scheme of principles that guides every individual about what is right or wrong and good or bad in a particular situation.

In this contemporary era, Greenfield (1981) and Foster (1986) emphasized the need for further study into the ethical and moral aspects of educational leadership. Starratt (1991) was among the first to propose a conceptual framework for ethical leadership and to suggest that ethical leadership should no longer be defined as a style but as the basis for moral dimensions and actions. Continuously, the ethical leadership construct also gained increased momentum in the second half of the decade as scholars observed that a greater intersection of leadership and ethics is essential if our nation is to recover from the apparent epidemic of moral deficiency identified in its 21st century leaders (Brown et al., 2005; Brown &Treviño, 2006). Furthermore, ethical and responsible leadership is the spirit of age (Kuusilehto & Awale, 2014) and stress the term responsible means "answerable for one's duty or task in one's domain of work" (p. 11). With these concerns, ethical sensitivities are needed to deeply study in educational premises.

Now concerning ethical leadership, it is both a visible and invisible concern. The visible part is portrayed as how a leader works with others, especially in his manner in public. The invisible aspect of ethical leadership rests on the leader's personality, in his decision-making process, in his mindset, in the set of values and principles on which he lures, and in his guts to make ethical decisions in challenging circumstances. Correspondingly, the research study of Brown, Treviño, and Harrison (2005) promotes social learning as the key theoretical perspectives in defining ethical

leadership. Social learning theory proposes that ethical knowledge influences employees' ethical conduct at work because ethical leaders are attractive and legitimate models that attract and hold followers' attention. Also, ethical leaders communicate the eminent behavior, and they use the reward system to keep employees accountable. Ethical leadership as defined by Brown et al. (2005) is the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making.

Going through literature, I also came with disparate and diverse understanding which also has to be in consideration while defining leadership. Yukl and Mahsud (2010) criticized the leadership literature by arguing that it has presented disparate and diverse findings with regard to defining what a leader is and identifying what makes a leader more effective (Hernandez, Eberly, Avolio, & Johnson, 2011). They argue that one difficulty is the numerous and varied definitions of a leader when explaining leadership with some studies focusing on the leader's contribution, others on the followers, and others emphasizing the role of the situation or context.

From the above literature, I understood that ethics is a set of moral conduct. Ethical leadership is a leading process which values all human aspects and provides a basic understanding of being morally decent. It places in center not only the value of emotions, feelings, love, hope and rights of individuals but also the institutional and social values. Principal, as the highest ruling figure, really matters to the overall development of the students along with institutional and social value. Principals should be a role model or lead by example so they are followed by followers indeed. Now I focus on principles of ethical leadership. Ethics encompasses many areas but is commonly broken down into three areas; (i) ethic of care (ii) ethic of justice (iii) ethic

of critique. There are many paradigms on ethical leadership, among them I look upon three fundamental ethical principles developed by Starratt (2004). My understanding on these dimensions is given below with brief discussion.

Ethic of Care

General understanding of the ethic of care is the empathy and responsibility for the wellbeing of the individual as defined by Eyal, Berkovich, and Schwartz (2011). This paradigm of ethics has been derived from the theory of relational ethics. Description of the ethics of care was based on the work of educational ethical theorists who come from a feminist approach to ethics and morality in education (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984). The foundation of the ethics of care began with Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg's theory. According to Gilligan (1982), the ethics of care included the concept of being there, listening, understanding and sharing responsibilities for another's welfare and maintaining relationship and attachment.

Similarly, According to Noddings (1984), caring should be the basis for the decision making of the educational leader. Educational leaders think, beyond one size fits all models and allows for the individual needs of the student to be guided to ethical decision-making (Gross & Shapiro, 2013; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). Furthermore, Langlois (2011) emphasized that human relation and welfare is of major importance for proper functioning of organization. She also stated that an organizational practicing an ethic of care helps to promote interpersonal relation, quality of life at work, health of workers, and health of community of workers as well (Starratt 1991) identifies that "it relates to the fundamental requirements of interpersonal relation, not from a contractual and legal standpoint, but in terms of absolute respect" (p.34).

Regarding this ethics of care, what I perceive is that it gives a framework to decide our action and show the consequences of our decision and action. It makes me think about the individuals' benefit and hurt as the long-term effect of the decisions made and the way an individual pays back in the future for the help they get at present (Shapiro &Stefkovich, 2011). Overall, this paradigm guides school leaders to make a decision with value in mind, humanity and in heart. In this study, I assume that ethics of care does not only create a respectful environment in the school but also provides a sense of love, compassion, trust, honesty, responsibility, understating, and valuing the dignity of human beings that society may showered by the blessing of humanity.

Ethics of Justice

The ethic of justice frequently serves as a foundation for legal principles and ideals. It mostly focuses on rightness and wrongness. Justice is not only a rule or set of rules but it is a moral principle, a mode of choosing that is universal, a rule of choosing that we want all people to adopt always in all situations. Starratt (1991) shares that it strives to protect the rights of all people through a logical system of laws, rules and regulations. It also demands that leaders place issues of fairness at the center of their decision making (Northouse, 2013). This type of ethics has a faith in the legal system and hopes for progress (Delgado, 1995). If individuals are treated differently, the ground of the different treatment must be clear and based on sound moral value.

Ethics of justice is rooted in two schools of thoughts. One argues that human reality is the individual, independent of social relationships where the individual is conceived prior to society. In this concern, Starratt (1994b) describes:

The ethic of justice as emanating from two schools of thought, one

originating in the 17th century, including the work of Hobbes and Kant and

more contemporary scholars such as Rawls and Kohlberg; the other rooted in the works of philosophers such as Aristotle, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, and Dewey. The former school considers the individual as central and sees social relationships as a type of a social contract, where the individual using human reason gives up some rights for the good of the whole or for social justice. The latter tends to see society rather than the individual, as central and seeks to teach individuals how to behave throughout their life within communities. In this tradition, justice emerges from "communal understandings" (p. 50).

This perspective focuses on individual rights and stems from values of fairness or equity that every individual has the right to equal treatment (Shapiro &Stefkovich, 2005). This perspective puts the focus on the rights of the majority, although it has a potential not to benefit specific individuals (McCray &Beachum, 2006).

Concerning the ethics of justice in the context of school leadership, school has an individual and organizational perspective on justice because the choice of an individual on community consciousness, and the organizational choices are the sum of the individual choice (Langlois, 2011). For her, ethics of care and justice puts emphasis on the need to take both choices into consideration. Kohlberg (1981) argues that there is a great concern not only to make schools more just, that is, to provide equality of educational opportunity and allow freedom. Now connecting to my focus of study, I believe each action and decision of the leader cultivates the future life of students.

Ethics of Critique

Ethics of critique is rooted in critical theory. It seeks to challenge the status and give voices to the marginalized section of the society. Under the ethics of critique, 'many theorists ask us not only to rethink laws and justice, but also to

consider other concepts such as privilege, power, culture and language' (Robison & Garratt, 2004). The ethics of critique is "close to the ethic of justice" (Starratt, 1991) as the use of critical lenses sheds light on injustices in order to attain greater social justice. However, the specific perspective of this ethics is to confront norms and power structures that are discriminating against weaker societies and offer other norms. Starratt (1991) observed that "their basic stance is ethical for they are dealing with questions of social justice and human dignity" (p. 189).

Some leaders exhibit an ethical profile indicating a pronounced ethic of critique, and they are able to resolve their ethical dilemmas and initiate meaningful changes within their organization (Langlois et al., 2014). The basic stance of such an ethic is dealing with questions of social justice and human dignity and to consider the needs of different stakeholders' individual rights. This ethics is often claimed to be needed in cases of a multicultural society or of ethnic diversity (Norberg& Johansson, 2014). In the case of institution, Starratt (1991) shares ethics of critiques questions in terms of relationships of power, domination, and discrimination but in my study, empowerment and inclusion were central of the concerns.

Here, I understood ethical principles to be followed in school leadership are; love care, welfare, justice, equality, honesty and truth, , responsibility, human rights, humanism, devotion, rule of law, love, tolerance, secularism, respect, frugality, democracy, positive human relations, openness, rights and freedoms (Mackenzie & Mackenzie, 2010; Shapiro & Gross, 2008).In the school setting, the ethical understanding of care, justice and critique provides a wholesome of framework to cultivate process ethical environment within an institution as well as in society. These ethical standards relationship between leader and follower may move together toward the desired achievements with the proud feeling of decent citizens.

School Principals as an Ethical Leader

"Guru Brahma, Guru Bishnu, Guru Deva Maheshowra" is a metaphorical sentence derived from Hindu philosophy represents an infinite attributes of teachers. Due to this notion, teachers are holding supreme position in the society since ancient periods in the Nepali context. Teachers are offered the word "Guru" symbolizes the God, truth and creator of moral human being (Dhakal & Koirala, 2005). With these assertions, teachers are securing the prestigious position even in this diverse and globalized society. School principals are honored as highest authorized leader within a school community. School leaders have a special responsibility to all members of their organization to be informed, be ethical and capable moral agents who lead democratic schools (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). Along with this, they are also respected as an intellectual personality and hope of the society.

They are powered with a position which is attractive for people to learn more about them and their leadership practices (Yukl, 2013). The growth and promotion of any school could easily be traced back by the leaders of the school because they are the examples of moral character and a moral leader always starts from self. Ethical leaders are perceived as people who do not tolerate ethical lapses. Ethical leader has to be honest, trustworthy, show credibility and demonstrate integrity, and needs to walk the ethical talk being courageous and strong (Trevino, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). Similarly, according to King (2008) ethical norms make a leader able to handle any critical situation in a typical way. Ethical consistency makes the personality of a leader more reliable. It builds trust between leader and followers and handles the disputed situation with patience by keeping in mind the safety of all the concerns. Yukl (2013) goes a step further and defines what it is that leaders can influence to include objectives and strategies, motivation to achieve, trust and cooperation of

members, allocation of resources, shared beliefs and values of members among others. Leadership is about social influence (Manning & Curtis, 2015), that results in change or else without change then (good) leadership has not occurred. Leadership has its importance in other aspects of life other than just in government alone.

Moreover, leaders draw everyone's attention and raise interest because their actions are significant and supposed to change the reality and make a path to the future (Starratt, 1993), Generally, it is mentioned that often an individual who holds a role of leadership deems himself relieved of moral obligations that others follow. When this happens, a leader is more likely to excuse him from acting ethically. A principal is not only an individual but also a representative of school and school leadership. School leaders are moral agents who demonstrate strong ethical behavior through words, attitudes, actions and decisions in moral institutions called schools (Bhattarai, 2013). They are not only expected to possess ethical character and practice ethical behavior, but they are also expected to build a culture of integrity (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) where ethical behavior is the organization's norm. The behavior of principals indicates leadership which is known as a moral art or a craft (Allio, 2013) because their role modeling establishes ethical expectations and standards (Gini, 2004) in all dimensions of school and society. Therefore, the principals are not only the driver of the values, beliefs and ethics of the school community but the actual designer (Eyal et al., 2011).

From the perspective of Buddhism, I found that teachers are expected to do their best to enhance the mental, behavior and spiritual development of students. Now in the case of principals, they were even more because leaders (principals) are evaluated more effectively by subordinates (Cohen, 2014). Naturally, leaders are different in common mass in much respect both in terms of quality and character.

Therefore, leaders are expected to rely on their inner voice and inner compass that points them in the ethical direction (Brown, 2007). Good leaders are designated by an enhanced capacity to feel morally obligated to a wide range of followers and this is not a skill, but knowledge and world perspective (Ciulla, 2005). In this literature based on my perception, ethical leaders speak to us about our identity, what we are and what we can become, how we live and how we could live better (Freeman & Stewart, 2006).

As the authors mention, leaders should make a "holding environment" portrayed by compassion, trust, and nurturance and help followers to change and develop when confronted with challenging circumstances. To get close to details, I went through some qualities of principals as set by Gluchmanova (2015). They are as follows: principals should develop a vision that is consistent with the educational philosophy; the school principals must be a strong moral leader and create a moral air in the school; the school principals should condemn discriminatory behavior; the school principals should consider effective teaching as a duty, acting in the interest of students and the community; the school principals have to maintain a balance between the rights of different groups within the school community; moral courage is part of the executive role; and the school principals should share ethical behavior, moral actions and honesty with school members

Now, I have come to realize that ethical leaders are rational people who live as models of making the world an ethical place. Ethical leaders who understand the learning process as a profoundly moral activity that engages the full humanity of the school community. They seek to take responsibility and understand presence (Starratt, 2004). The leader who is honest with and about himself and with others inspires trust that encourages followers to take responsibility. A great vigor I applied in reviewing

the literature allowed me to internalize that moral and ethical leadership receives insufficient attention to research on school leaders (Fullan, 2002). Therefore, there has been a strong interest in exploring the nature of ethical leadership (Ciulla, 2001) in the academic domain. Within the past decade, the literature on educational leadership has placed a greater focus on the moral aspects of schooling than ever before (Furman, 2003). So, Northouse, (2013) advocates the need for additional research in leadership ethics. Avolio, Waldman, and Yammarino (1991) established the concept of the four I's of transformational leadership, which were idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Copland, 2014).

After investigating individual conduct and character of ethical leaders, I came up with my own canvas of the ethical leaders. In other words, principals with ethical consciousness are caring, loving, and humble and have charitable attitudes. They are also concerned for the greater good, strive for fairness, take responsibility and show respect for each individual. Ethical leaders set high ethical standards and act in accordance with them. They influence the ethical values of the institution through their words and actions. Leaders serve as role models for their followers and show them the behavioral boundaries set within an institution. They are perceived as honest, trustworthy, and courageous and demonstrate integrity. The more the leader "walks and talks", by translating internalized values into action, the higher level of trust and respect he generates from followers. In this regard, a principal as a leader must be the model for the school community and its values (Hughes& Jones, 2010).

This research outlined that a leader's effort to influence the ethical behavior of their followers (being a moral manager) is an important aspect of an ethical leader (Treviño, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). Gary (2005) suggests that educators are

modeling behavior and teaching ethics every time they encounter students.

According to Katrancı, Sungu, and Sağlam (2015), for the success of the institutional

system, there is a need for honest and trustworthy ethical leaders who respect ethical

principles and values in the light of universal references. Furthermore, leaders stand

as role models, therefore ethical leadership models ethical behavior to the community

(Ouma, 2017). At the core of the act lie the right and wrong measures, dealing with

the idea of being ethical, wrong or right (Ghanem, 2018). However, various studies

reveal that leaders have moral intentions, but due to their incompetence create

unethical outcomes (Ciulla, 2005). Therefore, the study respects, values every

individual with their social, cultural and many more.

Theoretical Referents

After going through the literature on the concept of ethical leadership in the

working world of school principals, I came across several theoretical concepts on

ethical leadership. Since the episode of stories lived by the school principal in the

process of leadership, I assumed the value based theory might justify exploring the

meaning of ethical leadership. Pade (2015) suggests that leaders have to have a

strong set of values, morals and ethics. Then, I learned there is astrong interlink and

coexistence between ethics and values. In this study, the term ethics refers to a code

of conduct that establishes rules for acceptable behavior. However, values are only

ethical values when they deal with right and wrong behavior. As my thrust to explore

the ethical phenomenon in the lived world by principals, I chose value based

leadership (VBL) theory to organize my understanding. In other words, this study is

anchored through value based leadership theory. Here, I have highlighted my

understanding on this value based leadership theory in brief so that my study could

walk in the right track.

Value Based Leadership Theory

Value based leadership evolved as a bi-product of culture and time (Copeland,
2014). He reveals that the emergence of the twenty-first century was plagued with
extensive, evasive and disheartening ethical leadership failures. The competitive race
for success, and profitable tendency of organization dragged the moral and ethical
standard in to the silent zone. Almost all sectors were immune as many leaders were
exposed for immoral or unethical behaviors. In response, many began to place a
renewed emphasis on the importance of ethics and morality in exemplary leaders
(Avolio& Gardner, 2005; Brown &Treviño, 2006). As a result, in order to restore
hope, confidence, integrity and honor to leaders and organizations, VBL was
promoted.   Similarly, transformational leadership highlights that a leader possesses a
strong set of values, morals and ethics. The result was an increased focus on the
concept of VBL, which a decade later has become ubiquitous in both management
and leadership literature.

Furthermore, paying attention to the definition of Barrett (2006), values-based
leadership is a way of making authentic decisions that builds the trust and
commitment of employees and customers. This theory contends that a leader's
behaviors and style is rooted in ethical and moral foundations. In this leadership
style, there are four qualities which the leaders need to have. They are self-reflection,
balance, self-confidence and humanity of value based leadership theory. After
reviewing this theory, I learned   that   value based leadership theory is a modern
attitude and considers both coordinating personnel that is "establishing common
values" and paying attention to individual differences simultaneously. It is also a
process of leading by bringing into the line of the leader's value with institutional
value and social value as well. Leaders introduce the values and culture supportive of

innovation, transformation, service, respect, honesty, justice, care, empowerment and inclusion for all the stakeholders. In this leadership style, leaders never change the core principles and values. They only change their approaches and strategies in a situation in order to continue them (Yulk, 2004), so these leaders are required to lead and develop the mosaic social structure of Nepal.

Based upon this theory, what I can predict is that people who can influence others through their own behaviors rather than any power and instruction are true leaders. A leader who has a capacity to unleash other's full potentialities can have vision for followers self-development as well as the school culture where followers may feel free and allow them to grow is a perfect value based leader. Furthermore, these leaders are eager to help and possess the self-concept to enhance the value of self along with institutions. Guiding, visionary, counseling, empowering and having integrity are also prominent strengths which are needed to be embedded in effective and productive leaders.

For this reason, this theory stands as a set of values that shows the beliefs and opinions that have priority from individual and public aspects and also are desirable values is an abstract affair that has surrounded emotions, experiences and realities. After going through this theory, what I understand is that value based leadership theory is a process of leading having valued the spiritual, service, authentic, ethical and transformation strength of stakeholders, institutions and societies. Achieving the shared goals with all these qualities is the essence of value based leadership theory.

Empirical Studies on Ethical Leadership in Schools

Recent trends indicate that there is an emerging interest to dig out the issues of ethical leadership (Amori, 2010; Bigbee, 2011) and its dimension of care, justice, and critique. There might be several research studies on ethical leadership in the field

of education. The perception of school principals signifies the school leadership as well. Among them, I have collected some findings related to my research question to explore the perception of ethical paradigms in their educational leadership practice.

Begin with study on Ghunam (2018), in this paper, the notion of ethics is considered as tools of educational management. He shares that educational institutions are value based organizations having obligations to create safe organizations. Ethical leadership in education and its relation to education management is considered as a behavior rules of the school principals in management activities in daily affairs taking into account that school teachers and principals are expected to adhere to the rules and regulations pertaining to culture and tradition of what's good and what's bad in accordance with ethics principles paying heed to schools' principals who are anticipated to be honest and fair at school. In connection to this, I understand that ethics is the managerial component of effective leadership.

When I went through Ahmed (2016), I found the elements of ethics, trust, and mutual cooperation as backbone of sustainability in educational leadership and all these elements are observed by every successful leader in his organization. We should trust that our leaders will keep alive their character and values which are not so easy to set according to law but very important and useful for organizational success. A leader being the governor of the institute should be a role model for all with the ability of sustainable leadership.

Friendly environment makes learning easy and joyful. Good interaction, relationship, and chain of trust between superintendents, principals, teachers, parents, and students can surely lead the institution to progress. This research concludes that ethics plays an important and key role in the development of Finnish educational leadership.

Likewise, Pede (2015) evokes a strong indication of the influence of personal morals and values on the role of school principal. During the navigation on literature, I was interested to see the influence of school leaders' ethical leadership behaviors on organizational culture too, so based on the journal article by Toytok and Kapusuzoglu (2015), I claim that there is fairly high level of positive significant correlation between ethical leadership and organizational culture. Regression analysis showed that ethical leadership is a strong predictor of organizational culture. At last, I went through the journal by Bowen et al. (2014) who focused that school leaders have a special responsibility to all members of their organization to be informed, ethical, and capable moral agents who lead democratic schools (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005).

Furthermore, according to Freeman and Stewart (2006), ethical leaders speak to us about our identity, what we are and what we can become, how we live and how we could live better. On this literature base, I conclude my understanding of school principal as doer, actor   rather than just directing and guiding. The varied literature sources above thus suggest that leaders must be ethical every moment, demonstrating that ethics is an integral part of their intellectual and logical context they use to understand and relate to the world of leadership. After all, ethical leadership is the ultimate form towards an efficient and successful leadership in an organization. Ethical leadership has been found to be positively and significantly associated with transformational leadership and transformational culture of the organization. Along with this, it is described as the process of influencing people through principles, values and beliefs that embrace what we have defined as right behavior (Ouma, 2017).

In the context of Nepal, various studies have been carried out pertaining to school leadership. The research findings of (Thapa, 2016) suggested that school

leadership competencies in all types of schools were not satisfactory and adequate to address the growing quality expectations of learners and parents of schools in Nepal. Leadership issues raised by the studies are low level of efficacy of school principals (DOE, 2005), weak institutional leadership and absence of monitoring and supervision practices at schools (SESP, 2005; Bista, 2001; Sapkota, (2008),indigestible and unacceptable behaviors of institutional school principals (Wagle &Lammichhane,2006); inadequate administrative characteristics of school principals to implement TQM (Rijal,2004) and weak leadership roles of school principals (Bista & Carney, 2007) are in practices.

Centering on the moral and ethical competence of principals, Sapkota (2008) pointed that principals had low morale clarity. Similarly, indigestible and unacceptable behaviors of institutional school principals (Wagle & Lammichhane, 2006) were found in study. Bhattari (2010) concludes that government and teachers union policies documents are outlined with ethical codes but documents failed to address the meaning of ethics. It is stressed that ethical issues have emerged because there is a lack of the efforts to contextualize the ethics in the local milieu. Unfortunately, in the real situation teachers are found confused with ethical and unethical behaviors so school head teachers and teachers are criticized for unethical practices. Kafle (2013) examined the Nepali institutional schools from a distributed leadership perspective. In the research, Bhattarai (2015) identified that the head teacher did not demonstrate optimal care and justice to exercise their professional judgment fully. Going through the study carried out by Singh and Allison (2016) reveals that head teachers from higher-performing schools discussed and gave examples of the presence of a highly productive culture in their schools and explained how they believed this directly contributed to their school's academic success through

building relationships based on trust, professional respect, openness and ethical behavior. However, there are no studies on the lived world of school principals. The academic eyes yet reached to the principals' experienced world and how they make meaning out of their experience. Furthermore, there is a dearth of study on three paradigms of ethical leadership in institutional secondary schools in the context of Nepal.

<div align="center">**Research Gap**</div>

The review of literature above exposes that ethical leadership and its principles, ethics of care, justice, and critique practiced and examined in the process of school administration. Ethics is considered as part of professional development. It is used as tools to control and operate the daily scheduled activities. While going through literature and relevant studies, I found different meanings constructed in the discourse of ethics and ethical perception of school principals and ethical leadership. Some articles impress me as ethical leadership is meant for professional development of the school leaders. However, I found less investigation carried out regarding educational leadership and ethics, especially with alignment to the three major principles of ethical leadership such as ethics of care, ethics of justice and ethics of critique in the living world of institutional school of the Kathmandu Valley. Therefore, this study explores the experiences on the principles of ethical leadership of the principals. I assume that the new meaning I generate from this study may add knowledge on ethics in educational leadership. The finding of this research may contribute to the academia which could be useful for further study and minimize the gap of the knowledge on the issue of ethical leadership.

Theoretical Underpinning

Keeping this notion in my mind, I defined the theoretical premises for this study so that my understanding would be academically explored. I have a faith in explored understanding that would stand as fabric so that I could weave, generate and construct the research knowledge from this study.

The theoretical framework has been developed through brainstorming with three paradigms of ethical leadership as remarked by Starratt (2004). The concepts are reviewed in the process of this study. This begins with the concept of theater. Institutional schools are symbolized as a theater, and leadership is a play where this research is playing. Of course, principals as a key performer, actor or doer, whereas ethical issues and strength embedded in principal and leadership were our themes of the play. I am a researcher desperately eager to visualize play by wearing the eyeglass of ethical paradigms of leadership. The three dimensions are as follows; i) ethics of care, ii) ethics of justice and iii) ethics of critique. Furthermore, stepping on his concepts, I have included, love, care, respect, social welfare, counseling, human dignity, individuality, and balanced relationship under the ethics of care. Likewise, ethics of justice consists of fairness, honesty, transparency, freedom, and alternative choices. The third principle, ethics of critique consists of equal access, participation, empowerment and inclusion. Self-evaluation, realization, awareness and transformation are also covered under this paradigm. There exists direct and indirect interaction among the ethics of care, ethics of justice and ethics of critique which result in contextual professional leadership. I have employed the value based leadership theory (Copland, 2014) to trim and shape the meaning which I have explored from these stories. According to this theory, effective leadership

incorporates principals' self-reflection, balance, self-confidence and humanity. This is a strong foundation which builds ethical leadership.

Being specific toward this research, I assume that ethical leadership can claim if there is sense and contribution of caring, justice and critique. Now concerning the ethics of care, I assume loving, respecting, understating, listening, and sharing the responsibilities for other welfare. Likewise, the leader who can stand valuing the dignity of entire members as a human being is an ethical leader who can preserve and maintain the human relationship. From the perspective of ethics of justice, I believe preserving and maintaining the human relationship and dignity is essential for ethical leadership. On the basis of rule and right, if anyone motivated to exercise their freedom is an ethical leader. Allowing others, what is right and wrong from their self-realization is also the meaning of ethical leadership. The protection as well as prevention of emotional, physical, institutional and social casualties of stakeholders indicates the spectrum of ethics of justice.

In addition, using the third lens of ethics of critique, the texture of ethics of critique can be defined as follows. Balancing the distance among the school members and community members is an ethics of critique. Empowerment, equal access, equity, and inclusion are the features of balanced distance among the entire members. Grounding on these features, I can define, empowering school members, innovating the opportunities for equality and equity, and moving ahead with inclusion is an ethics of criticism. Furthermore, the leader, who can feel and challenge the value of minority and silent groups of peoples too, is known as an ethical leader. This may be a stronger predictor of leader effectiveness (Copeland , 2009) as well.

Chapter Essence

This chapter began with an overview of the thoughts of ethics and ethical leadership. Following that overview, the review of transitions into meaning, definition of ethics, historical context, and development of ethical theories and basic assumptions of ethical leaders were incorporated.

Furthermore, the definition and conceptions of ethical leadership were explored with a focus on school leadership. I have presented my understanding on three principles of ethical leadership; i) ethics of care, ii) ethics of justice and iii) ethics of critique. I tried to see the responsibilities of the principal as an educational leader. Finally, the concept of ethics and leadership melded with a form of a concept of ethical leadership in school. A value based leadership theory was presented as a theory to shape up my study as a research. The review of empirical studies paved the way to the research gap. At the end, I concluded this chapter with the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, emphasis is given on the methods I employed to explore the experienced narratives and stories of my participants on ethical leadership. In this expedition, to satisfy my efforts as a narrative researcher, I first present my philosophical premises which guide me to govern the entire inquiry. I made demarcations of my position on ontological, epistemological and axiological premises with rationale to this study. Then I sketch my paradigmatic stance as interpretivism with narrative inquiry by presenting why and how narrative inquiry is one of the most appropriate ways to address my research question. Then after, I discuss my research area and participants with reasons behind selecting the institutional school principals of the Kathmandu Valley. The procedures from gathering experiences and stories, transcribing, translating, and making meaning to themes generating are also presented. Finally, I discuss my concerns of temporality, social and place as quality standards of my study. At the end of the chapter, I present the discourse of ethical consideration which I have adopted in the research process.

Philosophical Premises of the Study

The term "philosophy" is heavy and abstract for me but now I understand philosophy is the totality of knowledge. Research paradigm is essentially a worldview, a whole framework of beliefs, values and methods within research. It acts as a guide about the existence of knowledge, value of knowledge and how we can get that knowledge. I believe in interpretivism research, knowledge is guided by research feelings and beliefs about the world and how it should be understood (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2005). In addition, Saldana (2015) opines, "If one of the primary goals of qualitative research is to discover what is meant to be human, the researcher needs to understand the rich diversities of human experiences" (p.4). Therefore, as an interpretive researcher, I educate myself with a clear understanding of research philosophy and its underlying ontology, epistemology and methodology before initiating this study as stated by Creswell (2009). Here, I am concerned with basic questions of ontology (nature of reality), epistemology (source of knowledge) and methodology.

Ontological Assumption

The purpose of my research is to explore the experienced narratives of institutional school principals so I have gone through the underlying value of the relativism approach to set my ontology. For me, relativism is the view that reality is subjective and differs from person to person (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This approach tries to dig out contextual meaning rather than reproducing established understanding as truth. I stand for ontological understanding of multiple realities. There are as many realities as individuals (Scotland, 2012), so my reality of knowledge is individually constructed. In my study, the reality of ethical leadership lies within the life world of school principals (Billsberry, 2009) who execute ethical activities in their role and responsibilities. Furthermore, I tried to understand a particular context, the core belief and socially constructed reality (Willis, 2007) of the participants.

Epistemological Assumption

Epistemology, the source of reality, is my major concern in this study. I am concerned with how the world is known about rather than what is to be known. As an interpretive researcher, I believe in subjective understanding of the ethical leadership of principals along with their perceptions on the ethical circumstances at their

workplaces. With the support of Saldana (2015), I have fostered my understanding on epistemology of my knowledge of this study. He clarifies that "it is a theory of knowledge construction based on the researcher's worldview that is how his or her lens and angled way of knowing it focuses and filters his or her perception and interpretation" (Saldana, 2015, p. 5). On this basis, I have set the boundaries of my source of knowledge to fulfill my hunger toward ethical leadership. Now, my epistemology is derived from every character, events and views embedded in the narratives of my participants rooted in the context because I do believe that reality can be external to individuals or produced by individual consciousness (Cohen et al., 2000). Saldana also agrees that knowledge is constructed within the individual, rather than something outside of oneself waiting to be discovered. Furthermore, experiences and stories are composed and received from the context and life world of the individual indeed. Adding the opinion of Saldana (2013), knowledge is constructed within the individual rather than something outside of oneself waiting to be discovered as well. Keeping all these in mind, I construct the knowledge on ethical leadership interpreting the past and present experiences and stories of school principals from their lived world (Billsbery, 2009). The truth of knowledge is formed through negotiations with my participants. I explored the emergent stories and negotiated their meaning with my participants (Creswell, 2008) to come to insights and understanding about social life, not necessarily to predict and control it (Saldana, 2013). I believe in different people and their different perspectives of the world (Will, 2007). With the valuing of the multiple perspectives in my study, I tried to explore a more comprehensive understanding of the situation (Morehouse, 2011).

Axiological Assumption

I value my participants' experiences, stories and academic culture and social understanding in the journey of inquiry. In my study, value provides the quality of judgment we make from epistemological and ontological claims (Given, 2008). The narratives of participants were placed in the center to study how people think and deal with their value (Richards, 2003). I as a researcher included all values expressed either by verbal or action during the study periods my participants experienced the world (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) they lived. Besides, I valued the multiple perspectives of my participants because so far as I perceived there is no absolute truth because it is contingent on the context and multiple perspectives (Saldana, 2013). Information of my participants on ethical leadership construct has been filtered, processed, stored and analyzed based on underlying academic value, social/ cultural values, values based leadership theory, and knowledge found in literature of ethics, and ethical leadership. I mean the feelings, hopes, desires; aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) of my participants are incorporated till the end of this study. In this way, I have concentrated on generating deeper knowledge as far as I can on ethical leadership.

My Research Paradigm: Interpretivism

I stand at interpretive paradigm to shape the philosophical foundation including ontology, epistemology and axiology of this study which I presented earlier. As far as I perceived, the research paradigm is a world view about what research is and how it is to be conducted (Wills, 2007). In addition, Thang and Thang (2015) mentioned that this paradigm enables viewing the world through participants' lens of perception and experiences as well as helps scholars in exploring the self-world by interpreting the understanding of individuals as they use experiences of participants to

construct and interpret their understanding from gathered information. Thomas (2003) suggests that "the interpretive paradigm portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing" (p.6). I seek methods that enable them to understand in depth the relationship of human beings to their environment and the part those people play in creating the social fabric of which they are a part (Thanh &Thanh, 2015).

The reason for employing the interpretive paradigm in my study is that it believes in reality as socially constructed, i.e. single observable reality (Saldana, 2011) rather there are multiple realities, or interpretation of a single event (Rowland, 2005). From the literature review, I came to realize that human experiences can be well captured in living and telling narrative inquiry so I have employed this method. I also came to know that narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience and a way of studying experience (Clandinin, 2013). I found that this is unique in this study because it reveals the life experiences through narrative and storytelling. Connecting to my context, ethics is a subjective topic by nature and cannot be understood at one time. All my participants have a series of experiences as academic leaders. Therefore, I have adopted an interpretive paradigm to explore. According to Willis (2007), interpretivism usually seeks to understand a particular context, and the core belief of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially constructed. Having said that I also address that the goal of my narrative inquiry is to come to insight and understanding about social life (Saldana, 2011).

Thinking as a Narrative Inquirer

After mapping the philosophical premises, interpretive paradigm and narrative inquiry for my study, then my concentrations focused on enhancing me as an ethical narrative inquirer. Before entering the lived world of my participants, I made a

promise to myself to think in a focused manner as a narrative inquirer expected to think (Saldana, 2015). In my level of understanding, a narrative inquiry is a qualitative method that is about examining stories to understand how they weave together to create a larger historical context (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Therefore, I explored the experiences and stories embedded in the lived world of the principals. I have indeed undergone my participants' personal narrative experiences (Chase, 2008) in their ethical leadership indeed. My focus is on the professional experience of the principals regarding the application of ethics in their leadership. We do believe that knowledge lies outside. We prefer copying others rather than analyzing ourselves. Do we ever try to find the knowledge which lies in our life and dies if not valued?

I present principals' stories and experiences in detail which provide insights into their professional life of leading processes in their schools and the ethical foundations such as ethics of care, ethics of justice and ethics of critique. I interact, converse and hear the lived experiences and stories of my participants. Information for my research was rooted into the experiences and stories of the participants.

My Living Territory in the Study

To get education from institutional schools (which was known as private boarding school in my childhood time) was one of my big dreams since my childhood which never got fulfilled in my life. This thirst is still alive in my mind and heart and will be forever. But to get in to the schools from the Kathmandu valley was like a "Ghiuko roti" (*Butter bread*) for me. Therefore, it was just painted in the bottom of my heart. Another inspiration was "incompletesteps of my late mother". I still visualize clearly the moment of sad facial expression and unclean voices when my mother was saying sorry for not sending us (me and my elder brother) to a private school. She was burning with a desire for providing English medium

(institutional) education. Since that day I became more curious regarding the world

of the institutional schools, especially of the Kathmandu valley.

Despite my personal hidden interest, I have also practical reasons for selecting

the institutional schools of the Kathmandu valley as my research area. In practice,

most of the parents are struggling to send their children to institutional schools rather

than community schools located nearby. Similarly, no one denies that Kathmandu

valley has good practices for quality education all over the country. People from every

corner of the country prefer the Kathmandu valley for better education to their

children. I am the living example of it. So, I was eager to study and identify the

magnate of the schools. Furthermore, in my understanding, principals from the

Kathmandu valley are the right sources of knowledge in my study. Therefore; I have

selected the Kathmandu valley as my study area.

Selection of Participants

The school principals were my co-researchers (participants) of this study. My

participants were selected purposely. I selected those principals of institutional

schools as research participants who have monuments of experiences and stories in

leadership. I assume that these participants were representatives of the larger group of

institutional school principals. Coincidentally, they also have strong belief, faith and

value of moral and ethical qualities of human beings in education and educational

leadership. Marching toward this purpose, I have gone to six principals to gather live

stories. But, during and after the story collection, I found some of the stories are not

adding the essence to my topic so I decided to exclude them from this study. Lastly, I

came up with the experiences and reflections of only four participants. At that point, I

was not comfortable with fewer participants but I also believe in 'in-depth' and

'insight' information from participants rather than number by statistics (Thanh &

Thanh (2015). Then I was satisfied with the number of participants.. In this way, I completed my selection of targeted participants for my study. In addition, during collection of narratives and interaction with my participants I found the richness and depth of the study. It made me even more mature on research topics and participants.

I was sure about the participants from the beginning of the research. The clear identification of the participants helped me to peep into their living world. The issues of ethical phenomenon were my central area of discussion. After defending my proposal (June, 3, 2019), I made a call to them and requested their appropriate time for our first meeting so that I could offer them to be the participants of my study. But all of them were found busy with tight schedules. So, I made them clear about the purpose of the study and related areas through phone and mail. Then I started to visit them with a consent letter wherever they said. One of the participants invited me to her house. I met four of them in their office and one in a coffee house. The second round of visits was made in their respective institutions. I was engaged almost for five hours with each of my participants in order to understand ethical aspects from their role and responsibilities. I started collecting information from June 2019 and the collection of information ended in August 2019.

Narratives as Information Generating Approach

The procedure toward the information, a gifted gift (Saldana, 2013) from my participants was exciting as well involved lots of multitasking. Making phone calls, waiting for responses, eager to see them as soon as possible, different propels, and different environments were fantastic which made my research journey rich and knowledgeable. At the same time, I was a little nervous and petrified before commencing this journey of the research. The big problem was how to present myself in front of intellectual and educated personalities with power and positions. I knew

already that one of the major causes behind it was my incompetence in the English language. Fortunately, all of them were very loving, caring, respectful, and empowering figures and had clear visions and missions. It was my first time setting together with the principals for the purpose of academic research. During and after interviewing, I became clearer on a famous Napoli saying "FALEKO HANGO NUGEKO HUNCHA" meaning *intellectual people who are humble.* The most heart touching "mile stone" was that they were also keen on issues of the moral and ethical values in the spectrum of educational leadership as opined that the moral and ethical crisis of society has to be eradicated through educational leadership for the prosperity of the country.

Concerning generation of the narratives, I prepared myself as narrative inquirer thinking normatively about experience through inquiry (Clandining & Huber, 2014). Then I made a procedure of generating their experiences and stories. Firstly, I visited them and told each of my participants about the purpose of this study and procedure indeed. In this phase, I oriented them toward my positionality and intentionality. Finally, we (me and my participants) were involved in a discursive process in order to explore the meaning of ethical leadership. I tried to enter into their life world and excavated the twist and turns of their life because narrative inquiry is about life and living (Clandining & Huber, 2014). I viewed the lived world through a " series of individuals' eyes" and chose participants who have their own interpretations of reality to embrace the worldview (Bochner & Nicholas, 2014). I limited my study to only oral narratives. With the use of an MP3 voice recorder, I prepared to record all the verbal information. First, oral narrative dealt with participants' social, personal and cultural background. Second, narratives were focused on the professional world of the participants. The information was obtained to

generate the information for further analysis and interpretation of the information thematically. To meet the objectives of these two narrative types; I have used only one method in my study which is mentioned below.

Interview (Telling Stories)

I am confirmed that the narratives of participants are the valuable sources of information for my research. Then I engaged myself on various methods for the generation of information in my narrative inquiry. I have adopted an appropriate method which could place me in the lived world of my participants. In this phase, I was influenced, "If you want to know how people understand their world and their lives, then why don't you talk to them" as mentioned by (Kyave & Brinkman as cited in Saldana, 2015, p. 10). Meanwhile, I came to realize that "narrative is a way of knowing" (Kramp, 2004, p. 106). Then I realized that "knowing" can be blessed through the ways of interviews. I also believed that in-depth interviews might be the practical way to explore participants' experiences, attitudes, and beliefs (Cohene et al., 2011) as my purpose. So, I authenticated my section of the interview method for my study.

Then I was excited to conduct an interview but I did not get clear ways out. I was confused as to what my research questions to be asked. I was convinced that narrative research questions should possess the qualities of being represented in multiple dimensions: what? how? and why? (Luitel, as cited in Taylor & Wallace, 2007). Furthermore, going through the related literature, I was inspired by storytelling techniques to generate the information for my study. Stepping on the statements of Mitchell and Egudo (2003), I came to realize that a narrative is an interpretive approach in the social sciences involving storytelling methodology. The story becomes an object of study, focusing on how individuals or groups make sense of

events and actions in their lives. In this line, most of the narrative inquiries begin with storytelling (Clandining & Huber, 2014). I perceived that telling stories is important to understand the world that participants live as I intended. Face to face interviews were conducted through mutual agreement (Clandinin, 2013) with my participants. They narrated their event based stories addressing my queries. They have also shared their perceptions, challenges and future possibilities as well.

Connecting the roles of stories with my study, I assumed that stories would generate lives, meaning and build the understanding of the school communities in which participants interact on a daily basis (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Now, sharing my understanding of the contribution of stories to my study, I agree with the views that people shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as phenomenon under study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006)

On the basis of these literary strengths, I got clarity on the value of stories in my narrative study. It also powered and energized me in periods of interviews, listening narratives and formation of stories. Luckily, my participants shared their stories to provide a portal into their lived experiences and make sense of those experiences. I began with basic interview questions for a grand tour of stories along with follow up probing questions. During the story telling, I came to realize that the interview process allowed the participants to share their stories from their perspective,

and level of comfort, revealing as much information as they wished (Leech, 2002). I do believe that they have generated meaning to their lives through their own voice.

As an ethical narrative researcher, I have motivated all participants to execute their stories (Clandinin, 2013) experienced on the topic of the study. To create a conducive storytelling environment, I have taken help of some probing questions during the story telling by my participants. But the questions differed (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) as per my query. At the end of the story generation, I found these stories making me consider what I know, how I know, and what and whom I care about. This inspired me to listen again and again to the stories of my participants even till the last day of the completion of study. One more reality I want to share was all stories were co -constructed by me and my participant (Duncan, 2017). One more charm of this study was that stories were generated based on the cases.

Procedure of Recording, Transcription and Translation of Information

After collecting experiences and stories from my four participants, I became even more attentive to protect all the information. For me, it was not just important and valuable gifts but also my ethical responsibilities. Therefore, I created four different file folders for each of the participants. Then after, I transcribed all the information obtained listening to the audio recorder in the Nepali Language as they were recorded in my MP3 recorder. I also translated all the Nepali transcriptions in the English language. I was not very good at Nepali language typing so it took me a whole month. From the second round of information, I directly translated in the English language for the sake of time. After transcribing and translating all the verbal data on the text, I interpreted all stories in the English language without violating any meaning and essence of their stories. Soon after the completion of this task, I visited all my participants with the Nepali transcription and my interpretation in the printed

form. I read each and every sentence so that they could correct or even make it clearer if I misunderstood the meaning of characters and events of their stories. But unfortunately, their busy schedule kept me away from doing this. I was waiting for their responses which they had committed while taking the translated copy from me. I did not get any comments regarding my understating and translations on their experiences and stories. It made me relaxed assuming that I could carry and protect the essence of others' narrative in my understanding. Later on, it was about one week I got their permission to make a meaning and themes from their experiences and stories. At the end of this procedure, my inner eyes perceived all these narratives not just as information but as gift given but not gathered (Saldana, 2013). Therefore, I have handled all these gifts with ethical care till the conclusions of this study.

Meaning Making and Themes Generating from Story Retelling

As a narrative inquirer, I came to know that knowledge is conceived by human experience (Saldana, 2014). Therefore, I believe my query would be addressed by the experienced narratives of school principals. Similarly, my epistemological perception on narrative was a way of knowing (Kramp, 2004) and that knowing was expressed in stories narrated by the participants. On the basis of these assumptions, I have navigated into every stage of the experienced world of participants. Every corner of the events in the narrated stories was equally prioritized. The individual character, perceptions, beliefs, feelings, emotions, challenges, courage and their performances of participants also were highly emphasized indeed. I paid my sincere efforts to visualize the direct, indirect, active, passive, formal and informal dimensions of the events so that their events can be seen in the perspective of others (Norris et al., 2005).

So far as I understood, narrative inquiry is an inquiry in the midst of while the participant is living, experiencing and continuing to live. It is an ongoing process

indeed so it is important to acknowledge the ongoing temporality of experiences. Focusing on the inquiry highlighted by Clandini and Hurber (2014) inquiry, living and telling, revealing and telling the stories make up the lives of both researcher and participants.

From the field-to-field text: one of the most important foundations was a relational being to build the good rapport and trust of the participants in the field. According to Clandini and Hurber (2014), the field is an ongoing conversation with participants where they share their experiences and stories. The researchers negotiate with participants an ongoing relational inquiry space, a relational space called field. The field texts are composed as a form of stories. As I believe, the story is experienced on events or sequence of events (Abbott, 2002) lived by the participants.

From field text to research text: My fields texts (stories) are generated from experiences lived in one specific event and are lived by my participants. Then first from the field I got a field text, it was transcribed in Nepali and translated in English and then I worked carefully on the essence of the information.

From interim text to research text: It is about making meaning of the experiences and stories narrated by the principals of the institutional secondary schools on the ethical principles in their leadership. It was a hard and complicated process in this study. The clarity and confidence which I gained from meaning making was the prime foundation of my themes. I have generated one theme per each paradigm of ethical leadership. So, three themes are embedded with meanings of twelve stories from four participants. As I assumed that these three themes led me toward the findings of the study. At the end, I created a longer and detailed presentation of the findings (Ely, 2007) of the research

Quality Standards

As a researcher of qualitative research, I was aware of maintaining the quality standards from the beginning to the end of the study. I always kept in mind that these quality standards include ethical qualities of the researcher. Therefore, I paid more attention to make sure of the quality standards of the study. The use of simple, clear and meaningful words in my language was my priority as far as I could. I was clear with what to do until I got the proper academic pathway to reach the destination. Of course, with the help of literature, I prepared myself for this adventure journey. I acknowledge that qualitative information is rich and in-depth because researchers often capture information through the process of 'deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding' (Punch, 2009). Besides that, according to Denzin (2018), to maintain quality standards, the researcher needs to increase reflection in the research and its place in the narrative of the participants. I became even clearer after going through literature by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). As they define the definition of narrative inquiry, "it is a way of understanding and inquiring the knowledge into experiences through collaboration between researcher and participants" (p.20). Similarly, Kramp (2004) stresses that, "each story has a plot that reflects the perspective of the narrator, setting in time and place, and beginning, middle, and ending. Although not necessarily presented in that order as it is told" (p.23). Now standing on this statement, I followed the three-dimensional narrative inquiry; temporality, sociality and place.

Temporality

To my knowledge, temporality is a central feature of the research work. So, I did my best to build the bond of relations with my participants. I believe that pure bounding is the most important component to reach the depth of information. As a

narrative researcher, I was prepared with this notion that "events under the study are in temporal transition" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479). Therefore, it was important to understand people, places and events as in process because nothing remains permanent, but always in instability. In other words, in this study, temporality refers to the temporal transition of events as principals always have the past, present and future (Clandinin & Huber, 2014). While generating meaning from narrative events in the form of stories and experiences of principals, I tried to explore how their present stories and experiences of leadership have been shaped by their past lived experiences and stories and how they have been preparing themselves heading into the future. Standing upon, different points of time I have used narratives to connect between past, present, and future life experiences of my four participants centering on ethical leadership.

Sociality

As an interpretive researcher, I believe narrative inquiries are concerned with personal and social interactions. In this regard, I have employed personal interaction as the feelings, hope, desires and moral obligation of my participants. Similarly, social interaction as the milieu, and the condition under which participants experienced and events were unfolding (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). In addition, my sociality refers to the need to focus on the existential conditions, the environment and surrounding factors while collecting the narrative text. It emphasized the development of good social relations among the researchers and participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). It covered both the personal attributes and interaction with four participants. I was careful while generating the meaning of their personal stories in order to consider how their passions, feelings, concerns and moral obligation were shaped by each of their social interactions and surrounding measures

at their role and responsibilities. All my participants have a direct relationship with students, parents and all webs of the community to enhance the moral and ethical strengths. It is also based on interpersonal, relational and, interactions in society (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Thus, whenever I tried to depict the meaning of the principal's stories and experiences, I was conscious of how their past stories were shaped by social interaction and surroundings.

Being a narrative researcher, sociality has to be maintained through the tendency of the groups among principals to develop social links of their experiences and events. The personal relationship between the researcher and participants helps to share deep feelings. As I believe that the emotions and moral identity of my participants ultimately increase the quality standards (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) of my study. Therefore, I was sincere regarding these arenas.

Place

I believe that the place has an influencing power to connect with memories and experiences of my participants in my study. Place refers to the specific concrete, physical and topographical boundaries of place or sequences for socialites and temporalities of the participants' stories and experience (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). In my inquiry, place is important as it may change the inquiry that delves into temporality. For maintaining quality standards in the research, the places are the foremost for recognizing the events of participants as well as experiences that take place. So, as a narrative researcher, I am equipped with relevant knowledge about the impact of each place while collecting the lived experiences of the research participants.

Ethical Considerations of the Study

My topic is related with ethical value so I was sincere with my ethics as an academic researcher. Literature suggested that if a researcher is not careful on ethical issues, then the study can place the researcher in a situation that evolves risks so I paid full concentration on it as much as I knew. Ethics is "a set of personal and professional principles for intrapersonal action and interpersonal conduct, rooted in obligatory codes and individual value attitude and belief system" (Saldana, 2015, p.195). So, I perceived ethics to be understood in terms of lifelong obligation to the people who have touched the course conduction of the research.

During the literature review, I have gone through Saldana (2013) who mentions that "research method textbooks describe the ethical responsibilities of the investor but virtually none of them advised the researcher to consider the moral and ethical dimensions of the participants themselves" (p.81). This bitter truth warned me to be more alert with each and every moment and my entire journey of the research till the end. I paid full respect to the dignity and worth of all my participants. Therefore, respecting and adhering to ethical values in my study became like my "breath" of the study. When I entered into the personal zone of my participants, I kept in high consideration the following issues in my mind.

Informed Consent

Collected narratives are precious to the participants who are the actual owners and possessors of them as they may have acquired them through various means including study, transmission, experimentations and life experiences. Therefore, I took consent and permission to use their narratives as data for my research. I informed my participants about this study and its significance as clarifying the purpose and

procedure of the research. I made a promise not to use collected opinions for any other purpose except this research project.

Confidentiality/ No Harm

I maintained the potential of narrative inquiry to provide a connection that offers participants the security needed to be truly open in sharing their narratives as suggested by Clandinin (2013). I was informed with professional and cultural sensitivity. I ensured my participants to maintain confidentiality, privacy and not to harm their social, economic, physical and emotional aspects, and do not harm (human right) beneficence. I was prepared to assign aliases to the participants to protect their privacy, obtaining informed consent and not disclosing the identities of participants, places and ethical practices. I kept in my action that because of subjectivity and intrusive nature of qualitative research ethical concern incorporates the confidentiality of the participants (Saldana, 2015). Moreover, I maintained ethical issues during the period of research.

Honesty

I have generated the narratives of experiences and stories adopting the principle of trustworthiness. I educated myself from "not being judgmental and by suspending their disbelief as they attend to participants' stories" (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007, p. 647). I made sincere efforts to remain honest while transcribing, translating and interpreting the narratives of the participants Finally and importantly, I strictly followed ethics of care, ethics of justice and ethics of honesty, respect, confidentially and other ethical considerations as required by the research guidelines of Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED).

Chapter Essence

This chapter detailed the pathway and boundary of this research. In the beginning of the chapter, I articulate my philosophical premises. The philosophical premises explain with a justification of my ontological, epistemological and axiological values in this inquiry as an interpretive researcher. Ontologically, I am guided with an interpretive approach which advocates that realities lie within the life world of individuals. Epistemologically, I believe that a researcher can construct knowledge from experience and stories of individuals which are grounded in their lived world. Axiological, I value both me and my participants' life world in the process of meaning making. After discussing my philosophical orientation, I relate it with my research paradigm as interpretivism with narrative inquiry. In doing so, I rationalized my motive of using a narrative inquiry in my study in order to explore experienced narratives of my participants. Then I articulated my position as a narrative inquirer. Furthermore, I clarified my living territory where I gather experiences and stories. I also discussed the selection of the participants. This chapter also incorporates three quality standards as temporality, sociality and place in order to make my study trustworthy. Finally, this chapter sheds light on ethical considerations.

CHAPTER IV

STORIES ON ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

The first phase of this chapter begins with a personal and professional biographical profile of participants. I assumed that it pictures the detail of family background, academic qualification of my participants and their professional journey in the principalship in brief. In the second phase, I have entered the thematic journey. Here, I elucidate the experiences and stories of my four participants during the course of information gathering for my study. Most of the stories are verbatim as the participants have told. Such words have been *italicized*. In doing so, I have framed the twelve gathered narratives into three themes. Then I executed my analysis and interpretation of the narratives. In the third phase of the chapter, I came up with a summary of three themes which are grounded in my understanding. This is presented as a summary of perspectives on ethical leadership. Furthermore, the meaning of ethical school leaders also articulated in order to get closer to the ethical sensitivities in narratives. This closeness of realities may lead me to the world where I can construct the meaning of ethical leadership as principals have lived.

Profile of Participants

Here, I present a brief biographical profile of four participants with their pseudo names. The purpose of this profile is to sketch the personal, social, and academic portrayal of the participants. I do believe that it may give a picture of individuals and the social cultural context of the participants. Along with this, it may create an institutional atmosphere of schools where they have been cultivating ethical

foundations through their leadership. I do believe that it helps me to understand their realities.

Participant No 1: Mr. Janak Jha

Mr. Jha is humble, caring, good listener, impressive and energetic personality, matured enough even in his early forties. I am influenced by his personal warmth, humor, and down to earth personality. His personality carries the essence of the beautiful hilly region "Gorkha District", a historical place of the nation. His childhood bloomed in agricultural surroundings. He is blessed with supportive parents even if they are not literate. Social awareness of parents was the foundation of his academic strength. He belongs to a joint family, so he has a deeper knowledge on social, cultural and religious values of the society. His middle class status of family taught him the importance of hard work and continuity. He holds a clear perception that struggle and hard work is the key to success. With this dedication, he completed his secondary school from a community school of the village. To pursue higher studies, he went to Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. He earned Intermediate level degree from Tri-Chandra College, Master's Degree from Tribhuwan University, Nepal. In the middle of the Master's course, he got an opportunity to study in the United Kingdom with a full scholarship in Master in Management. After five years, he came back with a Master's degree with two years' experience as an assistant teacher in high school in London. He received education from Nepal and the United Kindom (UK). He is sound in academic performance with a Master's degree in management and post graduate diploma in education. Now, he is heading ahead for a higher degree in educational leadership and management. He also performs different academic roles like a professor, trainer and consultant.

His eyes and voices are full of confidence and hopes which he got from experiences of seventeen years in the educational field. He has experience of different leading positions as the head of the department, academic coordinator and the vice principal. Now, he is leading 400 students and 30 teaching and non-teaching staff as a principal for three years. He is also a founder of the school. His school is targeted for the middle and low class of the society of the Kathmandu district. He received many national and international rewards for his innovative and excellent work. The charitable and social attitude is reflected in his voice. He conducts the English language class for free for the local people too. He expressed extraordinary experiences and stories of his leadership career.

Participant No 2: Mr. Ram Shah

He is a man of caring, loving, respectful, influencing and pleasing personality with full power of concentration for greater good. He is also a power package of vision with a mission. In addition, he is a soft, clear, meaningful speaker, well-mannered and towering personality in the arena of education. He has been involved in the academic sector for 18 years. His excellent academic performance and intellectual attitude made him principal of one of the best institutional organizations in Lalitpur district. Most of the students of this school belong to upper middle-class families. He had started his teaching career as grade four teacher of class four when he was a student of grade eleven. Then he was upgraded to secondary level subject teacher. Then he was assigned with the responsibility of an academic coordinator for three years. After a year, he was promoted to the post of vice principal for three to four years. He has gained a good reputation in his institution and society because of his clear, analytic, and communicative personality traits. Now, he is leading the principalship since 2015 A.D.

During the teaching periods, he got opportunities to attend much educational training which made him even stronger and empowered. He gained a Master's degree in Educational Leadership and is still on the way to a higher degree. He belongs to a small educated family from Palpa district. He completed his school level from AnandaKuti Boarding Schools which was one of the best schools in Nepal in his period. His mother has a respect for this field and his family members are engaged in the educational sector. He never had a dream to become a part of the academic sector but now he is taken as an experienced figure of education both at national and international levels. His fluency in narrating experiences was impressive and full of visions.

Participant 3: Ms. Bhrikuti Rai

She is the only female participant of my study. Confidence, boldness and brightness appear in her age of sixties. Clear and straightforward way of narrating style with a deep sense of institutional atmosphere along with diverse society was found in her. She demonstrates a fair, honest and charitable attitude. She has contributed to academic sectors for nearly four decades. She had started as a science teacher 27 years back. Now, she has been in the position of leader for more than 19 years. She has the matured experiences of leading academic institutions in different capabilities like subject head, academic coordinator, vice principal and principal. She looks reserved externally but internally she is easy going and kind hearted.

She is originally from the Kathmandu valley, so she got opportunities to know the value and importance of education from her early childhood. In her period, to become doctor and engineer were prestigious careers, so she decided to pursue one of these two careers. Among these two, the medical field was her priority. Therefore, she joined the science colleges. Parents, relatives and society encouraged and pressured

her to get enrolled in the Medical College. She did her best to get admission but time and luck was not in her favor. She continued trying till the completion of her Master's degree in botany. Then she stepped into the educational sector and was appointed as a temporary part time teacher. In doing so, time and surroundings pushed and pulled her in this teaching learning profession forever.

The interesting part is that she was pretty sure not to become a teacher or part of academic sectors in her life. That was not her aim and objective of life but now she feels proud of her profession and achievement. She is happy with positive perception toward the teaching profession of the current society. Her analytical and critical perceptions regarding ethical leadership reveal her as a power bank of knowledge.

Participant No 4: Mr. Bhuddha Thakali

He is a tall and jolly young man having a dynamic personality with spiritual potentiality. He is open, spontaneous, talkative and active. His humble, respectful, transformative, pleasing, and straight forward personality shows his courage and dedication to distinguish what is right and what is wrong. He has been in the Kathmandu valley for 23 years from Dolakha district. He is in his early forties with sharp knowledge on thinking, judging and interacting. He has a Master's degree in Physics and desires to achieve a PhD degree in the near future. He has an excellent academic performance since his school level. He was the first boy of the class and secured the position as "district topper" in the SLC (School Level Certificate). Likewise, he was the distinction holder in I. Sc. (Intermediate Level in Science), first division in Bachelor's and Master's level as well. He belongs to a middle class farmer family. He is a married man with one baby girl. He has been attached to educational institutions for two decades. He has been leading an institution of 780 students as a

founder principal. One better thing is that his wife is also engaged in the same school as an academic coordinator.

He was honored with the best teacher award in 2068 from PABSON (Private and Boarding Schools' Organization Nepal). Similarly, many other national and international awards in various sectors were honored. He is also a book writer, trainer, national curriculum developer and a member of PABSON. He has a passion for venturing into new programs in school. His school team is visionary and focuses on extra model schools in pure science stream. He has adequate knowledge of problems and possibilities in the educational sector from local level to national level.

He is also a scholar of a spiritual organization named "SudharBatica, Sangh". Very soon he will be securing the "Acharya" designation which is known as a "highest post in spiritual organization". His spiritual name is "PremBandhu". His experiences and stories are aligned with spiritual and scientific thoughts as well as collaboration of national and international contexts. This can draw the leadership dimension and qualities of leaders which may be needed in our context.

Unfolding the Packs of Stories

Initially, I thought that it would not be so difficult to gather experiences and stories from the participants but it was not so. I persistently gained the knowledge on ontological and epistemic value of an interpretive method within an interpretive research design throughout this journey. I have created a narrating environment with basic individual questions and overall scenarios of school before entering the major study area. My participants were acknowledged with areas of my study because I clarified the purpose and procedure of this research beforehand. On the other side, I was also prepared with related questions regarding the ethical premises. These

questions made it easier for me to begin with a grand tour of questions along with follow up probing questions.

During the interview, the participants narrated valuable stories which were a bank of events. In this process, I also learned my role as a relation builder, prompter and active listener and prober to assist participants in recalling their past and present experiences of being ethical leaders. They shared their past and present experiences from every corner of their professional worlds. I recorded all the stories in my audio recorder so that I could protect the living information collected from the participants. I listened to the audio recording and transcribed them; first in Nepali and second in the English language.

Proudly, I must say that all participants belong to institutional schools as the principals for many years. They were equipped with various experiences and stories. Sailing into the stories, I found that every story has unique strength and eye opening messages. Each of the stories was full of their symbolic representation of knowledge and experiences (Saldana, 2015). From the pile of stories, I have selected only those stories which would be related to ethical leadership. I wished I could present all those adorable stories in detail but unfortunately, I could not. It was a stressful and challenging moment for me. I was worried about how I could present them in a wise and appropriate way. In that confused moment, the term "theme" knocked my mind and heart. Immediately, under the supervision of my supervisor, I worked on cultivating the themes. Considering the essence of each story, I came up with three themes to explore the ethical phenomenon. Among many stories, I selected only four stories from each participant which contributed to the formation of the theme. In other words, each story from four participants was presented under the one theme. After the completion of narrating twelve stories, then I explored the meaning of themes and

shared as per my understanding. Weaving all these understandings, I shaped the features of ethical leadership. Along with this, I sketch the qualities of their professional characteristics. I developed three themes in order to interpret their experience and stories, particularly focusing on paradigms of ethical leadership such as care, justice and critique. Their experiences and stories on each theme are elaborated below.

Theme 1: Ethics of Care: Hearing, Sharing and Helping

There is nothing mushy about caring. It is the strong resilient backbone of human life (Noddings, 1992).

In general understanding, the word caring gives a soft, warm feeling and makes everyone. With these refreshed energies, people can stand as human beings and develop humanity. Aiming at this purpose, I have included, love, care, respect, service, social welfare, counseling, human dignity, responsibility, and relationship under the ethics of care in this study. Anchoring my research questions, I have started from my first participant, Mr. Janak Jha, how he experienced the ethics of care in his leadership. He shared that caring is the first requirement of school. On the basis of the caring environment of the school, parents send their children. This is also a thread of trustworthy relationship between parents and school. He further added that caring incorporates love; respect and trust which encourages every student to feel secured and protected which energizes students to learn more without any fear, stress and doubt. I expressed my query as how to create a caring atmosphere within a school. Then he became more specific with his remarks that love and compassion cannot cover the sphere of real caring. Then with vivid reflection, he narrated:

I was oriented towards every child as a representative of their family and society. So, for me, caring the students means caring for society as well. I still

remember my one sad event which was a moment, when I had just started my

principalship. Unfortunately, I came to know that one of our good students, Dipak

(pseudonym) from grade nine was underperforming in studies as well as

extracurricular activities. Immediately, I asked, "What was going on"? I didn't get

any clue then. But I perceived something was really wrong from his dull eyes. After a

while, I was shocked to know that he was suffering from kidney problems. That

problem was really bigger than my imagination.

Next day morning, my teacher and I went to visit his parents. I am familiar

with the economic, social and academic status of Dipak's parents. We sat in the small

Varanda (Balcony)and started a conversation. Dipak openly shared his problems in

detail from the beginning. Parents were in a confused stage. Blood dialysis or kidney

transplant was the only possible treatment of that disease. It was clear that financially

they were not very strong as it required. It was distressing that Dipak prefers to die

rather than giving extra emotional and financial burden to his parents and relatives.

The eyes of parents were full of tears, expectations and hopes. After listening and

sharing pain with each other, I went back to school with heavy steps.

For me, hearing the voices and accepting the phenomenon of others,

especially to the students, are weapons of my leadership, so I decided to help them

financially as well as mentally. I raised the agenda in the school board and allocated

some amount for treatment and tuition fees were waived for him till he could continue

his study. I continued counseling him not to lose hope for better health and study.

During this counseling moment, I saw a growing charm in his face. From his innocent

facial expression, I came to realize that he was feeling secure and relaxed. Later, he

continued to study with good spirit. I kept my promise. I am happy that he passed

"School Level Certificate" (S.L.C.). He is no more now, but I motivated, encouraged and made him happy financially and mentally till his last breath.

After going through his perceptions on caring, I came to know that caring is a highly prioritized requirement of school to gain the trust of parents and guardians. This is also the foundation of hope so that they would feel protected and secured. It is not only a thread of healthy relationship between school with students but also parents and society as well. Caring exists with a form of physical and mental help for the students meanwhile respecting the social and economic status of students. Pre-sketched boundaries of schools and documented role, authorities and powers seem minor in front of valuing humanity.

In another way, analyzing the story from the individual involvement of Mr. Janak has faith in charitable contributions to serve the people for the sake of humanity. He also has a passion to listen to the voices, sorrow and desire of others. It reflects his characters and perceptions. These innate qualities made him strong enough to hear and stand with students and parents even in their terrifying tragic situation. He motivated, counseled and respected the dignity of Deepak and his parents in a very humanistic manner. Another beauty and strength of Mr. Janak is that he showed the courage to cross the structural boundary of school and school principalship for doing good things. He used his authorized power for making the right decisions for the long run.

Standing at above mentioned findings, I figure that Mr. Janak holds the strong beliefs that leading with caring stands as sole glue to develop love, service, respect, trustworthy relationship, positive culture in the school as well as in society. He respects a child as a representative of his or her family and society. So, caring for a single child means caring for the whole society where he or she belongs. Hearing the

pain of students and parents is a moral responsibility of school leaders which might not be related to teaching learning activities. Sharing the moments with students and parents will nurture the caring culture not only within a school but also in the society. As I delved in to his experiences, I understood his role as the principal who presented himself to help others. He has his experiences and stories which define the ethics of caring as the pure and organic seeds for germination of effective school leadership.

 After hearing this first story, it grew my thrust toward the second experience, so I went to see my second participant Mr. Ram Shah. I was excited to visit his experienced world so that I might get closer to understanding the ethics of care in educational leadership. He believes in the personal courage of principals to care for the students as per performance capacities of students and behaviors style. The nature of the situation also demands specific caring, counseling and sharing with the students. Here, I probed him to add more clarity on it, and then he narrated:

It was the case many years back when I was assigned as an academic coordinator. We had a girl student from class ten who was talented but not sincere towards her studies and academic activities. As an academic coordinator, I knew she had a full potential but I and my entire team failed to understand and motivate her toward the positive attitude. We applied various possible ways to encourage her but she was stuck with her passive and careless mindset. She could do better and she knew it but she totally ignored it. I was really scared of her silent attitude, so I decided to take hard and challenging steps on it. So, I presented myself as a family member/ friend of hers who could share the ideas on further steps.

I vividly remember the day. It was the day of 1st term result. I took her and her mother in my cabin. The risky climate of my cabin was putting a pressure on me. Anyway, I act to present myself as usual. Holding her mark sheet in my hand, I talked

to her as her father. I said "Dear, learning sounds very hard for you, we were sorry for forcing you. If you don't like to study, then it's ok! But why don't you stop from today"? I further suggested "It is a waste of money of your parents, time and energies of yours and school indeed". I said; I must say "Goodbye" to you. Now you are free from school and do whatever you want to do". Her mother was sitting next to her with tearful eyes. She was motionless and speechless. After a while, she started to cry. Intentionally, I didn't stop her and did not even utter a single word.

He further revealed that *personally, it was a very sensitive as well as crucial moment for me but I took a chance with a hope of good changes on her. I was terribly sorry saying "Good bye" to her and was afraid of my decision too. I knew it was not the proper way to handle the case. But I became strong on my way of sharing with the hope for her betterment. Surprisingly, she came to school the next day with proper preparation. I could see rays of positivity in her face and gesture. Meanwhile, I and concerned teachers worked to energize her. As I have wished, from that day she started to work hard putting her best efforts. The important transformation I have seen was a positive attitude toward the studies and behaviors. It was a successful strategy in my life till now.*

After going through this story, many interesting pieces of events I have explored pertaining to ethics of care. This event warned that only positive actions, and loving words, and admiration may not be sufficient and practical for caring in the right direction. Fortunately, this story gave me insights on dual types of treatment for the good result in school leadership. Framing all these pieces of story, I could present my understanding in two different frames. One is about the leading process and another is about the personal performance of participants.

Based on the leading process, I must say, individual capacity of students demands particular love, attention, treatment, and support which might not be applicable or affective to everyone. So, respecting personal efficiency, talent, emotional level and behavior is determining vibration for caring. Trust is not only the living force to influence but also inspirational motivation to others. Psychological moments and levels differ from one to another. Therefore, it demands different strategies indeed.

Now moving into another frame   Mr. Shah emphasized on personal courage to adopt extra specific ways of helping students as per demand of individual consideration. He as the school principal thinks beyond one size fits all models and allows for the individual needs of the student. He plans for long-term consequences and benefits rather than solving the problems immediately. In addition, the principals have to have capacities to diagnose on how a leader can influence the motivation of individual followers and increase their performance. Furthermore, leaders had adapted the situational strategies to achieve the increment and transformation of the students. Capacities and thoughts of individuals and nature of circumstances may demand the various ways of leadership as well.

I examine some similarities and differences in their experiences as an ethical leader. Both of them envisioned the overall ethical environment from the point of view of ethics of care. They are heading toward the same goals with different steps. This made me even more curious so I explored the experiences and stories of my third participant Ms. Bhrikuti Rai. She emphasized on the protective behavior of leaders. For example, concerning the individual details of a few students could generate the strength of caring, motivating and controlling many other students. It is also a strong thread which binds principal and stakeholders together and creates the climate of

caring and respectful atmosphere. It is one of the important ways of relationship building strategies. In connection to caring, she narrated:

It was a case of B.S. 2069. New academic session for grade eleven and twelve had just started. The school was blooming with new faces and energies. After a month, it was reported that some new students from grade eleven were found careless and manner less than our expectation. As a leader, obviously it was a responsibility of mine to educate basic behaviors with moral excellences. Therefore, I adopted a strategy to go through personal details of students. It was true that I couldn't remember the name and personal activities of all students at the same time but what I did was, just selected a few of them and observed them. In doing so, I started to call them by their name in front of friends.

She was excited to reveal her tricks and continue the same story:

Coincidentally, one day, I found that a very problematic student was absent. Then his personal matters stood as my strategy to treat him. Next day, he was heading to class after the assembly. I waited for him in the corridor located between the assembly ground and class room intentionally. When he came near me, I called him loudly, "Anish…… (pseudonym) Why were you absent yesterday? Are you all right? I was planning to call your parents to confirm whether you are ok or not". He was surprised with my caring attitude toward the students. The beautiful thing I realized was that it made me alert of all students that I was watching them and I knew their activities in detail. Likewise, I exercised different ways to convince them that I as a principal have a great concern for individual behavior as well. Fortunately, the behaviors of "Anish" and his friends gradually changed with positive spirit as we were expecting from them.

In this story, I found that respecting, promoting, controlling, correcting and guiding are experienced as prime responsibilities in order to be an effective leader. Protecting the student's dignity and balancing the relationship are also prominent features that emerged as a highly prioritized essence of self-awareness. In this story, calling students by their name makes students feel happy, secure and alert as well. This gave me insights that very minor and basic personal matters of students are also influencing forces. In other words, paying proper attention to personal life and an activity is a practical and tricky technique to build the warm and cordial relationship between principal and students. I found that individual concern and respect to the student is a strong brick to build the caring, loving and protective interconnection between students and leaders. Having said so, I explored that leaders need to equip themselves with inner qualities to hold the passion to share the personal feelings, desire, hope and problems with followers. Therefore, the principal needs to have knowledge on how to protect, respect and share the individual issues as group issues. How to be a protector as being protected is also another strategy to influence and motivate followers to move together. This unity creates comfortable and caring strengths in leadership.

Marching toward the targeted destination of this study, I also added the experiences and stories of my fourth and last participant Mr. Buddha Thakali. Moved by his concerns, new, extra and surprising activities could energize the students to focus on learning activities. So, it is one of the practical strategies while building the positive unity of emotion as well. Sometimes the situation demands urgent self – constructed strategies to transformation. In his case, "educational excursion" style was one of the successful stories in his life which he could share in his professional life. I became more excited to listen to it, so I requested him to share.

Then he proudly narrated:

It was the day of parents-teachers meeting day any day of the autumn season. I was in my office with full attention concerning the parents' comments and suggestions. All school teachers had just started the meeting in their respective classes. It might be around 11o'clock.One parent appeared in my office with a sad motion. I asked him what the problem was, "Is everything ok"? I asked. After that he revealed a series of immoral activities done by his son.

Doing that, I visualized the moral crisis in the behaviors of his son. He appealed to me for the behavioral improvement of his son. I was really serious about the expectation of that parent. End of the day, surprisingly, it was reported that the moral crisis in students' behaviors became the key burning issues of the parents teachers' meeting. That made me even sadder. The very next day I called the emergency meeting. In the meeting, we academic board members figured out that discipline of students and extra expectation of parents toward the school was a big and serious challenge to improve. As a result, we all promised to do better in that area.

Then after, I began to study the family and social context of my students. I found that most of the students were single children so they were more pampered. Parents were depending on only school for character formation so they blamed school for being irresponsible of their students. It was natural that as principal, the complete attention was pointed to me indeed. I became more nervous than ever before. Many questions started emerging. I thought to myself "Am I a good principal"? In that stressful period, my spiritual knowledge inspired me to think something different to inject the value of human beings and conditions of the people

living around. I felt it was necessary to teach student values of human beings, self and parents.

He further shared his action-oriented plan. He narrated: *I announced one day extra activities which were not in annual calendar of that academic year. So, we made an educational excursion designated to the "Pashupati Temple" for class four to nine. The main goal of it was to teach how lucky they were and how to perceive the value of their existence, importance of parents and education. That day was the first day of the field trip. I went there with students of class seven (Section A). Around eleven o'clock we reached there. Twenty-eight students were divided into four groups. I was with a group who were more noticed students. We kept them in one group purposefully. I led them toward the handicapped beggars, special children because it was my central focus of the excursion. Fortunately, we got a chance to meet one beggar child of their age as I was aiming at. I encourage my students to observe him seriously and write an essay on child highlighting handicapped child as a student and themselves as a beggar.*

Next day, I went to the class, motivated them to share their character as beggars which we had seen the previous day. I paid more priorities on family, economic, social, and student/childhood life of beggar. Then I told them to close their eyes and feel the importance of every part of the body. Similarly, the importance of parents, financial status and opportunities of going to school, playing, singing, dancing and using the computer, etc. I tried to make them realize the value of self and surrounding. They articulated their perception in a beautiful way. Based on those perceptions, I explained the value of self, parents and the entire world in detail. Gradually, the class changed into more calm and conformable than it was before. Since that day, we found some positive changes in students. Of course, children might

forget soon so time and again we followed the kind of moral value-based activities.

Since then we don't have big problems related to discipline and moral behaviors.

After going through his experiences, I found that sharing the existing situation with students is an influencing way to care. In this story, he cared for the character and behavioral aspects of students. Only teaching, controlling and guiding may not be enough to cultivate the moral, emotions and value of the self-including others. I revealed that only bookish knowledge cannot nurture and polish the personal growth of students. Therefore, the leader has to feel the emotional parts of the students. Mental support is also perceived as a major responsibility of a leader. School leaders are prioritizing character and behavioral development through their self-knowledge and courage to do right for a long term impact. Psychological treatment is also a part of the leadership. Self-awareness and internalized moral perspective are the central sources of successful leadership. Creating a conductive environment of observation, self-realization, meditation, imagination and spiritualization is also experienced as inspirational responsibilities of the principals.

After exploring experiences and stories of these four participants on ethics of care in their leadership, I came to the point of understanding that ethics of care is an integrated process that begins with individual value and is interlinked with the value of school as well as society. In this journey, my first participant adhered to caring as a weapon of his leadership. He believes in charitable contributions to individuals as well as social welfare to respect and protect humanity. He understood the ethics of care as a process of helping others. My second participant also valued caring and was committed to it. He respects and accepts the level of capacities of each individual and lead accordingly. He focuses on individuality of team members which indicates that he understood ethics of care as hearing the individuality.

Likewise, my third participant also valued individual caring and consideration. She has a strong faith in personal love, caring, interaction and trust to build a transparent relationship. She stressed that it creates a protected and recurring environment in the school. My fourth participant valued all school members as equally responsible to nurture a caring atmosphere. He believes in sharing as a key to caring. After examining experiences and stories of four participants on ethics of care in their leadership, I came to know that hearing the voices of school stakeholders is the key seed to cultivate love, care, respect and compassion. It also fosters the secured, trustworthy and transparent relationship between leaders and team members.

After analyzing the characters of my participants, I have found that they stood as stewards to serve. They perceived and performed sharing the problems as common responsibilities. They placed follower's welfare foremost in their plan. Planning for possible alternatives to help others indicates that charitable quality is an example of ethics of care. Helping and serving others is also clearly perceived as caring. They care, share, and help others in all related dimensions of school members such as health, financial support, individual consideration, psychological aspect and moral character and behaviors were highly prioritized areas. My participants were found caring to harness the holistic development of students as well as family and society. As a result, I claim that hearing, sharing and helping others are the indicators of ethics of care.

Theme 2: Ethics of Justice: Holding the Situation for Better Alternatives

Ethic of justice strives to protect the rights of all people through a logical system of laws, rules and regulations (Starratt, 1991).

In general understanding, the word justice gives the vibration of legal provisional issues and activities. Based on this assumption, ethics of justice consists

of fairness, honesty, dignity, freedom, and alternative choices in my study. I present my query to my first participant, Mr. Janak Jha, regarding his experiences on ethics of justices in his role. He said that creating an environment of justice in leadership is challenging and contextual in my understanding. He always kept fairness on top priority. Meanwhile, equal treatment to students, teacher members, staff and parents was the central base to his decision making and providing the opportunities. But different situations, time, and place demand the nature of justice which might not be applicable to everyone and everywhere. With a long deep breath, he took me to his lived world. I was excited. He narrated:

It was a case of recent months. I had to make a strong decision on fighting the case of two boys from class nine. The problem was, one boy (i) had shaken his ink pen while writing but unfortunately, that pen made a wound on the head of his friend (boy ii) who was sitting close to him. The flow of blood made the boy (ii) nervous so he became unconscious. With the help of the class teacher and students, he was taken to hospital. After the medical checkup, we were reported that it was just a minor incident but regular medical follow up and caring would be needed.   We called parents and sent the boy (ii) home.

He continued; Next *day, the parents of (boy ii) came to me for a punishment procedure to the* boy (i). *I was shocked and asked them "why"? "It had happened just by mistake". Then father replied, "No! It was done by intention because that boy (i) is our neighbor so I know him very well and his jealousy with my son. In addition, the term exam is coming near so he wants to push my son back". I was surprised by such an answer. I requested him not to go through a police complaint and made a promise to set a committee within school and punish boy (i) after the report of investigation. It was very hard to convince the father. After a few days, the committee*

reported that it had happened without any bad intention but father was not ready to accept that. He was raising the issues of political power, social power and administrative power which was really an unnecessary burden. Later, the school board decided to suspend boy (i) for two weeks to make the parents of boy (ii) calm. But, I personally guided, motivated, and counseled him in his term exam preparation with help of subject teachers. Till today, I feel punishing boy (i) was not justice but we did so to get out of extra problems but it was a right decision for the benefits of the organization.

After going through his lived experience on the ethics of justice, I came to know that rules and policies to determine justice were not very practical and authentic in all cases. Mr. Jha respects and accepts the sorrow, feelings, emotions and desire of students and parents rather than detecting who was right and who was wrong. He performed himself as a mediator to explore the win –win condition. On the one hand, he made a decision for the sake of the institution from irritating forces in future. At the same time, he creates the situation to prevent the people from doing wrong things. His decision was detected by the context of the situation. He placed institutional benefits in the center. Therefore, as a principal, he puts emphasis on controlling the existing scenario. As a result, all concerned groups including principals can rethink their decisions for the betterment of everyone as well as the institution.

Concerning the experiences on ethics of justice in school, I asked the same question to my second participant, Mr. Ram Shah. He explored that the school leader has responsibilities to move together with the entire school team and social and family background of the school team. I did not get him clearly at the beginning so I probed him to enter his lived world. He shared:

Two years back, we had a female teacher of Nepali subjects at lower secondary level. She was a single mother and only breadwinner of the family of two children, mother-in-law and father-in-law. She had a sole responsibility for her family and teaching job was only one source of earning. From the social point of view, she was a perfect individual but if I observed her with a professional point of view, she was not a very skilled and competent teacher as our school demanded. As I mentioned earlier, practical based teaching learning activities with proper uses of digital technologies were our requirement but she was not able to meet our standards. With the process of various layers, we made a decision to remove her from the job. In that situation, I was caught in an ethical dilemma.

Respecting our social scenario, terminating the breadwinner of the family is very hard for me. But as a leader I have a responsibility to enhance the quality of the organization indeed. So, what I did was I looked for another school where she could continue her job before leaving our school. I set up an alternative job for her before relieving her of her duties. I was satisfied that she didn't know that that job was arranged by me. If she knew, I was sure she wouldn't do that. Here, with win-win conditions I shared social responsibility with her. On one side, she could earn money for her family as well and on the other side we terminated the unqualified teacher for maintaining the quality education of the school.

From his experiences, the influence of justice covers a larger area than only school boundaries and stakeholders. The family and social background of stakeholders also exist as prominent elements of justice. He confessed that the quality of the institution is equally important as much as the betterment of the entire team but the institutional objective and quality need to be justified more than anything else. He held the situation for doing better without violating the dignity of teachers while

securing the quality of school. With authentic and wise skills, he balanced both opposite aspects of the school team. He is a smart and tricky leader who generates transparency, equality and fairness in decisions for the betterment of team members along with school. From this story, I have explored that holding and controlling the emerging tempered situation for time being is the core strength of the ethics of justice. This may produce many alternative solutions for win-win conditions so that no one gets hurt.

In my journey of exploring experiences and stories of the school principal of the institutional secondary school of the Kathmandu valley, I asked the same question to my third participant, Ms. Bhrikti Rai. The interesting part was that she also had similar experiences as the previous two participants. As she believed justice for her was a respect of basic rights of everyone including rules and regulations of the school. Holding the situations with alternative strategies is essential before making the decisions. Time and space are needed to satisfy others from their own understanding. She narrated the event as:

Last year, we had a one girl student from Nuwakot district. She was a very introverted and slow learner in grade eleven in the science faculty. She was eligible to get into the science course on the basis of her SEE (Secondary Educational Education) grade. But after a few weeks of classes, we noticed that science was not her subject of interest. After that, I asked her whether she wanted to switch the subject. She could continue studies in the management faculty of the same institute if she wanted. But she did not respond to that. The counseling part was going on. In the 1st unit test exam, she did not secure good marks in physics, chemistry, biology and maths. She passed in two out of six subjects. On the basis of her result, we talked to her parents for more family support. I also told them that there was an option if she

desired to move on to another subject. Doubtfully, her mother raised the question to me "Why are you saying so? Is there any difference between students from institutional school and community school"? Then I realized I had to share my personal perception and professional responsibilities in detail.

She continued narrating her experiences in a respectful manner. Having *a cup of tea in my office, I explained "For me all students are equal from the day one of my career. I didn't make any discriminatory remarks between students. If they belong to the same class, then all are the same. No matter how their academic performance is and where they were from. Study is the student's prime responsibility and good teaching is our duty and that is one of the practical and key tools I am using to enhance the moral strength of students*". After the discussion for about half an hour, they went back. I did not figure out whether I could convince them or not. So, I made a decision to hold and control the situation in favor of the institution.

As the principal, my responsibility is to be honest with parents' wishes. Therefore, from that day, I personally encouraged, motivated and coached her for better performance in science. I was quite sure that science subjects could not make her comfortable for a long term. Even though respecting her keen desire and dignity, I let her grow, enjoy, and be satisfied with science subjects. Like, every curtain has to be opened in scheduled time; her parents also accepted the reality. Finally, after four months, she made a decision to switch from science to management faculty. Then she started performing well in her studies. She is as comfortable as I wished for her.

After going through this story, I felt that a decision can be transformed into action when the targeted person or group is convinced of it. Decisions need time to implement in practice so till that period, a leader has to have flexibility to control and counsel emotional feelings of team members. This may nurture the judging capacities

by themselves. As a result, they can identify their own realities and position. These realities pave a way toward the fairness and truth for doing right. This case alerts that the principal cannot accept whatever others say but before making a decision they have to have knowledge in depth about what is right and what is wrong. In doing so, they can produce alternative solutions for win- win situations as well. Freedom is necessary along with this as time has to flow in its own pace so that people can correct themselves in right direction with self-confidence. This might produce a fruitful result for stakeholders and the institution. So, controlling and holding the situation is a strategy to achieve fairness in leadership. Finally, I noticed that the principals have to have a power to explore the voice of followers in their own choice as Ms. Rai experienced and lived with.

Marching toward the journey of experiences and lived stories of school principals, I went to my fourth participant, Mr. Buddha Thakali. He revealed that normally justice demands to be based on rule, regulation and law. But school is for nurturing the innate human qualities of children. What is right and what is wrong is not an issue in the case of children's character and behaviors. Teacher and principal are here to correct and polish them. It was interesting and he has a different opinion than others so I probed him to explore more on ethics of justice. He narrated:

It was a big triggering event in my leadership world which gave me new knowledge to cultivate justice in my school culture. Minor physical punishment to the students was in practice since the established year. All of us employed different styles of punishment if any one made a mistake or was found guilty. But gradually, parents were against it. They object any corporal punishment. We were aware of the fact but we could not set an alternative solution to that. Time was running out before we could settle. An accident happened when one math teacher slapped his student for

incomplete homework. Unfortunately, the student fell down and his body temperature went up to one hundred three. He was taken to a room for rest and started a treatment procedure. I got the details of that accident immediately but I was out of school so I requested the administrative head to look after the case.

Unfortunately, at the end of the day, I was in a meeting of PABSON. There, I got an emergency call. You know, my absence might be a cause so I hurried to school as fast as I could. When I entered the school, I was shocked. Parents of that student including other parents gathered there with demand of dismissing that teacher who slapped his child immediately. Some mixed voices shouted for many other complaints. A young man came to me and challenged me "Where is that teacher? I will kill him who showed the power to innocent student". I was under a huge pressure to dismiss that teacher if he would not take action. I became polite and said sorry and promised to take action within a week. In that way, I did my best to control the situation from being further worse.

From the next day, I strictly announced to make punishment free school. But we had to find alternative ways of controlling the behaviors of students. After some discussion and exercise, we adopted meditation as a controlling mechanism. In that mechanism, students have to meditate for ten minutes immediately on the spot if they are found misbehaving or ignoring the assigned tasks. Sometimes they had to clean the toilets, canteen tables and pick the liters from school premises. Since that accident, we don't have serious problems with punishment issues. We have explored moral value based controlling tools to address justice.

From this narrative, I came to realize that decisions should not always be made to distinguish which is right and what is wrong even if it is clear in the eyes of principals. The principal has to adopt the passion to control and hold the situation till

all members get convinced. Otherwise, it may invite even more dangerous and harmful conditions in the school or in other words, between right and wrong. So a leader needs to take action oriented strategies for doing right in the long term as Mr. Thakali faced. He came up with "physical punishment free school" for the betterment of entire institutions and stakeholders. Intelligent, transformational and authentic decisions can be made on the basis of self-awareness guided by moral values rather than rule and law of the institution. These wise decisions add fairness and justice in the culture of the school indeed. As a result, it influences all members to move together to accomplish the common goals.

Here, concluding the evidence which I got from experiences and stories of my four principals, I am able to express my understating on ethics of justice. My first participant valued the dignity of students, parents as much as school. He understood that preventing the people as well as schools from miserable conditions is an ethics of justice. My second participant also values the texture of society, necessity of the teacher and quality standards of school too. For him, without harming the self-dignity of team members, searching for equal opportunities is the ethics of justices. My third participant empathized on freedom, right, self-awareness and balanced boundaries of students and school to maintain fairness. She advocates that principals have to have a power to explore the voice of followers in their own choice rather than imposing on them. She experienced that accepting the debatable scenario with honesty is also a strategy to strengthen the ethics of justice. My fourth participant valued the equal rights of entire team members of school. Therefore, the principal has to adapt the passion to control and hold the situation till all members get convinced. For him, looking for alternative choices with valuing personal rights is an ethics of justice.

Going through the lenses of character of justice in leadership, I explore that all of the principals are wisely concerned about issues of fairness and justice. They also give a priority to treat all of their school members in an equal manner. They focus on the situations from different ethical lenses so that they can consciously make decisions that are fair to all stakeholders. All school members are strong enough with their rights but they may not have clear assumptions about results which may occur from their rights. So, it is the principals' ethical responsibilities to create the atmosphere so that all team members can rethink their demands. As a result, they may discover and identify their own potentialities and positions.

During tough times, all of the principals may generate other possible alternative solutions for transparency, fairness, and legal and of course right things for everyone through mutual understating. They are putting efforts to balance the processing strategies as well. Here, I noticed that the written rules, policies and procedures of the institution are necessary to shape and guide the institution but human senses are far more effective, harmless and fair than these structured, strong policies and legitimized powers. Therefore, holding the problematic situation for better opportunities is the ethics of justice.

Theme 3: Ethics of Critique: Empowerment and Inclusion

As I elaborated earlier, ethical leadership of my participants could be perceived from multiple perspectives. They may exercise their understanding in their leadership process. Here, I have explored another foundation of ethical leadership that is ethics of critique. In this study, ethics of critique consists of equal access, equal participation, empowerment and inclusion. The power of self-evaluation, realization and awareness is also covered under this paradigm. To this end, I went to my first participant Mr. Janak Jha. He shared his experiences with advocacy of basic

human rights of the stakeholders, especially students. He further stated that equal opportunities for the students should be in due consideration. Highlighting the challenges, he accepted the rights of students through his role. Regarding this, he explained:

As I have said, my school is targeted for middle class families so we are familiar with the social, economic and academic aspects of our students. No matter how they are, their human rights for education come first. I want to share one mission which I have struggled for. One student from class ten named Ravi (pseudonym) who was intelligent and hard working with average performance came to my prime attention when I came to know that he was leaving school. I asked him, and then he shared about his family's condition. His father got married with another woman and left home. His mother was not very healthy to earn enough money for him. Two younger siblings were also going to school. So, he decided to stop his study for the betterment of his family.

I felt very sorry for his condition and made one strong decision to create the condition so that he would continue his study which was his human right. Many of our investors were against it because it was not practiced in our society but I challenged it. What I did was that he could continue his study till SEE (School Educational Evaluation) without paying any money but he would have to pay back all expenses after completing his (SEE). He accepted my proposal happily. He continued to study; I was very sure of what I had done. Fortunately, he passed SEE last year. The beautiful thing was he came to school for a job just the day of his SEE exam. Now, he is working as an administrative member but he works more than that. From his salaries, he is paying back some fixed amount to school. He has kept his promise.

His experiences of ethics of critique entail the effective leadership process is not only influencing, guiding and controlling followers but also a leader should have willpower to change the traditional pattern of school as well as society. In our society, students are expected to pay for schools but Mr.Jha changed the system by providing free education to Ravi. Furthermore, he introduced the terms and conditions to pay back all money to school.

This motivated and encouraged Ravi to continue his study because it is his right. This indicates that principals should not only do as per schools' policies but also do as a transformer of the society. Creating an environment which may differ is also a prime task of a principal who dreams for a healthy society as well. Empowering Ravi through education signifies that principal is protecting the basic human rights of the citizens with reasons. As a responsible citizen, principals can lead the society through empowering the needed individuals. Now, I figure out that ethics of critique is performed as empowering strength of students, schools as well as society.

Standing at this research question, I made up my mind to ask the same question to my second participant Mr. Ram Shah. He had a very clear opinion on it. For him, the objective of education is not only to teach the normal students but also accept the physical and mental realities of the students as well who are different than other children. He is happily ready to accept the challenges to create equality among the students no matter what school board members say. He shows the courage to stand up with what is right rather than what is profitable and easy dealing. In this regard, he narrated an event:

At present, I am facing a case. We have one student from grade two who is different from average students. He shows different behaviors such as if he wants to study, he enters the classroom if not then, he does not enter the class, just goes here

and there, runs, jumps and picks up the leaves of flowering plants. It is really hard to

bring him into the classroom. For years, he was on our observation list. We paid

special attention to him with the hope that we could bring positive changes on him but

we could not. On the basis of his reports, our academic board decided to call his

parents and tell them to take their children to the appropriate school where he could

get more personal care for him. School made a clear decision but as the principal I

am in "wait and watch" condition. Personally, I do believe that he is just a child and

this kind of behavior can be seen in any child. If we (school team) do not accept this

kind of challenge, then who will? So, I want to observe him for this year with more

effort..

Going through his experience, I noted that every student possesses an equal

right to get knowledge. He advocates that teaching learning methods can be changed

according to the physical/ mental condition of students rather than excluding them.

The critique has held a belief that education is for children, not children for education.

His individualized emphasis toward that particular student is so struggling for suitable

alternatives. It provided me additional insight regarding ethics of justice. Based on

this, I came to this point that equal opportunity is needed no matter what content and

context might be different from one to another. Every student has to come under the

policies and considerations. Leaders can promote inclusiveness in the school.

Chasing the knowledge on experiences and stories, I explored the perceptions

and practices of ethics of critique through the lived experiences of school principals.

Therefore, I went to my third participant, Ms. Bhrikuti Rai. She shared her clear,

strong and authentic vision to generate new leaders while leading the school. As being

a female principal, she has a keen interest in producing female principals in schools.

This is the reason why she is adopting the community school in Sindhuli District for

equal access to education for girls. Educating all girls is her dream to enhance the leadership qualities of coming generations, especially the female circle. On this topic, she delivered her stories in an enthusiastic way. She narrated:

During the thirty-seven years of my academic career, I have assigned many teachers in leading posts such as section head, subject head, and academic in charge but most of them were male. Personally, I want to see female leaders as far as possible. Coincidently, a young, beautiful, married Ms. Thapa was assigned as an English teacher. She proved herself as a talented teacher. She also possessed lots of skills and potentialities which were needed for being a perfect leader. I personally and professionally proposed to her to take charge as the department head of English more than five times but she refused. She was interested but not in condition to accept that. The main cause behind that was her mindset to stay in a comfort zone. She further added "Ma'am, I have multiple tasks to be engaged with and also our male dominated society is reluctant to accept females in deciding posts such as the principal". The very disappointing feedback I have noticed reveals that she had a strong mindset that indicated females could not lead the institution as well as male could. I had a discussion with her to build her mindset and get the confidence of "I can do". I tried my best to bring her in a leadership position but her family, household chores, children's studies and social activities were more important than leading the institution.

These realities of female teacher triggered my mind and heart. I realized if that was the condition of urban educated women, then what about others? Then I decided to do some social work for promoting the competence of female in education, especially in leadership role. So, we (me and my husband) decided to adopt one community school in "Shindhuli district". In that school, up to class seven tuition fee

was free so we could see girl students in the school. But there was not a single girl from class eight to ten. The reason was poverty of the family. The bitter reality was that the same family could pay for son but not for the daughter. Therefore, we made a fund to pay all school fees, stationery items and related charges of the all-girl students from that school. Since then, I loved to go to that school to see, suggest and support in required areas, especially in girl education. I wished to see development in female education and empower them.

After going through her constructive story, I came to this point that she has an innovative vision for institutions as well as society. She has raised the step to bring minor girls in a leading position to lead an institution. This exposed the willpower of her to uplift the quality and provided the opportunities to concerned individuals and groups. The self – awareness and realization of the followers also another critical aspect needed to be addressed by educational leaders as well. This experience and story also authenticated that ethical leadership is a process to address the voices to the marginalized section of the society. Furthermore, an ethical leader develops a mindset to create a direction to prove that they could do something different aiming at empowering the targeted group.

In the final phase of the journey of experiences and stories of school principals, I went to my fourth participant, Mr. Buddha Thakali to add more experienced knowledge on ethics of critique. As a scholar of spiritual education, he focused on spiritual knowledge, practices, yoga and meditation as effective ways to cultivate the notion of equality, and equity in the society. It was hard for me to understand these philosophical and spiritual narratives but later these words energized me with pure essence. I expressed more desire on it, I created an atmosphere more of probing. He narrated:

It was a case of two years back. I have started yoga and meditation classes and practices for more than five years in my school. I had a strong belief that it would be effective for creating and maintaining the healthy environment of my school and yoga would harness the mental and physical health of students. I was very sure it would contribute to overall development of school members indeed. Every class began with one-minute meditation. We also prepared our teacher for all those things. We had a scheduled period for yoga, prayer and meditation class. Confusion and problems evolved when some of the parents were not very happy with our spiritual activities. They were not ready to accept the different school activities. They raised the voice not to distract from regular teaching, learning and school activities. We had several meetings based on those issues. Parents were confident on their points.

Then I came to realize educating about the importance of yoga, meditation and the spiritual world to only students would not be very fruitful for a long term. Parents also need to be equally acknowledged and involved. But it was not as easy as I assumed. I was not only an authorized figure to make decisions. After deep study and discussion, I came up with an announcement that our school would teach yoga and meditation in our own school grounds every day. We taught free yoga and meditation class from 5.am to 6.am every day. It produced a good impact and positive attitude. At least, we became successful in teaching yoga and meditation to society.

After going through this innovative story, I understood that ethics of critique is a set of vision on a silent area in the structure of school. Equal awareness is necessary for purifying the right things, no matter within a school or outside of the school. On the one hand, society is a part of school as school is a part of society. This story gave an understanding of ethical leaders who can provide equal opportunities to the stakeholders. A leader has to have courage to break the status quo of institutional and

social formations for minimizing distance between individual to individual and school to society. In addition, I found spiritual knowledge is essentially required to purify the inner world of people. In this mosaic and complex society, people need to adhere to spiritual potentialities to minimize the self-made distance between community and schools.

After examining the all participants' experience on ethics of critique on their role, I illuminate that my first participant experienced that his willpower to challenge the traditional pattern to secure equal access to students was empowered. He understood that equity and equality are needed to be well realized to address the ethics of critique. Similarly second participants experienced ethics of critique as an inclusion of all types of students for their fundamental rights such as education. He advocates that if students cannot meet the level of education, then the teaching learning pattern can be planned according to the student's physical and mental capacities. My third participant has a vision for gender equality and empowerment for marginalized groups. She understood minimizing the distance among the gender, group of people and territory is the main essence of ethics of critique. My fourth and last participant believes that spiritual knowledge, yoga and meditation cultivate the feeling of equality and equity among the people. These feelings are a natural foundation of bridging all people and situations. Their experiences and stories authenticate to this reality that ethics of critique is a process of equality, equity, equal access, participation, empowerment and inclusion.

Drawing the characteristics of leaders from ethics of critique, I found that they have a strong value on the balanced distance among the every type of students and every corner of the society. They believe in self-reflection, awareness and realization and spiritual strength.

My understanding on Ethical Leadership

After the completion of narrating twelve stories under the three themes, I pondered upon every event of the stories pertaining to the dimensions of ethical leadership. They are ethics of care, ethics of justice and ethics of critique. These aspects supported me to capture the essence of the phenomena of stories. Then I plucked the meaning of themes and shared them as per my understanding. Weaving all these understandings, I shaped the definition of ethical leadership. Concerning ethical leadership, I came to this point of understanding that it is a multi-dimensional spectrum having multi perspectives. It is almost impossible to specify and concretize the definition, nature and form of ethical leadership from a single perspective. There are different perceptions lived by my participants. If I go through each theme, then we find a comprehensive meaning of ethical leadership experienced by institutional school principals.

Concerning the first theme, it incorporates the meaning like integrity, social welfare, respecting and protecting, hearing, relational building, trusting, sharing and helping. This authenticates that ethical leadership cannot be defined from only one perspective. It is a process of valuing the individual dignity aligning with institutional and social values. It is also the process of hearing the voices, sharing the situation and helping others for the sake of fundamental rights of humanity. The second theme consists of fairness, prevention, freedom, balanced prioritization, neutralization, and alternative opportunities. From this perspective, ethical leadership can be understood as a process of being neutralized not only for prevention but also for right opportunities. It is also a process to exercise the freedom to fairness, self-awareness and realization. The third and last theme is made of equality, equity, empowerment and inclusion. From this perspective, ethical leadership can be claimed as a process of

creating equal access to the entire group of school members as well as society. In summary, ethical leadership is a process of valuing the human dignity of each individual. The perception and performance of humanity is the prime source of ethical leadership.

My Understanding on Quality of Ethical Leader

As my quest for this study, I have generated the meaning of ethical leadership. Now I attempt to sketch the personal quality of an ethical leader so that it would enlarge the horizon of ethical leadership. As I have mentioned earlier in the literature review section that ethical values are embedded with what leaders do and who leaders are. Connecting with this notion, I tried to frame the qualities of my participants from the texts of their narrative. My participants are associated with the top level of leadership. All of them are towering figures in the role of principalship. So, they shared their past and present experience of being a leader in an institutional school. They have a clear perspective on individual and professional qualities of an ethical school principal. I have viewed them from two different perspectives. One was an *intra- personal* perspective which focuses closely on my participants.

Having said that, I came to realize the meaning of ethical leadership that can be drawn from different perspectives like caregiver, helper, counselor, mentor, servant, vision seeker, planner, protector, judge, transformer, psychologist, team builder, confidence builder, motivator and source of energy and knowledge. Surprisingly, the only common and strong strength I have noted in these qualities was emphasis on moral and ethical values   as well as institutional values by the participants. Leaders who are able to build cognitive trust with stakeholders by being professional show that they care for those who work for them are evaluated as more effective leaders.

Another perspective is an *intra –personal* process. It focuses on relations created by leaders and followers. I have found the relationship between principal students and teachers positive. The participants faced the challenges and then planned for suitable alternatives.

Hope, trust, solution and acceptance rely on the relationship between leaders and followers. It is also a reciprocal process. The principals have expectations from students and parents and they also expect from the school principals instead. Trust is a major binding glue of leaders which determines their success. Therefore, leaders are expected to rely on their inner voice, inner compass that points them in the ethical direction (Brown, 2007).

As I went through information for making a meaning of ethical role, I came to know that we can make a meaning of ethical leaders from multiple perspectives. My participants gave me three perspectives of being an ethical leader in school leadership. The first approach I explored them being ethical leader is hearing, respecting, sharing, helping and their commitment to envisioning and influencing others grow and move as a human being. From this perspective, I claim that ethical leaders are caregivers, listeners, and mentors, and gardeners of humanity. The second perception is their engagement with valuing the dignity of every individual, looking for better as well as right opportunities, individual consideration, holding the debatable issues for exercising the freedom and balancing every relationship. These attributes of principals allow me to make a meaning of ethical leader as a protector, planner, designer, neutralizer, motivator and transformer.

Similarly, stepping on the third and last approach, I claim that my participants have experiences on challenging the structured pattern of school, creator of quality and equity, and exploring inclusion and empowerment indeed. Spiritual knowledge

was implemented with a hope that enhances self-awareness, realization and confidence of the followers. Now I can say ethical leaders are those who have strong willpower to explore their own authentic way and courage to face the challenges. Ethical leaders possess spiritual knowledge.

Beside these, ethical leaders incorporate leaders who possess the willpower to care, share and help others. Mentor, protector, opportunities seeker and inventor are also characters of an ethical leader. In this regard, ethical leaders are those people who have a charitable attitude, individualized consideration, transactional leadership and decision making power for win – win condition of individual value with institutional and social value.

Chapter Essence

In this chapter four, I have sketched   the portfolio of my four participants. The family, social and academic background of them is clearly presented in brief. I have considered the professional journey of all principals having equally strong background for my research topic so it is highlighted in detail as far I could. These profiles helped me to get closer with my participants. It also helped me to understand the characters, role time and place of the events so that I could maintain the quality standards of my work.

After the completion of four profiles of participants, I have presented the unfolding packs of stories from my participants. I have constructed three different themes deriving from narrated the stories. Themes are rooted by three principles of ethical leadership. They are ethics of care, ethics of justice and ethics of critiques. The stories from four participants for the one theme were presented. I mapped the essence of every story and came up with my understanding. With the support of these multiple understanding, I was able to construct the meaning of ethical leadership

according to each theme. I have also presented the characters of a leader to build the

meaning of ethical leaders. After this long and challenging work, I have articulated

my understanding on ethical leadership. I have concluded this chapter with the

summary of meaning on ethical leadership and ethical leaders.

CHAPTER V

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter, I introduced my participants through their brief profiles, and then I came up with a series of stories experienced by principals. Themes and my understanding of the gist of stories were also visualized in that chapter. I have generated meanings of ethical leadership and leaders from multiple realities of my understanding. This chapter deals with theoretical discussion of this study. The purpose of this chapter is to legitimize my thematic articulation of my participants' information linking with theories which could be authenticated as a meaning of ethical leadership as I intended. Therefore, in this section, I set out a journey to link previous literature and value based leadership (VBL) on my understanding, meaning pertaining to the themes of ethical leadership.

Meaning of Ethical Leadership

In the journey of this research, I came closer to various corners of the lived world of my participants. The multiple realities of narratives supported me to construct the meaning of ethical leadership. This made me successful to explore the knowledge on the phenomenon of ethical leaders and ethical leadership. In doing so, I have also added my reflections into the process of knowledge building. I understood ethical leadership from three different lenses. They are ethics of care, ethics of justice and ethics of critique. Concerning the ethics of care, the integrity, social welfare, respecting and protecting, hearing, relational building, trusting, sharing and helping were found strongly experienced. In this regard, I made a meaning that leadership is a process of valuing the individual dignity aligning with institutional and social values.

It is also a process of hearing the voices, sharing the situation and helping others for the sake of fundamental rights of humanity.

Principal prioritizes not only on caring the emotions, feeling desires of others but also accepts the existing context of followers to build the trustworthy relationship with followers. For them, trust is a major binding glue of leaders which determines their success. Cordial relationship among the stakeholders is strength of an institution which can be generated only by an ethical leader. In this line, Darcy (2010) warns that "crisis of trust affect power, and leads towards failure" (p 200). Therefore, leaders are expected to rely on their inner voice, inner compass that points them in the ethical direction (Brown, 2007). So, my participants perceived caring as hearing, loving and helping others. It also added that the caring nature may differ from each other. The existing context may demand different ways of caring than normally it does.

The caring process has a bigger spectrum so that everyone can be benefitted no matter directly or indirectly. Social welfare is also found in the process of ethical leadership. These aspects of leadership are also addressed by Sergiovanni (1992). He believes that there should be a deep concern for the welfare of the school as a community which extends far beyond the brick and mortar of the actual schoolhouse and into the local community. Greenleaf (1970) and Sendjaya (2008) agree on a common premise that ethical leaders serve others. Langlois (2011) emphasizes that human relation and welfare is of major importance for proper functioning of organization. Being ethical is thinking about the welfare of others (Mihelič et al., 2010). Now I explore that an ethical leader has also responsibilities to nurture the welfare atmosphere in the school as much as in society.

Valuing individuality is also understood as a prime influencing force to caring in leadership. Starratt (2005) discusses that each student must be valued, and educational leader should have the competency to undertake his area of work honestly. I came to this point of understanding that ethics of care is the foundation of human beings as stated by (Noddings, 1984). Similar opinion is also revealed by Starratt (1991). He identified that an ethics of care is related to the fundamental requirements of interpersonal relations not from the legal standpoint but in terms of absolute respect.   Further, it is committed to bearing the social responsibilities along with institutional responsibilities. If I link it to the knowledge of Gilligan (1982), a founder of ethics of care, then my understanding sets the meaning on ethical leadership., according to her, the ethics of care includes concept of being there, listing, understanding, sharing responsibilities for another's welfare, strengthening and maintaining relationship, attachment, and abandonment of relationships. I claim that my generated understanding aligns with this statement. In this regard, Eyal et al. (2011) hold the similar opinion as empathy and responsibility for the wellbeing of an individual is the core message of ethics of care.

Similarly, I have gone through the perception of ethics of care as viewed by Noddings (1984). In her point of view, the first job of schools is to care for children. She further states that caring should be the foundation of ethical decision making. She also states that a form of caring that does not require an ethical effort to motivate it (although it may require considerable physical and mental effort in responding to needs). In addition, she strongly warns that educators must care for their students' intellectual, emotional, psychological, and physical health. She would call an educator unethical if he or she did not demonstrate this level of care for every student. Here, ethical leadership can be defined as a process of trusting, valuing, understanding, and

hearing, sharing the responsibilities and communicating for the sake of the emotional, physical, mental and social aspects of the entire team. In this concern, for Bhattari (2019), care is communication through language, action, behaviors.

Therefore, principals are expected to create a comfortable channel of communication and interaction between stakeholders to maintain care. Similarly, Bandura (1987) shares that ethical leaders are nurturing, caring, trustworthy and treat others fairly which garners positive attention resulting in followers being drawn to them. Brown and Treviño (2006) offered the same view as with Bandura (1987). However, he argued that ethical leaders, like authentic and transformational leaders, are altruistically motivated, demonstrating a genuine caring and concern for people. In above mentioned statements, ethical leadership makes a meaning of concern, integrity, nurturing, respect and trustworthy. From one lens, it can be understood as the process of serving and respecting the value of human beings as well. Ethical behavior incorporates the concepts of fairness and respecting others (Bawden, 2000/2003; Northouse, 2004). The ethic of care is the empathy and responsibility for the wellbeing of the individual as defined by Eyal et al. (2011). To value oneself and, at the same time, subordinate oneself to higher purposes and principles is the paradoxical essence of the highest humanity and the foundation of effective leadership (Covey, 2004) Adding the opinions shared by Katranci et al. (2015) for the success of the institutional system, there is a need for honest and trustworthy ethical leaders who respect ethical principles and values in the light of universal references.

Merging with value based leadership theory in my understanding is to legitimize my insights. I have found that one of the qualities of a value based leader is self-reflection which is an understanding of him or her to respect value with institutional value and social value. In other words, the principal does not only

analyze the principles and benefits but also examines the values and virtues that constitute moral life. Likewise, humanity is also a key quality of value based leaders. These can be understood from the kind, humble, respectful and passionate nature of principals. Hearing the unspoken voices of team members, standing with supportive hands, serving with dedication and respecting the realities are prioritized as prime duties. It symbolizes that leaders are familiar with an entire corner of humanity. This claim also authenticates my understanding of ethical leadership.

After examining the experiences of four principals, I understood ethical leadership from the perspective of ethics of justice. From this lens, ethical leadership can be understood as the process of being neutralized not only for prevention but also for right opportunities. It is also a process of exercising the freedom to ward off fairness, self-awareness and realization. In doing so, I found that principals have struggled with various hurdles, crises and difficulties in their role and responsibilities. They have formulated emergency strategies to rescue the students' behavior while maintaining the prestige of school. They have initiated innovation and creations in their role through their matured and moral based mindset. The deepened reality I have seen is that my participants have prioritized humanity rather than formulated rules and regulations of their respective institutions. Their judgments were strongly rooted in humanistic strength. They attempt to minimize the possibilities of unwanted emotional and physical damages. Exploring the knowledge from the angle of ethics of justice in ethical leadership I found that there needs to be a balance between ethics of justice and ethics of care as opined by Quick and Normore (2004).

Neutralization of leaders, letting others exercise their freedom is also found in the meaning of ethical leadership. In this line, I want to link with the views of Starrtta (2004). He says that the principal is led to reconsider his views on what is ethical

value. This is not only to avoid harm, but also to be good and do well. Being ethical is about thinking about consequences of one's actions (Mihelič et al., 2010). Therefore, in the long-term consequence, Kannair (2005) indicates that the leader "walks and talks" by doing and translating ethics into action, followers learn about moral values, faith and care by examining the actions of leaders It is based on the well-being of individuals, to respond to their stress and empower them. Similar opinion was shared by Langlois (2011), who puts emphasis on human relation and welfare to be of major importance for the proper functioning of school. Ethical leadership is preventing people from doing the wrong thing that we need to view as enabling people to do the right thing (Freeman & Stewart, 2006).

Holding the environment for a time being is also found as valuable strategies of ethical leadership. They believe in a period of that holding time span; all members can realize the right things and invent the good and practical alternative. In this regard, Heifetz (1994) explains that "ethical leaders should make a holding environment" portrayed by compassion, trust and nurturance. In a supportive context, followers can feel safe to confront hard problems" (as cited in Northouse, 2013, p. 429). Similarly, Kohlberg (1982) also talks about the ability of leaders to take a risk to create fairness rather than following the legal aspect of the situation. Thapa (2016) critiques that a school principal is required to have the ability to see higher and wider than immediate problems or situations. My understanding has the essence which is remarked by Northouse (2013). According to him, as a rule of ethics of justice, no one should receive special treatment or special consideration when his or her particular situation demands it. If it happens, it must be clear, reasonable, and must be based on moral value. This opinion helped me to legitimize my understating of ethical leadership

Starratt (2004) explains that leaders who strive to act ethically encounter challenging situations not because of technical leadership problems, but because of the messy human problems or serious human consequences involved in the situation. So he argues that a school leader's work is intellectual and moral at the same time. Therefore, leaders' decisions should be intellectual and moral. From this statement, the procedure of diagnosis of right from wrong can be minimized through controlling the situation and introducing alternative ways. In this regard, Ward (as cited in Monahan, 2012) investigates the cause of ethical failures in a leader and found out that ethical failures do not occur because of selfishness, but rather out of the leader's ignorance.

However, law is seen as a support of social hierarchies based upon race class and gender (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005). After linking my understanding with literature, I polish my understanding. Ethics of justice is a process of generating fairness on the basis of ethical standards rather than rules and legislative procedures. They think about long-term consequences, drawbacks and benefits of the decisions they make in the institution. In this leadership process, equity is also found as a strong influencing layer of the leadership process. Connecting with literature, I found that Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) agree on this perspective and focus on individual rights and stems from values of fairness or equity that every individual has the right to equal treatment.

Freedom is another beauty of leadership in my leadership exploration. Leaders value the rights of every individual as much as accept complexities of situation. In doing so, they also create the space to exercise freedom in order to distinguish rights from wrong in their problems. In this concern, Foucault holds the opinion that the essential condition for the practice of ethics is freedom and spaces for freedom such a

society permits its members both in the political and in the ethical sphere as shared by Wain (2020). From this point of view, it became clear that freedom is a source of ethics. Interpreting this line from another angle, the choice of an individual on community consciousness and the organizational choices are the sum of the individual choice (Langlois, 2011). Furthermore, Yulk (2006) shares the same view as freedom of choice is a stage of moral development which uses ethical as well as unethical behavior. For her, ethics of care and justice puts emphasis on the need to take both choices into consideration. On the basis of the above mentioned   literature, I legitimize my understanding of ethics of justice. Another strong pillar of leadership of this study is the relationship.

The relationship among the principals, parents and community is found strong and authentic. This is giving the value of relationship building, dialogues across differences and sharing power in pursuit of the common purpose of social justice and democratic schools. This relationship can be also defined as an authentic partnership as defined by Auerbach (2010). Similarly, Reese (2017) highlights that the role of leadership is to add value to other people and the true measure of leadership is influence, thus a great leader must have the ability to change the attitude or behavior of others. I have found that the principal experienced ethics of justice on the foundation valuing the team members as individuals. In this line, I found the agreement of Vilma (2018). He remarks that "all people want to feel valued - not just for their work, but as individuals" (p.50). From this angle, I claim my meaning is as legitimized as I worked for. Freeman and Stewart (2006) suggest that ethical leaders articulate and embody the purpose and values of the organization and focus on institutional success rather than on personal ego.

Now, I want to link my legitimized understandings with value-based leadership theory to build a stronger foundation of my claims. Under the value-based leadership, the approach of authentic leadership focuses on interpersonal qualities of a leader such as   self –knowledge, self- regulation and self-concept. It is also claimed that one of the qualities of value-based leaders is self-reflection which is the understanding of him or her through linking up a leader's value with institutional value. Values-based leaders effectively engage, motivate and develop their followers, establish a culture that enables transformational sustainable change, resulting in effective execution, innovation and outstanding performance (Tylor, 2011). My participants are well equipped with above mentioned qualities of value-based leaders. From this evidence, I claim that my participants have perceived and performed to make a justice for self, school stakeholders and school as well entire community. I expect that schools should not just consider doing the right thing in terms of what the regulations say, but to express ethics in a wider framework of social justice and sustainable (Ouma,2017) achievements.

After legitimizing the two perceptions regarding ethical leadership, now link my third understanding with literature and theory as well. The third and last perspective is viewed through ethics of critique which is incorporated with equality, equity empowerment and inclusion. Before getting into the information, I prepared with eye opening knowledge as coined by Starratt (2004). He states, "If the ethic of justice looks towards fairness, the ethic of critique looks toward barriers to fairness" (p. 47). Moving forward with this perspective, ethical leadership can be claimed as a process of creating equal access to an entire group of school members as well as people of the society. Principals highly prioritize equality and equity opportunities and consideration. Empowerment and inclusive plans for the student, parents along

with teachers can be found in their lived world. Ethical leaders speak to us about our identity, what we are and what we can become, how we live and how we could live better (Freeman & Stewart, 2006). They are introducing various plans and some of them are visible and invisible at the moment. They are relying on their inner voice and inner compass that points them in the ethical direction (Brown, 2007). Based on this literature, my perception is that ethical leaders speak to us about our identity, what we are and what we can become, how we live and how we could live better (Freeman & Stewart, 2006). All these are performed in order to nurture the self-awareness, self-determination, and confident power of every one of the school as well as society.

Here, analyzing the meaning of ethical leader from this perspective is creating a living conversation about ethics and the value for stakeholders (Freeman & Stewart, 2006). Ethical leaders are self-motivated, intelligent as well as confident to project humanity in their leadership. Merging my understanding of ethics of critique with value based leadership theory; I came to this point of understanding that ethical leaders create a balanced access and opportunities. To achieve these goals, a leader has to have courage to lead with self-reflection, balance, self -confidence, and humanity. Fortunately, principals are not only rich and strong enough with these qualities but also intelligent enough. They hold the potentialities to perform when and how. Now I claim that my understanding of ethical leadership is   authenticated.

My Insights on Ethical Leadership and Qualities of Ethical Leader

After theorizing my understanding on ethical leadership, I came to this point of understanding that it is a multi-dimensional spectrum having multi perspectives. It is almost impossible to specify and concretize the definition, nature and form of ethical leadership from a single perspective. There are different perceptions lived by

my participants. If I go through each theme, then we find a comprehensive meaning of ethical leadership experienced by institutional school principals.

Ethical leadership is a process of valuing the individual dignity aligning with institutional and social values. This is also a process to emphasize, nurture and value the foundation of every follower as a human being. It is also a process of hearing the voices, sharing the situation and helping others for the sake of fundamental rights of humanity. Ethical leadership can be manifested by sincerity, trust, assurance, compassion, moral values, and endurance. It not only prevents people from doing wrong but also innovates the right alternatives. Ethical leadership permits everyone to exercise their rights and freedom so that they could reflect the ethical sensitivities with their realization. Similarly, the leading process which minimizes the distance between people, gender, and group for the long term development is also known as ethical leadership. Holding the problematic environment not only for prevention but also for invention of right opportunities is known as ethical leadership. In addition, it is also a process of exercising the freedom toward fairness, self-awareness and realization. Similarly, ethical leadership can be claimed as a process of creating equal access to the entire group of school members as well as society. I explored that it is associated with a process of valuing the basic foundation of individuals.

In the whole process of ethical leadership, a school principal experienced a number of defined and undefined roles in creating and maintaining an ethical educational environment. I understood principal as a key authorized person to produce, protect and promote the ethical consciousness in school along with society. He or she has to have an eye to respect every individual as a human being rather than any other added identification. All human beings are the same and they deserve basic human rights. An academic leader has to have power to diagnose individual realities

which can be different than expected. The principal has to set the long term goals for the students, teachers, parents, school and society indeed. This process paves the path for creation and innovation. Principal drew on their own and followers' values for direction and motivation (Barrett, 2006) and it is found that followers were inspired, trusted and motivated on it as well.

Visualizing the personal character of ethical leaders I have found that they are humble, caring, loving, and humble and have charitable attitudes. They are also concerned for the greater good, strive for fairness, take responsibility and show respect for each individual. They set high ethical standards and act in accordance with them. They influence the ethical values of the institution through their words and actions. Leaders serve as role models for their followers and show them the behavioral boundaries set within an institution. They can influence people to make a voice of their own choice. They are found as honest, trustworthy, and courageous and demonstrate integrity. The more the leader "walks and talks" by translating internalized values into action, the higher level of trust and respect he or she generates from the followers. Thapa(2016) mentions that "urban school head teachers/ principals were reported more competent" (p.120). Concerning the trust between principals and followers, humanity is a magnetic force to place them in their respective position. With these forces, leaders walk together toward destinations as marked by students, teachers, schools, parents, society and nation as a whole.

Valuing the feelings, emotions, desires, hope and physical mental condition of the students, teachers are the original strengths of this relationship. Centering on the role and responsibilities of school principal, they played a number of defined and undefined roles in generating and maintaining ethical sensitivities in the school and society. They are confident and aware enough with their exposures, decisions,

strategies and explorations. They accept their ethical challenges that they are not only leading the school but also leading the entire society toward prosperities and development. For them, the boundary of ethical leadership is not limited within a school, it also covers the entire sphere of society and nation as well. Courage and willpower of leaders can cross the limitations of rule, regulations, procedures and boundaries of the institutions as well as traditions of society for the right doing and better purification of the people.

On the basis of my constructed knowledge, I compare my knowledge with findings of the previous research studies in the Nepali context. I found that my knowledge contradicts the findings of previous research carried out by Bhattari (2015). He revealed that in practice principals do not demonstrate optimal care to exercise their professional judgment fully but my collected narratives advocate that ethics of care is applied as a prominent part of their leadership. The school leadership is fully anchored by ethical qualities. This contradictory finding indicates that the leadership qualities are heading toward the moral and ethical foundation. It may add an ethical value to individuals, schools, society and nation as well. It indicates that our educational leadership is germinated from the dimensions of ethical leadership. Principals are self-reflected, confident to explore and implement the ethical standards in their position.   But I cannot ignore the ethical deficiency in their activities as well.

Marching toward the end of this chapter, I want to summarize my insights as an exploration of the study. It may also be perceived as a new explored knowledge. The study assured that ethical leadership has multilayered dimensions and abstract ways to deal with. Humanity is the innate qualities of every individual, therefore re-cultivating, protecting and executing these basic qualities is the ethical leadership. Treating every individual as a unique human being is a fuel of ethical leadership.

Accepting and respecting the personal and social realities of each member is a strong and organic thread of effective ethical leadership. Holding the situation for better opportunities and intervention of alternative solutions are features of ethical leadership. Ethical leadership is a process of valuing the individual dignity aligning with institutional value and social values. When people feel loved, cared, secured and empowered, then they will be capable of distinguishing right from wrong and good from bad. Humble, caring, loving, listener, responsible, honest, planner, challenger and motivator are some of the attributes of an ethical leader. Personal and professional courage and willpower of principals are magnetic powers of an ethical leader. These also come up as an anchoring point to generate and transform the ethical principles in effective leadership practices. Personally, I came to realize that ethical leadership is more sophisticated and more useful than just a matter of good character and values. So, I prefer to define it as not a style but as the basis for moral dimensions and actions as suggested by Starratt (1991).

Chapter Essence

The focus of this chapter was theoretical discussion of this study standing on research question how principals narrate their experiences and stories on their ethical leadership. I began this discussion by separating the three themes generated from explicit stories of the principals on my research question. I have presented various meanings of ethical leadership as the answers of my inquiry questions. Furthermore, in this chapter, I highlight the crux of the study along with other established understanding as ontological and epistemological premises of my area of interest. Arriving at the ontological and epistemological value of ethical experiences in institutional school of the Kathmandu Valley is a deeply personal experience for me. With the theoretical support of value based leadership theory (Copeland, 2014), I

developed my perception on ethical leadership. Following my understanding and

organizing them in the discussion process, I came up with the meaning of ethical

leadership and quality of ethical leader. These constructed meanings are presented as

new knowledge of this inquiry.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

As I reached this final chapter VI, my research journey came to the completion. Entering this chapter, I came to realize that there are still many more areas waiting for academic exploration. Meanwhile, I experienced research adventures that are those desires that always make one venture out to the new expedition. They never come to an end. However, this chapter concludes this journey which I set out from 2018. Moving ahead with this chapter, it documents three different phases of the study. In the first phase of the chapter, the conclusions of meanings made from the stories on ethical leadership form principals of institutional secondary schools are presented. Likewise, three implications of the study are highlighted in the second phase of this chapter. Furthermore, in the third and last phase of the chapter, my personal experience, feeling, reflection and understanding that I underwent through my research journey are articulated as per my level of understanding. I felt really relaxed and refreshed while expressing my reflections. In doing so, I have highlighted with justification how the research topic gripped my mind and soul and why I felt the significance of the study. In the last paragraph, I articulated the essence of the chapter. This dissertation was wrapped up with list of references used in my study

Conclusion

Acquiring the philosophical understanding till now, this is my ethical acceptance that my researched knowledge is the sparks of the truth but not an ultimate truth because I experienced that it is impossible to reach the truth. In the horizon of

ethical leadership, ethical values are aligned with every corner as well as every moment of school. It covers a wider spectrum with awareness and alertness toward humanity. It creates long term effects on individual development, institutional betterment, and social purification process.

As per my study, the institutional school perceives ethics attached with the basic requirement of human beings as a social being. Love, care, share, compassion, service, respect, justice, truth, transparency, equality, equity, and empowerment are experienced as qualities to inject the aliveness in the ethical principles. The ethics of care is performed by helping, sharing and hearing from others. The ethics of justice is made through better alternatives and ethics of critique is experienced through empowerment and inclusion. Therefore, ethics of care (sharing and hearing), ethics of justice (better alternative) and ethics of critique (empowerment and inclusion) are the dimensions to construct the meaning of ethical leadership in the institutional school of Kathmandu. Now, the meaning of ethical leadership is valuing human dignity. It is an integrated process of individual values, institutional values and social/ cultural values. Therefore, it is very subjective as per individuals and different according to the particular context.

In this diverse, complex, and dynamic nature of school and society, the principal is the only respected and expected personality who could lead the school with ethical intelligence. As a result, the principal must have distinct character and conduct than others. The specific quality of the principal is not so easy to set according to laws, rules and any other documented form. As a result, it might be different as multiple realities of individuals and their valued beliefs. In this leading process, the level of individual rationale of principal is a seed of ethical germination in the leading process. Even though all situations may not be appropriate for

execution of effective ethical leadership, the principal is the key source to cultivate and nurture the sense of it and transform it into action. Along with this, the level of understanding and values system of the entire community also stand as a fertilizer in the process of growth and maturation of ethical leadership. Personal courage and will strengths of principal are the central root to understand and transform the ethical knowledge in practice. Ethical courage and clarity of leaders has confidence to cross the limitations of rule, regulations, procedures and boundaries of the institutions as well as society for the right doing and better purification Therefore, I conclude ethical leadership is a process of influencing the structures free and unlimited sphere of the people as well as society.

Nevertheless, the present research has successfully generated the meaning of ethical leadership and qualities of ethical leader as well. However, I understood that ethical leadership is not a construct of deep mental beliefs but also a construct of individual, social and cultural beliefs and values system. Ethical leadership in a true sense is to accelerate human intelligence rather than anything else. The effectiveness of ethical leadership depends upon the efforts with ethical clarities, commitment with values and interaction with the socio –cultural context. Consequently, each principal has his/her unique approach of perceiving and performing ethical values but all of them are directed or targeted towards the value of humanity.

Moreover, assembling the personal character of principal as ethical leaders, I came up with these similarities and potentialities. They are humble, honest, transparent, pleasing personalities, social workers, creators of fairness, quick strategies planner, opportunities seeker and change maker. They always stand for what is right to create the justice and healthy environment for further growth and transformation. Holistic development of the students is always in the center of the

leaders. They put emphasis on individual realities with respect to human beings. They believe that valuing the dignity of each individual is a real, right and strong source of trust. Similarly, the trustworthy relationships between leaders and followers are the key strength of ethical school leadership.

As far I am concerned with the involvement of principals as an ethical leader, they are aware and confident with their exposures, decisions, strategies and explorations. They accept ethical challenges from their respective position as designer and transformer. They acknowledge that they are not only leading the school but also the entire society toward prosperities and development. For them, the boundary of ethical leadership is not limited within a school as it also covers the entire sphere of society and nation as well.

Here, I conclude my research with my gained knowledge on the meaning of ethical leadership in brief. Ethical leadership is an integrated process of values perceived by principals, school community and society. It starts from valuing the basic fundamental rights of individuals aiming toward the ethical transformation for a long term in the society. There is a strong interrelationship between ethical sensitivities, influences and transformation. It begins with individual's aspects and sparks a big horizon of prosperities, peace, and fairness, inclusion and empowerment of the society. Courage and confidence of a leader can challenge the rules, regulations, procedures and boundaries of the institution as well as of the society. Humanity is an authentic and operating guideline than any other rules and policies. In this leading process, personal ethical standards of principal are key roots to understand the ethical values and its implications.

Furthermore, ethical leadership is not only a technique to lead the school as it is aimed but also cultivation of the wellbeing of humanity. It is also energy to craft the

natural phenomenon of the situation and moral development of an individual. It also shares the social responsibilities as an ethical web of the society. Under this prism, it is the key to change, reform and transform not only to schools but to the social webs. Now, I claim that educational leaders often encounter challenging situations. It is not because of technical incompetency of leaders but because of human problems and serious human consequences involved in the situation. My conclusion is that without ethical value, we assume we are stepping forwards but it sets us backward.

Implications

After I set the conclusion of this study, I came to realize the importance of the conclusion for academic enhancement. So far, I assumed the conclusion of this study also carries significant values into the various educational sectors. As I have mentioned earlier, this interpretive inquiry was carried out with a desire to explore the narratives on ethical leadership which were experienced by school principals from institutional schools from the Kathmandu Valley. The main thrust was how intellectual, responsible and authorized personalities such as school principals lived with ethical paradigms in their lived worlds.

Furthermore, I paid sincere effort to dig out the meaning of ethical strengths such as ethics of care, justice and critique as they exhibited from their leading position. I also had an intention to explore the positions and importance of ethical value in the process of school leadership. This research was not proposed for the generalization of the essence of ethical leadership or to argue with existing leading phenomena. Conversely, the only concern was to explore the meaning of ethical leadership from the experiences of the school principals. While saying so, I present some possible implications of this research from my level of understanding.

Implication for Practice

The essence of this study would be a worth to school leaders for valuing their prestigious position of "God". In my perception all participants are creators of the road map of a process of growth and development of ethical leadership so the essence of the study would be insightful to all stakeholders. It may suggest and guide the leadership skills to the existing as well upcoming leaders, especially principals, such as they will be acknowledged to move beyond the boundary of institution for the greater good of the entire web of the institution as well society. Listening to the voice of decent human beings is needed before performing the roles and responsibilities. Valuing the individual is a key and natural weapon for the improvement and development of the leadership. A leader has to nurture the humanistic qualities of followers in advance, only then they can influence, motivate, lead and at the end transform the followers. The leader will know that the situation may demand different and specific dealing styles for the particular person and condition so "putting all in the same basket" may not justify the problems. All concerned authorities will internalize the realities of ethical leadership activities experienced in the institutional schools.

In the end, this study may depict the texture of the society as a harmonious and ethical society.

Implication for Policies

This research was carried out for the academic purpose rather than to set the policies. Even in the excavation of experiences and stories of school principals, I came up with some issues. Hope, these may add values in the implications at policy level. The findings of the study suggest that policy makers should make leadership policy centering on the sense of individual rather than bookish knowledge and result oriented activities. A principal has to have their own flexible authorities so that they may figure out, increase and implement the sense of human being. It also requested

institutional policies to value, respect the contextual emotions, feeling of stakeholders rather than just following the piles of documented rules and regulations. The school management committee (SMC) should take strong and ethical steps in order to avoid external influences in school leadership.

Concerning the national level implications, the study suggested that test scores are not the only measurement tools of a quality education. Therefore, the moral and ethical values of the students also include the parameter of measuring quality education. There are many more visible and invisible, direct and indirect aspects of students which are required to be nurtured by education. Students need to be respected and valued as a human being, only then they will be ready for further growth. The value of humanity, justice, moral, care is the bridge of trust and faith between leaders and followers. Therefore, school policies and planning demands to be equipped with an ethical foundation.

Implication for Further Study

After exploring every aspect of ethical leadership, I believe that this study would be a baseline for further research in the horizon of educational leadership. I found that ethical leadership has multiple layers which are embedded in the inner, outer and mental world of the individuals, values and beliefs of the society and institutional values, rules and procedures. Each and every layer has a precious contribution to generate the ethical environment. Therefore, various layers such as individual character of leaders, nature of ethical dilemmas, economic, social and cultural background of the parents, school as well as society, gender perspective, and indigenous practices can be appropriate topics for further studies.

Reflections on Research Journey

At the very beginning of this journey, it was the day of my first semester at this MPhil level. I was blessed with every bit of the moment no matter inside or outside of the university. I was flying with colorful rays of hope of higher achievements. Among them, the most beautiful and precious ray was my dissertation. I was super excited with the adventures of my research journey. As I experienced, I may be one who was really excited to begin the research work among the classmates, even though I did not know what it looked like. As I started to develop my research proposal, I tried to squeeze my volume of thoughts in one.

Eventually, I was alert to my problem which was penetrating my mind and soul for a long period of my life time. It gave me clarity to set the purpose, research questions and rationale of the study but articulating them in a research format was terrible and unstable. Now, I feel ashamed of myself how immature the phase of time gave me competence and ideas so I was prepared with courage and commitment to conduct research in this area. While sharing the research topics in the classroom, I got many suggestions to rethink on the selection of the topic. The major reason behind it was that ethical related study would be a "Herculean task". Similarly, "ethics" is a subjective issue and we do not have the right to judge the "ethics" of anyone. But it has been pitching my heart and mind since my childhood so it was not easy to detach from it. Besides that, I came to realize that doing academic research on ethical premises may enhance my real scenario so that I can be satisfied with some distance and step forward. As a learner of educational leadership, I was looking for a connection of ethical values in educational leadership. Coincidently, while going through literature, I came to know that a large amount of time and trouble has been spent worrying about the definition of ethical leadership (Ciulla, 2011). It trigged my

mind and soul forcefully. I had queries on the existence and the employment of ethical standards in the course of leadership. Along with this, some unset waves pushed me to question if it is a reality of international scenario, then how about my developing diverse context? So, I became more confident, attentive and even more focused on this topic and set the research journey.

After the confirmation on the research topic, I faced various confusions with research territories. But the word' leadership' made it easier for me to be specific in the case of selection of participants. I intended to select school principals including selected members of the School Management Committee (SMC), teachers, students and parents to enrich and support the knowledge for this study as suggested during my proposal defense day (3rd June, 2019). But working on that I came to realize that it may be difficult to deal with all of them and provide justice to their priceless stories. So ethically in my first attempt of doing research study, I just confined myself to school principals as the participants.

Concerning the research paradigm and approaches, I have come along a long journey. The words; epistemology, ontology and axiology were quite fascinating and impressive. Finally, I placed myself as an interpretive inquirer. To select the research approach under the interpretive paradigm was one of the extra loaded and time consumed tasks in my research journey. When I was in my 1st semester, I was almost settled to conduct ethnographic research thinking that it might be a right approach for my research paradigm but in the second semester, it changed into phenomenology. The most turning points were the literary meaning of phenomenology, "study of lived phenomenon". I don't know why but I was inspired and excited with this research approach. As a result, I equipped myself with related literature but at the end of the session various thoughts came to me which warned me that I am not yet matured

enough to justify the bracketing (epoch)of the participants and interpret it in the academic text. Later, I decided to consult my facilitators. They gave me practical advice with the power of narrative inquiry. In this way, in the beginning of my third semester, I prepared myself to navigate the journey of narrative inquiry. Now, I am comfortable with the premise of narrative inquiry and still have a long way to go.

Plugging the narratives of intellectual dignitaries was the most magnetic and vibrating beauty of this topic for me. During the periods of collection of information, one more beautiful excitement came to me. That was visiting the different institutional schools of the Kathmandu valley. I really felt blessed stepping into the school compound, sitting in the principals' cabins and talking with that intellectual, educated boss of the schools. I enjoyed hearing and recording the stories. My happiest and proud moment included drawing the meaning and generating the knowledge even though it was not easy. But diving into the literature ocean was quite tough and vast for me. The transcribing and translating made me more tired and took more weeks than I had scheduled.

In addition, I would like to share how I was personally convinced from this study concerning ethical values. During the conversation with principals and observing and analyzing the characters of principals in their lived stories, I understood that the ethical strengths are strongly alive in our educators. They hold clear perceptions and performance on it. Ethical leadership is appropriated and valued in any context of school, students and society. They are also feeling the necessity of moral and ethical aspects in education for sustainable and harmonious development of the nation and citizens. All in all, I am optimistic that principals are capable of holding the ethical strengths but the only thing is how to make it stronger and transform to the school, society and nation.

Chapter Essence

This chapter began with the conclusion of the entire study. In the conclusion, my developed understandings on dimensions and elements of ethical values aligning with school leadership are illustrated. Humanity, as a key root and strengths of ethical leadership, is also claimed as a conclusion. In addition, the character and conduct of principals also included in order to explore the meaning of ethical leadership. Weaving the essence of these mentioned areas, I generated the meaning of ethical leadership. Finally, this meaning of ethical leadership is presented as my explored knowledge. While generating the meaning of it, I got one more opportunity to sketch the quality and conduct of ethical leaders. That opportunity fulfilled my queries which have been confusing me since my childhood.

Furthermore, I pointed the way forward in terms of drawing implications of this study. I discussed implications of my study under three different sectors such as implication for practice, policy and further studies in detail on the basis of my assumptions. My reflections on this study are presented in the last phase of this chapter. I have articulated my experiences in this voyage as reflection of this research. I proudly shared my each and every exciting, healing, confusing and frustrating moment since I conceived this research till date. My happiness, satisfaction, and difficulties during the field visit are also articulated in detail as my reflections on this research. Being a narrative inquirer, I remained ethical while expressing every moment as a reflection. In doing so, I must say that this research was a live learning experience for me. Now, I have concluded this chapter with my outline of my research journey.

Nevertheless, I prefer to conclude my research with my future directions. As I shared earlier, the completion of this research encouraged me as much as alerting me

to explore the knowledge on ethical premises for the sake of human wellbeing, ethical society and prosperities of a nation. As I acknowledged, a clear and specified territory will lead me toward the goals. Fortunately, I had clarity on it but the way of placing them in the research structure was a bundle of pressure and hurdles. Developing the courage, confidence, dedication and passion, I came with completed work. During this journey, I found that the cultural, social and ritual value and beliefs are the amazing guidelines to instruct people. So, I feel that further research study in this area is needed. Besides this, I am interested in exploring ethical strengths that lie in the indigenous leadership practices. I have a desire to continue my further study going in depth in ethical perception, sources and practices in our indigenous culture and local knowledge which is our national pride and strength.

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