ETHNOGRAPHY OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE: A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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DEDICATION

The students, teachers and the other staff in school who have been experiencing and responding to various forms of school violence

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree.

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of Raj Kumar Dhungana for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education was presented on 28 February 2018.

Title: Ethnography of School Violence: A Cultural Perspective

Abstract Approved: _____ _____

Prof. Mahesh Nath Parajuli, PhD — Thesis Supervisor

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School education is largely universalised in Nepal, but schools are not yet free from different challenges like violence. This study aimed to understand how school violence is experienced, how it affects the school life and teaching learning, and how Nepali public schools respond to such violence.

This study revealed that the aim of achieving quality and equity in education cannot be realised without addressing the violence in school. Further, it emphasised that school violence cannot be effectively understood and prevented unless realising the intricacies and complexities of violent practices rooted in school's culture.

Using a new methodological approach – the ethnography of school violence, this study revealed that the adolescent students in the study schools are more or less exposed to direct form of violence such as corporal punishment, discrimination, bullying, and different forms of harassments. Majority of the students also experienced some forms of structural violence such as making public school suitable for economically poor students, not addressing the issues such as overcrowded classrooms, poor physical infrastructure and poor access to educational materials. The

direct and structural violence have unequal consequences on the basis of student's cultural and academic merits. School, through the othering process, makes more suffering for those students who are economically poor, culturally less priviliged, and academically weak. The risks to the vulnerable student increase when the school is suituated in a fragile context.

The adolescents, who experience violence lose the sense of safety, get deprived of academic freedom, lose their potential life opportunities and increase the risk to be involved in violence. However, the students together with other stakeholders and policy makers are actively responding to school violence. Nevertheless, most of response actions are targeted against the direct forms of school violence. Hence, such response actions are not effective to challenge the structural and cultural forms of violence.

In this study I derived my theoretical perspectives mainly from the idea of cultural violence (Galtung, 1990) and critical theory of othering (Kumasiro, 2000). Similarly, some of the locally practiced power perspectives provided a frame to gain better analysis of the root causes school violence. To make the study grounded into the local cultural context, this study proposed to include spiritual violence aspect into the Galtung's violence triangle. Inclusion of spirituality in violence triangle made Galtung's theory more useful to interpret and analyse information gained from the context that is influenced by the participants' spiritual lifeworld.

The fieldwork for this study was carried out when overt political violence and conflict were at peak and thus the fragility was high than other contexts. The overt political violence and conflict are not prevalant at the same level in and around the school setting.

This study revealed that school violence is one of the major challenges to the school education system in Nepal. The diverse cultural contexts demand more intensive studies about different forms of school violence such as cyber bullying, use of arms, drugs and substance abuse, violence against teachers, and political intereference.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CFSNF	Child Friendly School National Framework
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRC	The Convention on the Rights of the Child
DEO	District Education Officer
GoN	Government of Nepal
HDI	Human development Index
HMG	His Majesties Government
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
INSEC	Informal Sector Service Center
LWF	Learn Without Fear
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non Government Organization
NPC	National Planning Commission
RP	Resource Person
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SEE	Secondary School Examination
SMC	School Management Committee
SSDP	School Sector Development Programme
SSRP	School Sector Reform Programme
SZoP	School as Zones of Peace
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCING MY JOURNEY TO SCHOOL VIOLENCE

This is the first chapter of my doctoral thesis "Ethnography of School Violence: A Cultural Perspective". I have introduced the concept of school violence on the basis of my self-reflection and literature by sharing my memorialized account of school violence in this chapter. Then, I have presented school violence with short theoretical underpinnings applied in this study. Further, I have outlined my research questions along with ethical and quality standards used in this study and concluded this chapter with a brief roadmap of the rest of this study.

Culture encompasses the value of both positive and negative elements like peace and violence; and none of the culture can be categorise as violent or peaceful (Galtung, 1990). Cultural elements like religion, language, gender, caste and ethnicity and spirituality are useful social construct that protect humanity, tolerance, peace and justice. However, these cultural elements also have paradoxes. Similar to culture, school education aims to promote peace and justice, equality and tolerance, but often school also is seen as instrument of violence, injustice and inequality. In their introductory note, *Rethinking School Violence: Theory, Gender, Context*, Robinson et al. (2012) argued that school is largely a safe space but it is also a 'dangerous place' for children and teachers.

School education has largely been universalized in Nepal, but Nepali schools are not free from different challenges, including violence. In many other countries school violence has been gaining more and more attention in recent years but in countries like Nepal this has been a neglected area. Amidst such situation, this

ethnographic study, carried out in five schools in two districts in Tarai, aimed to understand how school violence is experienced, affected, and responded in school.

The term school violence and violence in school are used interchangeably in various literatures. I owe the idea of Furlong and Morrison (2000) who argued that the school is a physical, educational, and social institution and school violence is an educational problem, worthy for classroom and school's attention (p.73). Hence, this study is the study of school violence (school as one of the socio-political units of society), including visible and invisible violence in school.

In this study, I approached school violence as a socio-cultural phenomenon which can be better understood using the interpretive research paradigm. School violence is a sensitive issue and such sensitivity increases when the context is encountering with active political violence. Therefore, I used multi sited ethnographic research approach, became sensitive to the research process, participants' culture and the context.

For me school is like a family, a *Paribar* [family], and a state institution, therefore, I approached school as a 'family' within the broader premises of a multicultural community. Students' learning and ownership of the school can be increased when the curriculum and school context reflect their cultural values and identities (Bartlett, 2007; Palmer 2008, as cited in Borrero, Yeh, Cruz, & Suda, 2012).

Going beyond, the cultural island approach (Van Maanen, 2011), I applied an ethnographic research method, a multi-site ethnography of school violence by deriving relevant approaches from the existing body of ethnographies including those on school ethnography (Thapan, 2014) and the ethnography of violence (Nordstrom & Robben, 1995). I concentrated on the 'ethnography of violence' as the principal research methodology as it is sensitive enough to conduct research in overtly violent

context, and appropriate for exploring my research questions. This study is ethnography in school; thus, the students, teachers and parents were the key participants of this study.

Similarly, in order to draw meanings out of what I observed and what I listened, I applied three theoretical perspectives: the concept of cultural violence developed by Johan Galtung (1990), the theory of cultural violence and the idea of school's role of othering youth (Borrero et al.,2012). Similarly, to explain school violence, I also used a local proverb that is used frequently in the field: *Jo Hocho, Usko Mukhama Ghocho* -The weak is vulnerable, at risk and subject to violence.'

According to K. M. Williams (2005), sharing the researcher's perspectives and thoughts on the issue of research is a good starting point, thus, I start this thesis with my own experiences of school violence. This will give the reader some ideas about why I selected 'school violence' as my doctoral research subject.

School Violence: My Memorialised Account

I acknowledge many positive impacts of schooling in my life. I respect my teachers and am grateful to my school mates, school staff and all who made my schooling a 'not bad' experience. However, the positive aspects of my schooling could not prevent me from experiencing violence and unpleasant moments. Even after a few decades, some of those experiences are still fresh in my mind. Before going into the discussion of school violence on a broader community level, let me clear my heart and mind, and confess that I myself am a victim, as well as a perpetrator of school violence.

I remember my first exposure to school violence. It was in 1987 when I was 12 years old and studying in grade seven. My family had migrated from a rural area to the suburb of Kathmandu Valley in 1985 and my parents admitted me to a new public

school. Shortly after entering this new school I was exposed to one of the instances of school violence:

We were playing football inside the school compound on a day in September 1985. Pushing and pulling was a normal part of young teens' play, and was/is more so in football. But that was a bad day. Mistakenly, I pushed a local boy during the game though my mother warned me to be careful with those locals. Those students who had their parental houses near the school were considered locals and the new comers like me were categorized as outsiders. Due to the mistake, a few local boys surrounded me and pushed, shoved, and hit me. When I cried, they left me alone and went back to their classes. I tolerated it because it was normal to be bullied or beaten up by the locals, especially for the students who had migrated to the new locality.

The memory of that incident is still fresh in my mind, which might have some influence on my current behaviour, as I still feel that the locals are stronger and safer than those who are migrants. That case was not the end of the story. I remember another experience of violence in the same school.

Playing inside the class when the teacher was absent was common. As usual, we were shoving, pushing, yelling and pulling with our friends inside the classroom. I was actively involved in this process. When I was pulling my friend, suddenly an old wooden desk broke. Some of our friends reported that to the school administration. With the fear of possibly getting a harsh punishment, I immediately went home and remained absent for a few days, to avoid a likely punishment. However, I heard that, on the day after the incident, Bhairab sir, the strictest teacher of my school beaten some of my friends. Most of the punished boys were classified as *Napadhne* (literal meaning 'those who do not study' or who are weak in studies). I escaped the harsh punishment; by remaining absent from the school for weeks, but such punishments

were the normal part of my schooling. My teachers beat me and my classmates, pulled our hair and ears, and made us walk with bare knees on the rough ground. I remember that the academically weak students were mostly punished in school.

After 13 years of schooling, I started my teaching career as a primary level teacher and applied *Bhairab* Sir's approach to teaching. In formal meetings, the principal of my school, where I was teaching, often instructed the teachers to be friendly. However, in reality, the school system appreciated the strict teachers like *Bhairab Sir.* Despite being one of the strictest teachers, the school authority rewarded me as the 'best performer'. Besides my sincere teaching, I believe that the psychological and physical violence I used to maintain discipline were some of the major reasons behind the reward.

To remain 'the best', I continued using corporal punishment to maintain class discipline and ensure that my student's get better marks in their assessment, which in turn, made the school, appreciate my work. The reward system recognized and appreciated the *Bhairab* Sir's way of handling students. Now, however, I feel sorry for those children who were victimized by teachers like *Bhairab* Sir and myself. Saltmarsh (2012) observed that violence is part of the overall life of a school including, the teaching, learning, and parenting. Further, it is transmitted from one era to the next, in a new role as a teacher; I used Bhairab sir's way of teaching in school.

My exposure to school violence as a victim and as a perpetrator has given me a solid background from which to understand the nature and complexities of school violence. In addition, from 2005-2014, I engaged in Nepal's school curriculum reform process, mainly to integrate lessons on peace, human rights, democracy and disarmament into curricula, textbooks and teacher training tools. The opportunity to participate in curricular reform process provided me with more insights about the

value of non-violence and peace in school education. This experience further inspired me to promote non-violence through education. My experiences provided me with a foundation for this study. This account also enabled me to locate school violence in particular cultural contexts, i.e., in the public schools.

In my study, I selected adolescent students going to public schools. My memory of experiencing violence during my adolescence was one of the major reasons for choosing adolescent students as the key participants' for this study. There are many negative effects of violence on the victimizers and the victims (Eisenbraun, 2007; Estevez, Jimenez,& Musitu, 2008; Rana, 2006) and adolescents are more actively involved than the other age groups in various forms of violence, such as sexual violence, drug abuse, gun violence.(Betts, Houston, Steer,& Gardner, 2015; Estevez etal.,2008). The literature and my exposure to violence in adolescent stage, the adolescent students appeared as an appropriate group of population to study school violence. Similarly, this also guided me to locate school violence as one of the important research problems.

Locating School Violence as a Research Problem

Nepal's curriculum framework had a set of educational goals that clearly included the values of peace, tolerance, human rights, equity, and justice (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2005) but these goals are not going to be met unless school provides positive and enabling learning space for all. Further, Nepal's Constitution, Consolidated Equity Strategy (CES) 2014, Schools as Zones of Peace National Framework 2011 and Learn Without Fear Policy 2010 are some notable policy references to understand and prevent school violence. In addition, Nepal also ratified the United Nations Convention of the rights of the Child (CRC). The article 19 included the state party's commitment to take all measures to protect child from all

forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse or neglect, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse.

In Nepali ritual practices, *ahimsha paramo dharma* or non violence is our ultimate duty is widely ingrained in the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. The Hindus believe that performing non-violent actions can unite human with the ultimate soul, the *Paramatma,* and liberate from the troublesome cycle of birth and death. Similarly, presenting serious negative consequences such as cruel suffering, loss, injury of the body, heavy affliction, and loss of mind Dhammapada (Verse: 138-140) also discouraged violent actions. These traditions values peace and discourage humans to use the violent means for their personal gain.

Despite having policies that discourage stakeholders to use violence and the cultural values embedded in religion and rituals, school violence is still a major challenge in Nepal. Therefore, it is important to understand why school violence is not actively challenged? Why the existing policies are not being effective to change the schools' norms that accept school violence? Whether the present school culture and context enable students to question the visible and invisible forms of violence? Who perpetrate violence in school and who becomes the victims and why? Are there any problems in our culture that maintains the seeds of violence? These questions are important because positive school culture is one of the key prerequisites to quality education (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). The key problem is with our inability to understand and deal with the cultural aspects of school that has been retaining the cultural norms to continue violent practices in school. This is the major research problem to this study.

Rationale of the Study

Education will not be able to produce citizens able to reflect the major goals of education in Nepal (MoE, 2005), being to understand and practice peace, tolerance, human rights, equity and justice, unless negative factors like violence embedded school culture is better understood and addressed. The violent contexts in and around school have many negative implications to the students' learning and upbringing. For academic success, young students need senses of stability, safety, and predictability (Baker, Jaffe, Ashbourne, & Carter, 2002). The Kapilvastu and Sunsari context where students have been exposed to the memories of the violent past and also exposed to recent political violence was important setting to engage with.

Understanding and recognizing the need to address school violence, scholars started revisiting existing education system. They are exploring: the cultural capital of the othered (Borreroet al., 2012), education for others (Kumashiro, 2000); questioning the school normal schooling (Harber & Sakade, 2009); rethinking school violence (Saltmarsh, 2012). Since the students are primarily treated differently based on their academic performance, enhancing their academic performance could be the best strategy to challenge othering and violence in school. Rodney, Srivastava, and Johnson (2008) argued that there is a clear relationship between education performance and school violence. The good performers -the privileged students – experience less violence than the 'poor performers'. Hence, the efforts to minimize disparity on academic performance among students can significantly reduce school violence.

It is important as school violence has deep roots in a broader culture and therefore seeking solutions into school bullying, peer victimization, corporal punishment or cyber violence is not going to solve this complex problem (Clark,

2011). Majority of the existing studies mainly concentrated on direct forms of violence, and a fewer studies on structural and symbolic forms of violence. These studies are unable to explain the contextual and cultural roots of violence (Galtung, 1990, Furlong & Morrison, 2000; Sheer & Sheer, 2011). Therefore, effectively understanding school violence is important not only for present generations, but future ones as well. Victims of school violence are more likely to become perpetrators of violence in the future, thus becoming part of its vicious cycle (Zur, 1995). More literature on school violence prevention and response is available than on how adolescents experience and make sense of school violence in multicultural and fragile contexts.

Literature shows that there are limited studies available related to school violence in Nepal. These studies are mainly focused on direct forms of violence like corporal punishment (Aryal, 2010), bullying (Rana, 2006), the effects of armed violence (Pherali, 2013), dating violence (Adhikari, 2013), violence against ethnic minorities (Khanal, 2017), and gender based violence (Poudyal, 2017). These studies are useful to understand the specific forms of violence but they are unable to answer why stakeholders largely remained silent on everyday violence rooted in school norms. In addition, these studies are unable to answer why students coming from particular socio-cultural backgrounds experience more violence than others. Robinson et al. (2012) indicated that the legacy of earlier traditions of violence and the abuse of power could be reflected in the present schooling system. It is important in Nepal's ongoing political violent context because such unsafe school environment contributes to the higher risk of school violence (Barnes, Brynard, & de Wet, 2012). Consequently, the learners are not able to achieve their fullest potential learning (Burdick-Will, 2013; Furlong, Chung, Bates, & Morrison, 1995). In addition, students

have other negative effects like physical, psychological, social, or educational harm (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger, & Lumpkin, 2014, p. 7).

My exposures and experiences to school violence and the research gap in school violence lead me to focus this study on the cultural perspective of school violence.

Study Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of school going adolescents of Nepal and understand their experiences of school violence in their school's cultural location. Further, I formulated three broad research questions to contribute to the purposes of this study.

1. How have the school going adolescents in a school located in multicultural setting experience school violence?
2. How does school violence affect adolescent students' studies?
3. How is school violence responded in schools?

The first one is the leading question of this study. Considering the research gaps on school violence, these three questions are also ordered high to low preferences.

Chapter Organization

This study is organized in nine chapters. First two chapters provide overview of the thesis and locate the research issue. I introduced my memorialized account on school violence and described why school violence is a research problem. In Chapter Two, I have presented a brief review of some of the key conceptual and theoretical aspects relevant to this study to establish my research space. I approached literature of school violence, considering school violence as a social construct, which is internally sprung and dialectical (Wills & Trodman, 2002).

Chapter Three dealt with how I carried out this study, where, I have driven readers to the study context and explained how I engaged in the fragile field setting. Similarly, I have also described the philosophical and methodological approaches of this study. In Chapters Four, I presented existing policies formulated to reduce or prevent the visible and invisible forms of school violence. The chapter Five, Six, and seven presents the stories and emotions of adolescent students gathered during the ethnographic fieldwork. More particularly, adolescent students' experiences of school violence and major effects of such experiences and exposure to school violence are outlined in Chapter Five and Six. In Chapter Seven, I have brought the brighter sides of schooling by presenting how adolescents together with other stakeholders are responding to school violence. These chapters tell the participants' reality (Kumsai, 2011) and provide adolescents' understanding of school violence.

In Chapter Eight, on the basis of the theoretical and philosophical perspectives, ethnographic stories of school violence and policy review, I engaged myself in meaning making process and analyzed the findings from the field relating the findings with my memories and experiences, and also with broader contexts, relevant theories, and literature. Conclusions, implications and reflections have been outlined in the Chapter Nine.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL POSITIONING

Before moving to Kapilvastu, I was aware that there is no simple answer of, why the *Bhairab* Sir's way of teaching was accepted in school. I had some insights that our school system was influenced by our culture including caste, gender, religion, and political authority. Use of corporal punishment, expulsion, domination, harassment is considered as teacher's duty in school. However, school is concerned when teachers' use of violence cause injury or other physical harm.

When I decided to travel to the field (Kapilvastu), Nepal's political situation was fragile as some of the Terai based political parties were protesting against the provisions of the new Constitution promulgated on September 2015. Some Terai-based political parties renounced from the voting process of the Constitution and started their protests in Madheshi majority districts (Rehnamol, 2017). The protest turned into prolonged general strikes, mostly affecting the central and eastern Terai districts including the Kapilvastu and Sunsari, the districts that I selected for fieldwork. Therefore, I had to carry out my ethnographic study on school violence in the violent political context.

Conceptualizing School Violence

Before starting the fieldwork, I wanted to have conceptual clarity on school violence and, for this I reviewed relevant literature. Violence is widely discussed in psychology, sociology, health, political science among other disciplines but each of these fields approach violence differently. Defining multifaceted term like school violence is not an easy and simple. I realised this when, in the field, students and

teachers asked me to explain school violence in understandable language. I used Nepali term '*Himsa'* that translates similar to violence. *Himsa* means many different things for adolescents. The adolescent student referred *Himsa* as undue pressure, teasing, sexual harassment, armed violence, child labor, war, communal discrimination, cyber bullying, early marriage, hate, dating violence, corruption and so on. When asked about their concept of '*Himsa'*, boys generally referred to physical violence but girls referred the issues like gender based violence such as sexual violence, sexual exploitations, and early marriage.

The cultural elements like religion, language, caste, political ideology often define what violence is. In Hindu culture, there are three types of *Himsa*: *kayak*, *bachik*, and *mansik*. The *kayik* Himsa means physical assault, *bachik* means verbal abuse, while *mansik* means emotional and psychological abuse and torture. Bhairab sir's way of teaching and bullying against me in school were examples of physical assults, *kayik himsa*. Use of *kayik, bachik* and *mansik himsa* was common in my family and community. Such *himsa* was used to maintain discipline in family and community, maintain dominance of elders, mostly the men.

In Vedic principle, *Himsa* is the sinful act, or *Paap* and working for non-violence are the true religion. *Aahimsha Paramo Dharma* [Non-violence is an ultimate religion/duty] is one of the major messages of Hindu religion. However, punish those who stand against truth and justice is considered as right karma. In *Bhagabat* Geeta, Krishna inspired Arjuna, the great warrior of Mahabharata, to fight and use a violent means to defend truth and justice and defeat *Aadharma*. Hindu tradition generally accepts the use of violence or punishment against the *Aadharmi*, the actors who support or commit violence or sinful/evil act. Hindu idea of '*Dharma Himsa Tathaibacha*' emphasized the importance to use of violence for justice and

truth than just follow non-violence (Srivastava, Dhingra, Bhardwaj & Srivastava, 2013). This shows that the Hindu literature presented the use of violence to establish truth and justice is more important than following the path of non-violence.

Similarly, the Hindu *gurukul* education system is influenced by various eastern literature including *Bhagbat Geeta*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and the work of Chanakya. For example, the idea of Chanakya, *Laleyet Panchabarsani Dasbarsani Tadayet [3:18] or* Take care of your children until with love until five years and use physical and verbal assault for their education for next ten years demonstrates how the adolescents were perceived and treated in the Hindu *gurukul* education system.

Often, culture categorises person and their acts as the dichotomous realities. Galtung (1990) described occidental tradition as dichotomies between god and evil, good god and bad. Hence, violence against Satan/Demon is justified. In Buddhism, violence is described as evil act. Violence is the act that causes suffering for both perpetrator and the victims. Repetition of evil acts like violence creates more violence and thus create more suffering (Bhikkhu, V.T, 1997). The evil act creates *Dukkha* in human life. Dhammapada (10: 137-140) highlighted the ten consequences for perpetrators including bodily injury, illness, pain, loss of relatives, grave charge, and in next life he shall born in hell. For Buddhism, violence is one of the major causes of *Dukkha* or suffering in life and beyond, whereas Hinduism presents violence as sinful act '*Aadharma'*. Similarly, Bhagbat Geeta described the importance of Karma as a human duty to prepare for his/her next life, which is determined by their action in present life. Such actions are classified into karma or human duty, *aakarma*, the action taken for greater good, and *bikarma*, the action that is harmful for self and others. Though, The Hindu and Buddhist traditions have many differences, literature on the both religions have expressed high respect for the non-violent way of life. The

Hindu traditions recognise the use of violence in responsible manner, and use it only when other means are failed, and only if this is the only way to protect truth and justice. Whereas Dhammapada (10: 273-289) rejects all forms of violence by following the non-violent eightfold path: Right thought, view, speech, action, livelihood, efforts, mindfulness and concentration.

On the basis of experiences and exposure to violence, different people understand violence differently. Estevez et al. (2008) argued that, in some cultures, violence has a positive role as it is considered a 'normal' behaviour in order to solve conflicts and problems. Turner (1991) presented that violence, by providing the most promising alternative to extremism like Stalinism and international communism, maintains social order. Violence for students often is not considered violence for the teachers. Hence, I realized that it is inappropriate to conceptualize school violence under a single definition rather it has to be seen as a multidisciplinary and multifaceted field of study. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of school violence, one form of violence like school bullying could be relevant for some of the other disciplines, such as education, law, health, criminology, and psychology.

Psychologists and health professionals generally deal violence as a physical and psychological problem. For example, Waldron (2009) argued that the school violence is still a criminologist dominant research area where sociologists examined it as one of the barriers to the academic success. In the narrow understanding, school violence is explained as one of the major causes to physical or psychological injury (Farrington, 2007). Similarly, for Heretick (2003), violence is an intentional act to harm others. Psychologist and health professional's understanding to the violence are unable to explain the meaning of structural, symbolic and cultural forms of violence. In structural and cultural forms of violence, the perpetrators are invisible, and

sometimes their actions are not intentional, rather the victims themselves are actively be part in perpetuating violence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

Social scientists, broadening the scope from health and psychological concern, described violence as a broad socio-cultural phenomenon. On the basis of in-depth literature review, Furlong and Morrison (2000) defined school violence as "a multi-faceted construct that involves both criminal acts and aggression in schools, inhibit development and learning, as well as harm the school's climate" (p.71).Similarly, Farmer (2004) conceptualized violence as a "social machinery of oppression" (p. 307) and Galtung (1990) defined it as "the symbolic spheres of our existence- exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (p.291). In a cross-disciplinary analysis of violence, Mider (2013) mentioned about other types of violence such as latent violence that includes iconic violence, media and symbolic violence. These concepts show that scoping of violence is challenging as it can be as narrow as health concern and also as broad as the latent tension. One is more visible wheres the other is less visible or invisible in nature.

From a socio-cultural lens, schools and classrooms are often presented as 'miniature of society' (Dewey, 1915). Describing school as a part of the broader socio cultural context, Morrell (2002) presented school as a site of violence, as a producer of violence and as a starting point for ending to violence" (p.39). This describes school as a part of the broader society with paradoxical facets: the one promotes peace, tolerance and justice and another produces and reproduces violence, injustice and oppressions. As a student of social science, I approached school violence as a socio cultural construct, taking its scope wider as one of the multidisciplinary issues.

Many factors and stakeholders are responsible to respond school violence. School's formal and informal policies, school management committees, and curriculum are important tools and institution to prevent school violence. It is also important as teaching learning methods and approaches are guided by the school culture and the norms that are formalized through policies.

Education curriculum, formal policies, informal or hidden curriculum and norms can foster violence as well as peace in school. Apple (1995) argued that state carries the dominant's ideology and performs in maintaining the relations of domination and exploitation in our society and also hidden curriculum is often undermines the formal curricular objectives. Curriculum is one of the major instruments to maintaining this relation of domination and fostering the dominant culture and to promote non-violence. Sinclair (2010) further argued that curriculum can make our society unsafe if it stimulates conflict and increases recruitment in armed forces, creates biases, and glorifies war and genocide. While approaching school violence as social cultural issue, exploring the elements of school violence into the education and other policies was also important.

In Nepal, political parties use teachers, form students' unions and use school management committees as well as resources coming to the school for their political gain (Pherali, 2013). In addition, the political activities like general strikes and use of children and school for political gain are contributing to the high rate of school violence in Nepal. The school closure is the most obvious visible consequences of the frequent political protests in and around the schools.

Some forms of violence that fostered through policies and norms are questioned but they are merely challenged when violence is covered under the acceptable norms of schooling. In my schooling period, my mother asked me to

tolerate bullying, when I complained about I being bullied by some of the local students. The cultural boundary of we (of the locals) and others (a new student coming from outside than the school locality) might be one of the key reasons of creating tensions between multiple groups of 'we' and 'others'. The behaviourists argued that the use of reinforcement and non-reinforcement as alternative to punishment. However, this has created categories of students those who get reward and those who are not rewarded (Mohapi, 2008). The behaviourist approach of reinforcement helped to maintain the practice of categorization and othering in school.

Criticizing the weakness of most of the popular cultures, Sherer and Sherer (2011) argued that children become more violent where their culture justifies the use of force and aggression. Our society is maintaining social hierarchy, inequality, and suffering that is produced and maintained by symbolic domination which is the result of symbolic violence (Bourdueu, 1990). Often violence and use/abuse of power are created manifested and maintained through social symbols. Various cultural factors like masculinity, habits of conformity, discipline and morality, reproduction of inequalities, competitive examination regimes are some of the major causes of school violence (Barnes et al., 2012).

Cultural factors also create the situation of unequal distribution of power, resources and privileges (K. M. Williams, 2005). Analyzing the ways of how gender based violence crosses the walls of formal school and influences learners, Morrell (2002) mentioned, in school, men play the major role as the perpetrator and women as victim. Morrell's generalization of men as the major perpetrator of violnce could be misleading as it does not recognise the men as victims. On the contrary, Nansel et al. (2001) and Olweus (1993) found that boys are more likely to be involved as both bullies and targets, and they become victims of physical violence. In addition to the

boy-girl situation on violence, another study carried out in the USA demonstrates that there is no equitable environment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) students in school (Kosciw, Palmer, Kull,& Greytak, 2013).

Eisenbraun (2007) argued that gender is one of the major determinants of school violence as adolescent boys can become both victims as well as perpetrators of school violence. This idea was relevant when I discussed with adolescent students coming from the marginalized communities like *Dalits*, girls and Muslim minorities. In Hindu and Buddhism, violence is considered as *Paap*, *Aadharma*, sin or evil act. Even if the perpetrators are not punished in this life, they will have to face consequences after his/her life. However, these beliefs found less influential among the adolescent students.

Most of the scholars who worked on school violence used most of their energy on prevention and assessment of possible risks of school violence (Eisenbraun, 2007; Miller, 2008; Sakiba & Peterson, 2006). Most of the prevention related studies focused to prevent one or the other forms of violence however, very limited studies conducted to explore school violence in overtly violent situations. Hence, how adolescent students experience violence in the middle of overt violent context is the major research gap to the study of school violence.

This study, aimed to mitigate this research gap. I was open and ready to deconstruct my conceptual understanding of school violence with my ethnographic engagement in the field. I was interested to understand the reasons of lasting roots of school violence. A clear theoretical position was important before start engaging with research participants and collecting information from the field.

Theoretical Position

A number of theoretical approaches are used to explain and understand school violence. The complexity of violence in general and specially the school violence was difficult to deal with by using a single theoretical lens. Thus, I used three social theories in this study. First, I used two local folklores that were helpful to understand and analyse school violence in the schools' cultural location. There are two similar folklores equally popular in the Hill and Terai regions of Nepal: "*Jo Hocho Usko Mukhma Ghocho*" and '*Jiski Laathi, Usiki Bhais'* [*that who holds a stick owns the water buffalo*). These folklores positioned power and authority in the centre to violence. The central meaning of these two folklores is, 'the powerful can do whatever they want, and victimization of the weak is normal.'

Because of the population distribution of the study districts, high disparity as well as diversity among the different communities, the uneven power relation and victimisation were common in the selected districts. These districts have significant proportion of Maithali and Awadhi Languages speakers, other than Nepali as the official language of instruction and the language of Majority populations in Nepal. Average 15% (18% in Kapilvastu and 12% in Sunsari) of the total populations in Sunsari and Kapilvastu are Muslim, much higher than the four percent, the national average (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2011). In this context, I preferred to carry out fieldwork in the school located in high diversity in terms of language, religion, ethnicity, caste among others. The purpose of selecting such school was to adequately reflect Nepal's large diversity in school.

At the time of fieldwork, most of the schools were closed due to general strike called by the Terai-Based political parties who were protesting to change the provisions of Nepal's new Constitution. Thus, the conceptual understanding and field

contexts led this ethnographic journey into two streams: cultural stream and critical stream of othering. For Jensen (2011), othering means, the powerful group's definition that present subordinate group as inferior and problematic and justify the powerful groups' power dominance.

The idea of othering used in this study is influenced by Kumashiro (2000) and Staub (2003). The othering in school is the practices and process of categorizing students on the basis of their backgrounds and identities, behave them differently, devalue their cultural norms/practices, and consider their exposure to violence as normal part of schooling. The cultural stream of school violence included the role of cultural aspects like spirituality, religion, gender, language, academic performance, and party politics. The critical stream of othering is used to discuss how school violence is experienced and responded by the students with diverse cultural backgrounds. This idea of othering could be useful to understand school violence in the school which is located in the fragile context.

I used the idea of cultural violence to represent the language, religion, political ideology and academic performance as important facets of culture and school setting. Galtung (1990) defined cultural violence as "the symbolic spheres of our existence-exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (p. 291).Cultural violence as a theoretical lens is a necessary theoretical underpinnings that helped me to understand different forms of violence like direct, structural and cultural domains of violence prevailing in schools. Despite having its usefulness, the Galtung's idea of structural violence is criticised for making perpetrators illusive and invisible into the complex system and structure. As the result, individual actors are incapable to respond such violence (Va´zquez-Arroyo, 2012). Moreover, Galtung's

idea of structural violence has made the violence more broad concept as it captured broad area of cultural elements like religion, language and political ideologies as source of violence. This definition helped to widen the concpet of violence from narrow psychology, health and criminal concern to the social and cultural field. However, the Galtung's definition has not adequately captured the spiritual aspect of culture. The spiritual belief system is a cultural construct that justifies the use of violence in the name of 'respect the powerful' and by creating imaginary symbols, mythical stories, and shamanic performances. Such belief systems are influential in setting schools' cultural norms.

If children learn bullying as acceptable and appropriate, they are more likely to engage in bullying or other forms of aggression (Gendron, Williams, &Guerra, 2011). K. M.Williams (2005) in his study on school violence mentioned that the power-holders decide on the process and beneficiary of the resources. Some get far less resources in school and thus they are deprived of quality education. H. Williams (2013) presented that structural violence in schools is often promoted through macro-exclusionary practices, standardized tests that are culturally biased, gendered and differentiated discipline for different groups. I realized that without understanding the roots of violence, such cultural forms of violence in school could not be well described.

Though the cultural violence perspective is helpful to understand school violence from a broader point of view, it is unable to provide a critical understanding of why some students are more exposed to violence than the others. I used a post-colonial idea of '*othering'* to discuss the situation of the specific categories of student such as students from religious minority, whose mother tongue is other than Nepali and poorly performing students. In multicultural and politically fragile setting,

adolescents might be more exposed in categorizing and naming. The specific categories' of the students in school get specific identities. In school, most of the othered students are identified as *Bhuskul*, and *Jauwa* and 'The kids most likely' for Saltmarsh (2012), and others for Kumashiro (2000). Othering is defined as the process of structural violence that is targeted to the traditionally marginalized group whose experiences involve the cultural and racial ambiguity, categorization and labeling, hierarchical power dynamics and limited access to resources (Borrero et al., 2012). In the school setting, meaning of marginalized students is also depending upon student's academic performance, and identity like good or bad. In school, the students who are talented and good at studies are generally recognised as good in comparison with the students whose academic performance is poor.

Staub (2003) introduced collective violence, a new category of violence that is caused from the group's self concept, cultural devaluation, ideology of antagonism and unhealed victimization. Collective violence occurs in a situation where, the certain group of people realises their victim identity. The difficulties in life and intergroup conflict create opportunities that allow the different groups to devalue each other's culture and further they create ideological antagonism (Staub, 2003). Such antagonism could be further cemented when there are unhealed pains of the past. As a result, in everyday schooling, both children and teachers of *other* category are more likely to be victimized with different forms of direct and indirect violence.

The cost of violence is more to the 'others' like marginalised communities including Madheshi. In the Terai, data shows that dropout rate among Madheshi Dalits is higher and many children of this community are out of school (Poudel (2007). I observed that teachers unequally treat adolescent students who perform good and poor in their class. When teaching in schools, I always encouraged and

appreciated good performing students, presented class topper as role model. In this study, I explored how students from diverse cultural and academic abilities are categorised and treated in school and how such categorization could contribute to school violence.

Theoretical Framework of School Violence

The use or misuse of power is central to violence. It is violence when, individual gain power due to their social or cultural position and use their power, including knowledge, to dominate or harm 'others'. I presented the coercive power or the power to use violence as *laathi* or stick in the folklore of '*Jiski Laathi, Uski Bhaish'* [that who holds stick owns the buffalo]. This perspective is useful to analyze how students with different social capital and power experience violence in school. The idea of power holder can monopolise over violence, is against the Hindu notion of 'अहिंसापरमोधर्मचःतथैवहिंसाधर्म।:[non-violence is our ultimate duty: more important duty is to use violence to protect *Dharma or truth*". The person, who has authority to use coercive power, should be more responsible. In other word, the person with 'stick' should use his power with responsible manner. Thus, the local folklore 'the person who holds a stick owns the buffalo' can be used to justify the use of power for the powerholder's personal gain. This principle can be applied in school. The authority of school to teach students, and maintain discipline should be used in a resposible manner. These local folklores could also misuse to justify the coercive authority of the authoritarian teachers over the others. Further, the local proverbs like *Jo Hocho Usko Mukhma Ghocho* were popular among students in the field. In this study, *Hocho* represents the students who are less privileged.

I used the idea of cultural violence as described by Galtung (1990); the idea of othering (Borrero et al., 2012; Kumashiro, 2000; Staub, 2003) to analyse how

categorisation of students lead to discrimination and violence in school. These ideas match with my experience but I am not sure about the impact of such harmful behaviour like violence on a student's life.

Cultural violence represents the violence rooted in cultural dispositions like; religion, language, gender, caste/ethnicity, and race. Galtung (1990), following the direct and structural violence, the cultural violence can be considered as the third super-types of violence, and the major legitimisers of the other forms of violence.

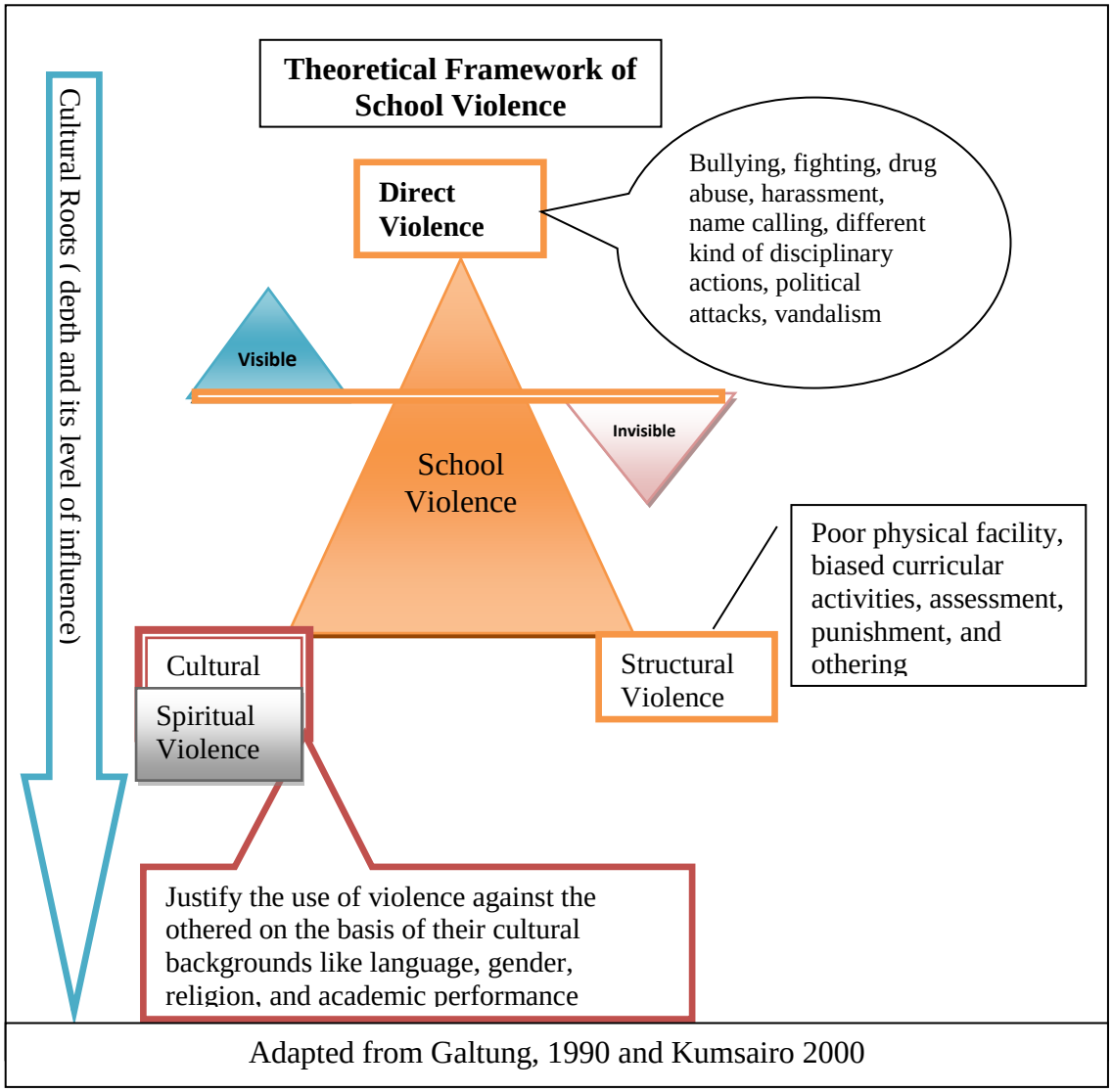

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of School Violence

Based on this conceptual and theoretical positioning, I approached Nepali school as the multi-cultural location. Further, I realised that the idea of cultural

violence remains incomplete without including spiritual aspect of violence. The influence of spirituality in violence is studied more in counseling psychology, but it is new concept in the study of school violence. I included this element in the Galtung's violence triangle to compliment it with 'spirituality' as important element of culture, and useful metaphysical concept studied to understand fear and trauma of school violence. Based on my conceptual and theoretical positions, I adopted a theoretical framework of this study.

The nature of school violence is highly influenced by the students' identities constructed through the cultural elements such as religion, spiritual worldview, language, political ideology and academic performance. Such violence is initiated through the schooling structure like curricular activities, assessment, punishment, discipline, categorization and othering. This violent schooling process rooted in school culture manifested as direct or personal forms of violence like punishment, bullying, harassment and others.

These theories helped me to understand that school is a part of broader society and violence in school is also one of the many different phenomena of social realities. Similarly, they engage in responding to different forms of violence they encounter in schools. Boon & Head (2010) criticised the critical theories for sidelining the issue of violence. Considering the importance of critical perspectives, and to analyse school violence from critical perspective, I also used the idea of othering (Kumashiro, 2000).

Essence of the Chapter

The narrow conceptual frame of school violence is unable to explain how experiences of and exposure to violence in the schools located in a multicultural and politically fragile field context. In eastern literature, mainly in Hinduism and Buddhism, the violence or *himsa* is defined as *paap* or *aadharma* (sinful act and the

act against religious codes). These religions inscribed ‘non-violence’ as the major duty or *dharma* of human being [*Aahimsha Paramo Dharma*]. Present approach to view violence as the visible or direct form gives incomplete picture of student’s exposure to diverse forms of violence such as visible and invisible, direct and indirect, structural, symbolic and cultural. Hence, school violence has to be studied in a holistic manner to understand the broader view of school violence. Similarly, it is essential to use multiple theoretical perspectives including the idea of othering, Galtung’s triangle of violence and local perspectives rooted in local folklores.

In Chapter Three, I discussed the ontological, epistemological and methodological positions and procedures of this study. Chapter III also presents the field engagement process while exploring answers to the three research questions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, I presented philosophical position of this study and the methodological approaches and tools applied to this research. In the beginning, philosophical, ontological and epistemological approaches to the study are presented. After this, I have described the field context and outlined the methodology, the ethnography of school violence.

Philosophical Approaches

Ethnography is not only one of the other qualitative methods but also a philosophical guidance. Whitehead (2004) mentioned that "ethnography has ontological and epistemological properties and also a holistic, highly flexible and creative process" (p.4). Violence can be counted as we can count dead bodies, number of body raped, wounded and beaten. However, most of the aspects of violence like human experiences of pain, grief, and sorrow are subjective. On this, Scheper-Hughes (1996) argued that the interpretive and postmodern researchers are questioned about the epistemological approach that prefers seeing an individual as a subjective reality. She explored structural violence and particularly worked on her paper 'invisible genocide' revealing the subjective aspects of violence. Reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed (Collis & Hussey, 2014). While dealing the complex issue of experiences of school violence, I have the same opinion with Saldana (2015) who argued, "there is no truth external to us waiting to be discovered" (p.5).This opinion reflects the subjective nature of experiences of school violence. There is no problem called 'school violence' waiting to be solved by any single research.

Litchman (2013) argued that the interpretive and post-positivists see reality as imperfect as it is. I believe that the nature of reality of school violence is not an objective reality rather it is interpretive, multiple, subjective, imperfect and is a cultural construct.

The *Shankhya* philosophy, one of the Vedic philosophical paradigms, views the direct violence as illusion. However, my ontology is guided by the Buddhist idea of relative truth. The truth is relative to the knower, advancement of *Bodhisattvas*, and the transcending knowledge, *Pragya* (Ruegg, 1971). Hence, my reality is subjective to the level of my *pragya* and advancement of *Bodhisattva.*The four noble truths, suffering exists, there is cause of suffering, and there are ways to end suffering. The idea of *Bodhisattva* provided me an important insight to explore school violence as it gives a positive hope for putting efforts to end violence.

Adolescent students' experiences of violence are varied and it may be interpreted differently in different culture and context. In social reality, the meaning and truth are socially constructed. Specifically on the violence as a social issue, the Nordstrom and Robbens (1996) argued that violence is a socially and culturally constructed and manifested dimension of human existence. I used interpretive perspective so that I can consider the voice and stories of diverse participants.

I wanted to observe school's everyday life and engage with adolescents having diverse cultural backgrounds, including teachers and parents. The aim of this engagement was to gain in-depth cultural interpretation of what I observed, heard and reflected in the field, and to be able to make meaning from the observed and heard subjective realities. Subjective knowledge can be co-constructed through interaction between and among participants in the historical and lived context (Scotland, 2012). In this study, the participants worked with me as co-researchers and hence this

knowledge product is the co-creation of me and my participants. Wolcott (1990) mentioned that constructionist views culture as dynamically constructed but individually negotiated. I negotiated with students based my and student's mutual interest, understanding and availability to engage with this study.

This research process was empowering to me and the participants. It was empowering because, through the research process, the participants and I were able to tell some of the untold stories, and share their hidden sufferings of violence. Similarly, the research process for some of my co-researchers was a healing experience as this process provided them with a chance to release their past pains, feelings and trauma of violence.

I was a new member in the selected schools and therefore my presence has influenced the co-researchers' behaviour and the school's culture also influenced my thinking and understanding about school violence. Nolen, Ward, and Horn (2011) argued that the new identity could be a powerful motive for the students to engage with researchers. However, in this study, such identity was not always helpful as students started gossiping among themselves saying *Naya Sir Aayo* - 'new sir came'. For students, I was a male teacher, a teacher-like person, an educated, person with higher status than the students. In School-3, in the initial stage of my engagement, some of the Madheshi students and teachers were less interested to participate in my formal/informal discussions. One of the reasons of this low interest could be my identity as a 'Pahade Researcher', my limited competency to speak local language, and age difference. With prolonged engagement, I could minimise these challenges. In qualitative research, researchers primarily decide research issue, field, and participants based on their personal values and belief (Scotland, 2012). My

engagement with the adolescents, in the word of Furrer and Skinner (2003), was active, "goal-directed, flexible and persistent" (p.149).

Since the preparation of my ethnographic fieldwork, I was prepared to engage with the school culture and interpret my observations and transcriptions on the basis of context and culture as I was exploring school violence from a cultural perspective. Though the schools I engaged in during my fieldwork were in the Terai, but each of the schools had somehow diverse de facto rules, norms and practices. In such diversity, I also encountered different unexpected incidences. Green, Skukauskaite, and Baker (2012) argued that ethnography itself is an epistemology, through which ethnographers confront with something that does not go as expected. Such unexpected points are rich for the ethnographers who strive to shift the view to the participants, the insiders. Guba and Lincoln (1994) argued that epistemology determines the nature of relationships between the researcher and the participants. I engaged with the participants; the adolescents coming from multi-cultural context. Epistemology is a theory of knowledge construction based on the researcher's ontological position. Saldana (2015) mentioned that "the epistemology you use is uniquely your own" (p.6). Participants influenced my research worldviews that was set before the fieldwork.' Creswell (2011) argued that the researcher aims to make sense of the meanings from the participants' worldviews. Therefore, diverse culture and the field context influenced my ethnographic fieldwork.

I applied the interpretive research paradigm to understand and co-construct the meaning of school violence. It was essential to go out there in the field and understand the phenomenon from peoples' natural life world. Constructivism is a meta-perspective in which "much human activity is devoted to ordering processes - the organizational patterning of experience. These ordering processes are fundamentally

emotional, tacit, and categorical (they depend on contrasts), and they are the essence of meaning-making"(Mahoney & Granvold, 2005, p. 72). The constructivist idea helped me to interpret the material and non-material culture, phenomenon, ideals, symbols, gestures and interactions. I was conscious that the adolescent students develop meaning(s) from their everyday interactions.

In my research, understanding multiple perspectives of different communities with their different cultural background was important. For this, I contacted a local Madheshi leader living nearby the highway and found some helpful local leaders. This strategy was taken in addition to giving priority to the Mhadeshi students' spoken and unspoken voices in my research. I found that this strategy was useful but I had to do some extra efforts to get the Madheshi students' trust. I used the dialogical approach of data generation and thus the interviews were less structured. I also used reflexivity and critical approach to gain in depth understanding of school violence. Clarke (2010) reaffirmed that the ethnographic research can capture complexities of all forms of violence through which a number of lessons can be learned and ethnographers can give voice to the oppressed. In schools, voice of the students including the othered can be heard as it can trace the spoken and unspoken experiences of the students.

On the basis of my philosophical approach, as an interpretivist, I used constructive paradigms to understand school violence. On the basis of my ontological and epistemological orientations; I used the multi-cited ethnographic research method in this study.

As a supplementary approach, I used critical worldview based on the idea of 'othering' that helped me to understand the unequal power relationships and the subjective constructions of peoples mediated by such power dynamics (Carspecken,

1996). This critical approach was useful to analyze violence affected students' pains and unequal distribution of violence among different categories of students. It helped me to analyze students' experiences of school violence, particularly the experiences of disadvantaged, excluded and other deprived (Taylor & Medina, 2011). I used the idea of cultural violence, othering and the perspective of 'the one who is weak are more at risk of violence' to analyze the cultural facets of school violence.

Methodological Approaches

After setting my epistemic orientation, I applied ethnographic research approach to attain my research purpose. I applied five criteria to decide on the research method essential to contribute my research purpose and research questions.

First, the method should have enough flexibility in the research process so that I could quickly navigate from one approach to another. The flexible ethnography allowed me to be able to understand the complex school culture (Thappen, 2014) to be a sensitive researcher (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007), enabled me to work in covert and overt violent contexts (Robben & Nordstorm, 1995), and empowered me and my participants to engage in a critical dialogical enquiry (Clarke, 2010). In addition, in case of inability to continue research in one site, I needed alternative site for the fieldwork. Hence, I initially selected five schools for my fieldwork applying the multi site ethnography. Opportunity to use school's contextual and cultural perspectives was the second essential feature required to respond to my research questions. The multi site ethnography is not new concept, challenging the ethnography as 'being there' to 'being there....and there...and there (Hannerz, 2003). The multi sited ethnography is more suitable, and necessary to work in a fragile and unpredictable setting, as it provides flexibility to the ethnographer.

Third, due to the fragile context in the field in general and violent political context in particular, I was looking for a methodology that allowed using multiple flexible methods. I required a research approach that could deal with diversity and multicultural contexts in school (Eisenbraun, 2007). Thapan (2014) argued that the ethnography is the most suitable methodological approach to understand the roles of religion, gender, and prevailing social and political forces, as categories that shape student activity in which it is helpful for making meaning of students' everyday life in school (p.13). Ethnography mainly uses the cultural perspective as a meaning making process. Fourth, the research methodology should recognize the importance of safety, privacy and conflict sensitivity approach of the participants. Fifth, I was looking for a method that allowed me for reflective thinking and writing.

On the basis of the aforesaid five essential features, I selected ethnographic research approach for my study, so that my methodology could be flexible, dynamic, conflict sensitive, contextual, and reflexive. In addition, I included some elements of 'ethnography' that is suitable to work in a violent context.

Study Participants and Sites

This study has exposed an 'alarming' situation of school violence in Nepal. It is important to note, due to the specific field context during my fieldwork: post-earthquake chaos, active political violence and economic blocked in Nepal-India boarder; the findings of this study should not be generalised. As ethnographic study, generalisation of the results is not the intended goal of this study. However, this study more-or-less represents the prevalence of visible and invisible forms of violence: the structural and cultural roots of school violence.

I prepared an interview protocol, with some key concerns/questions that I needed to discuss with participants during the ethnographic engagement in the field.

The field, Kapilvastu and Sundari districts, located in the mid-western and eastern Terai regions of Nepal. Cultural diversity was one of the reasons. In addition, these districts were selected based on their exposure to natural and human-led emergencies (flood and riot). I was involved in a post-riot peace-education program in 2007; I trained teachers to foster tolerance and non-violence conflict management tools for riot affected schools. My past experience was very helpful to establish rapport and gain confident to engage in the field.

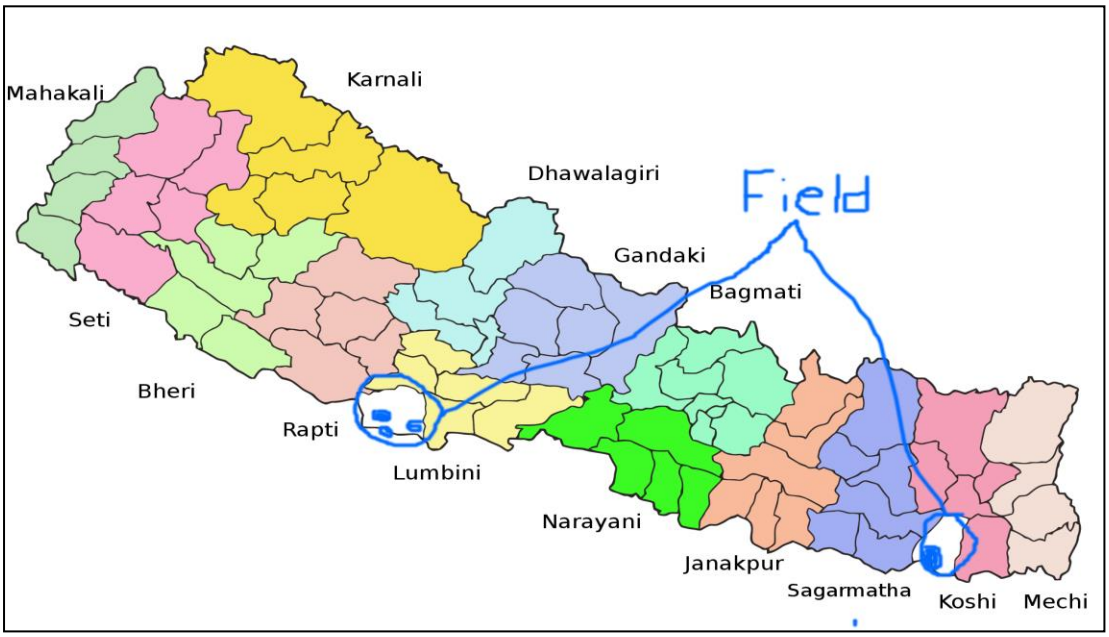

Figure 2: Selected districts for field work in Nepal's map

I recognized the existence of multiple contradictions and conflicts between and among Hindus and Muslims; between Maoist insurgents and anti Maoists (e.g., state supported local landlords); and land disputes between local Madheshi and Pahade (Bhandari, 2008). In 2007, when a local Muslim landlord was killed by an unidentified group, these contradictions sparked a violent riot in Kapilvastu which, killed 14 people, 22 were injured, and thousands were displaced (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2007). A few days of the riot my office sent me to Kapilvastu for a mission to assess support required to the communities in post-riot

context and provide immediate peace education training to the riot-affected teachers. In that mission I observed fear and trauma among the teachers who had witnessed and/or heard horrible stories of violence.

Similarly, I also had some past experiences in Sunsari, the second study district. In 2008, I visited Sunsari to assess the psychosocial and protection needs of 2008 Koshi River's flood affected children who were displaced and living in temporary camps and learning in temporary learning centers along the line of East-West Highway of Sunsari district of Nepal. In 2010, during my fieldwork for my Master's thesis, I again visited Sunsari and engaged with children and schools affected by the flood. The natural disaster and violent conflicts have made these districts fragile. Such fragility hinders the developmentally appropriate exposures at the pre-school and preadolescent phases of life and affects adolescents as well (Miller & Kraus, 2008). I wanted to understand how the adolescent students who are living in the fragile contexts of Sunsari and Kapilvastu were progressing in their schooling, and in particular, I was interested to understand their experience of school violence.

I had to carry out my fieldwork in schools with a multicultural population so that my study would capture Nepal's multicultural realities. The selected field locations have a significant number of Muslim and Hindu religious groups, as well as indigenous Tharu, Awadhi and Maithali language communities; and economically poor as well as less poor settlements; and rural and urban communities. Diversity in terms of religion, language, and ethnicity; experiences of traumatic events, like natural or human made emergencies; and my exposure and memories were the key drivers in my selection of the field. Nepali people are experiencing discrimination based on gender, caste, religion, indignity and race. Discrimination based on newly emerging identities such as the Madheshi speaking populations of the southern plain

of Nepal, being a group of Hindu Maithil, Awadhi, and Bhojpuri castes (Hachhethu, 2007) and Pahade's has increased over the last decade.

The Terai comprises 20 districts of Nepal with 17 percent of the geography and 50.27 per cent populations (Pahade 39.86 percent, Madheshi 38.71 percent, Tharu 12.64 percent and Muslim 8.32 percent (CBS, 2012). The Terai and Madhesh are often used synonymously; however, Terai primarily represents the geography of Nepal's southern plains whereas Madhesh represents the identity of Madheshi – the majority of the people living in Terai. The socio-political and cultural context in Terai is more diverse in compare with 48 percent population living in over 80 percent hilly region of Nepal. Due to increased population density, available of fertile land and increased urbanization, 15 plain land of Nepal, the Terai a center of attention for politics as well as conflict. I entered in the field in such a challenging context.

Entering in the Fragile Context of Terai

A week before the beginning of my ethnographic fieldwork, Nepali political parties declared the long awaited Constitution in 2015. Unfortunately, the promulgation of the Constitution also faced a six-month (From September 2015 to February 2016) long violent political resistance from number of the Terai based political parties. Over five dozens of people, including security personnel were killed and thousands were hurt during the movement (Lawoti, 2016). As a result of the protests, there was a short supply of essential food, fuel, cooking gas and transportation in Nepal. From these protests Terai was more affected than other parts of Nepal. My first day's field note gives a sense of my understanding about the field.

> Leaving home was not an easy job. It is because, together with home, I had to leave my comfort, family, society, community, routine, safety and predictability. Today, I left home expecting to get some of the answers to my

> research questions. A few weeks ago, I left my job for this fieldwork and now I left my 2 year's boy, 82 year's father, my elder son, wife and mother back home. I already started missing them, particularly my 2 year's little son.(Field Note: 28 September, 2015**)**

I felt and encountered with a number of risks and challenges while travelling and working in the field. Fieldwork was stressful due to the ongoing violent protests in the field. In the meantime, India imposed an undeclared blockade to Nepal and blocked essential supplies in Nepal-India boarder. This blockade was to extend support to the Madheshi to their anti-constitution movement for political cultural reasons (Ghimire, 2017) caused serious consequences in everyday life in Nepal. The effects of the blocked and the protest were also overtly visible in Kapilvastu and Sunsari districts. There was an acute fuel shortage in the market. Thus, a few vehicles were flying on the roads. Similarly, the protesters vandalized a large number of buses; hence a quite a few buses were running on the highways with limited police escorts. In this context, the majority of the schools were closed in Terai due to the fear of the ongoing political violence.

Kapilvastu Context

I selected Kapilvastu district for my fieldwork, but I also needed consent from the District Education Office and school authority to start my fieldwork. Further, I had to identify my focused field location; school; co-researchers; place to stay (room) for the fieldwork. I begin my journey from Kathmandu with many uncertainties but my past experiences of working in violent context, during the Maoist armed insurgency, was very useful. Morrell (2002) argued that, to operate in the field, it is good to have good understanding of the context.

The first day of my fieldwork, I started a 7 kilometers long walk from my room to the first school expecting to start my ethnographic engagement. My former colleagues living in Kapilvastu accepted me to be their guest for few days. I noticed a high number of Tharu population living around my neighborhood; whereas most of the Hill originated or the Pahade were living in the market centers and along the Mahendra Highway. The Madheshi communities concentrated to the southern part of the highway and expanded up to the Nepal-India boarder.

The most salient feature of Nepali society in Terai is categorizing the hill people as Pahade (including high mountain population) and the Madheshi who inhibit the low-lying Terai region (McDonald& Vaughn, 2013). However, the term Madheshi is politically contested. Actually, there are two highly contested interpretations about the Madheshi: First Madhesh as a geographical location, all people living in Madhesh (Terai) are Madheshies; Second, Madhesh as a nation, an identity of the people associated with the plains Hindu castes of Maithali- and Bhojpuri-speaking populations. On the issue of Madheshi identity, Madheshi political parties formed alliances and led major political protests in the Terai in 2007 (Upreti, Paudel, & Ghimire, 2013) and in 2015-16. The active political protests that often converted into violent protest made my study setting overtly fragile.

I found four broad cultures in the Terai: *Pahade Parampara*, *Tharu Chalan*, *Muslim Religion* and *Madheshi Chalan* representing the four major population groups in the Terai. As recognized by the participants, I used the term *Pahade* to represent the hill originated people and culture. These cultures or communities are not homogenous rather they have intra-cultural diversities and hierarchies. For practical reasons, I concentrated to these four cultures during my ethnographic field work.

The first school was located between two police camps and therefore experiencing less or no *Banda* from the political and other forms of strikes. While many of the other schools were closed during the first few weeks of my fieldwork, the first school was smoothly running. A large majority of Tharu and Pahade students were studying in School-1 but only one Madheshi teacher was there. One Madheshi girl of grade 12 in the same school found fluent in Nepali language, assimilated with Pahade communities, and hardly able to speak Awadhi. She stated, "My family is the only Madheshi in the middle of Pahade community, there are little differences between our and Pahade cultures, but the Madheshi living in the south are more traditional" (Field note: 1 October 2015).

After few weeks of the fieldwork in the first school, I selected second school located about 10 kilometers south from the first school. Two of those schools were located south from the Mahendra Highway, with the majority of students from the Madheshi and Tharu communities. In this school, the number of Pahade students was less than 40 percent. Each of the Pahade, Muslim and Madheshi students were almost about 30 percent each in School-3. This shows the cultural diversity in the selected schools.

Kapilvastu had a number of incidences of violent clashes in the past. The Year 2007 riot was one of the most recent cases of such violence. In 2007, as the result of the communal violence, total 14 people were killed; more than 300 buildings were damaged or destroyed, including five mosques and 200 houses and the violence spilled over to two other neighboring districts where individual households, and mosques were vandalised and many people were displaced (Bhandari, 2008). The situation in Kapilvastu district was also violent. Unfortunately, Kapilvastu continued

facing the incidences of political violence including blockade, band/general strikes, and vandalism. These violent incidences had been directly affecting the education.

A large majority of schools were closed (except few schools located near the East-West Highway); a number of students and teachers were also taking part in the ongoing protests; and violent protests were reported in the everyday news; and importantly things were not predictable. Indian blocked in Nepal-India boarder was additional contributor to the existing fragility in the schools. My field note reads,

> Every public bus from the Terai are now carrying petroleum like cooking gas, petrol, diesel and other inflammable fuel. Therefore, travelling by bus is very dangerous. Police and administration is not in a position to monitor this situation. (Field Note, 18 December 2017)

After a few days of my arrival to my home from Kapilvastu with 10 liters of petrol, similar passenger's bus carrying large number of jerry canes of petrol and cooking gas cylinders caught into fire and a number of passengers were killed. However, I survived because luckily, I did not come across with any such incidences.

Sunsari Context

I selected the fourth and the fifth schools in Sunsari District so that I could get some more perspectives and to get some comparative analysis of two different settings. Fourth school in Sunsari was near the Indian border with approximately50 percent Madheshi populations, 20 percent Muslim, about 25 percent Tharu and a very small number of Pahade students. Almost all the students speak Maithali as their mother tongue. A few Pahade students studying in this school were also able to speak Maithali, and very much adapted to the local culture like *Chhatth*, *Jitiya*, *Faghu* among others. The other three schools were near the East-West Highway, with students from diverse communities including Pahade including Brahmin, Chhetri,

Janajati, and hill *Dalits*; Tharu, Muslim, and Madheshi including Yadav, Mishra, Jha, Mahato, and Terai *Dalits* like Musahar. See appendix -II for detailed population, mother tongue and religion of the Terai region.

Like in Kapilvastu, because of the continued violent political protests, the security situation of Sunsari District was also fragile. The political protests were more concentrated in the Central Terai districts. Due to the prolonged protest and school closure, the protesters faced criticism from stakeholders for denying children's rights to education. As a result of high criticism from various stakeholders during the fieldwork, the protesting parties decided to let the schools open in the morning shift so that they could continue their political protest in the afternoon.

There were many similarities between Sunsari and Kapilvastu district contexts. Both districts have high numbers of indigenous Tharu, Muslim and Madheshi followed by Pahade. Both districts had a recent history of violent clashes between the religious (Hindu and Muslim) and the racial (Pahade and Madheshi) groups. The ongoing Madheshi Alliance's protest was concentrated in the central Terai region rather than in Kapilvastu and Sunsari. These two districts were moderately affected by the 2015-16 violent protests as the central Terai Districts were most affected from such protests. The violent protests were concentrated in some of the market centers, and in district headquarters. The protests often turned into violent clashes between the police and the protesters making the context insecure to me, the students and the teachers. This situation contributed to make the study context highly fragile because of the state of 2015 Earthquakes led emergency situation and the political violence in the Terai.

I had to consider and understand the culture and the context, but my study was concentrated in the schools' setting. The four major cultures, namely Madheshi,

Muslim, Tharu and Pahade, interacted in school as the students, teachers, and parents bring in their culture to schools. Hence, my study did not aim to make an in-depth narrative of all cultural aspects observed in the school. Rather, this study was mainly concentrated on understanding school violence in school culture. In addition to the overt violent context, students were also experiencing lived covert, structural and cultural violence at their homes and schools. Exploitation and discrimination, early marriage, gender based discrimination are serious issues in the Madhesh mainly among intra-Madeshi communities. Upretiet al. (2013) presented that the Madheshi upper caste, middle caste and *Dalits*' human development index (HDI) were 0.625, 0.450 and 0.383 respectively. Such high disparity in the society towards a specific section of social group is structural violence (Galtung, 1969). Though inter-racial (Pahade and Madheshi) conflict and violence was politicized and made a common discourse in the field, the intra-racial violence is deeper. Explaining this situation, a Madheshi teacher in Sunsari mentioned, "In Madhesh, big fishes are eating small fishes. The high class dominates the low class. The current protest is against the Pahade domination in Madhesh, but there is no one to fight against the Madheshi elite's domination" (Field note, 11 January, 2016).

While the Madeshi teacher was saying 'the other', he was referring to Terai *Dalits*, as the human development index of the Terai dalit was almost half of the high class and high caste Madeshi elites (United Nations Development Programme, 2016). In one hand, the ongoing political violence kept schools under the shadow of threat and insecurity. On the other hand, many students were experiencing discrimination, abuse and exploitations based on gender, caste, religion, class and others in schools. Thus, the study population was the adolescent students living in the violent and the fragile school setting.

Research Participants

In this study, I selected adolescent students as the focused study population. Students are central to school as some of them may gain and others may lose (Thapan, 2014). I selected adolescents as study population because they are more exposed to serious types of violence (Estevez et al., 2008) and their dropout rate is higher than lower age groups (Poyck, Koirala, Aryal, & Sharma, 2016) in Nepal.

I engaged with a total of 220 participants including 169 participants in 24 in-depth group discussions; and interviewed 51 participants (34 minutes on an average). Out of the total participants, a large majority (194) were adolescents, 26 parents, 16 teachers, and 10 other stakeholders including School Management Committee (SMC) members, and District Education Office (DEO) staff. Over half of them were girls/women as the number of girl students was higher than boys in all selected schools. To get a broader picture of school violence, besides the fieldwork, I collected over 50 school violence related news and stories published in print and online media. Of the selected 194 adolescents, I deeply engaged with and influenced by the following key participants:

Vaisali- (13): A smart and good looking indigenous girl of grade seven from Kapilvastu. She was open, talkative, trying to give positive impression about her. She shared her experience of being sexually harassed by a teacher.

Indra- (19): A visually impaired Madheshi boy of grade eight who was active and wanted to be a singer. He shared how he had been experiencing physical punishment in school in Kapilvastu and neglect from his family members. He was blamed for being involved in sexual harassment against a visually impaired girl.

Om- (16): A bold Pahade boy of grade 10, living in the Tharu and Madheshi dominated area of Kapilvastu, was concerned about Pahade community's increased

insecurity. He wanted to join the Indian or Nepal Army after completing high school. He was feeling insecure due to his involvement in the Madheshi-Pahade fight.

Emani- (16): Emani is a Muslim girl, studying in grade ten in Kapilvastu. She was open, active and often participating in extra activities organized by the school. Her father and brother wanted her to leave school; her neighbours blamed and talked bad things about her saying that she was not observing the Islamic culture. She believed that girls are also responsible for inviting sexual violence and stressed that *Himmat* or courage as a prerequisite to fight against violence.

Nisa- (18): Nisa is an eighth grader Madeshi Dalit girl in Sunsari, who preferred to sit on the last bench. She was passive in her class but active when the teachers were away. She categorized herself as a *Bhuskul* (very poor in study and dumb), was from Maithali speaking community and weak in the Nepali language. She aimed to study up to grade 10 (*no hope to pass the SEE*) and marry.

Sima-(16): Sima is a Madheshi girl studying in Grade 10 of Sunsari district. She was also the president of a child club for some years. She recognized that Madheshi girls had to experience many cultural barriers at home and at school. She had no family support to continue her education but a teacher was helping her with some support for education.

Engaging in the Field

During the design phase of this study, the violent political protest was not anticipated. Therefore, this study was focused on cultural aspects of school violence, and less on political violence. Similarly, it was challenging to carry out fieldwork in a fragile setting. The immediate situation was changing all the time and thus 'unpredictability' was the key characteristic of the field setting. I approached the field in four phases: entry, rapport building, engaging and exit.

I went to a school with the support of one of my personal contacts. I met my contact, a sister of my former colleague, in the school. She introduced me to the Assistant Head teacher. After the brief introduction I explained to him my needs, presented the letter from my University, and gave a reference of verbal consent for cooperation from District Education Officer (DEO). I prepared my talking points, practiced twice before going to the school so that I can answer some of the possible difficult questions. In addition, I also offered them some voluntary help to cover some classes when needed. My university's letter and DEO's reference and my explanation about my research approach played a key role to get approval to engage in the School-1. It took three days to gain 'Yes' to carry out my ethnography in the first school. When the Head teacher approved my request, I requested him to nominate a focal teacher for everyday contact and engagement. The Head teacher assigned a focal teacher in four schools whereas in School-3, the Head teacher himself coordinated for my research activities with other teachers.

My efforts for systematic entry into the school not only increased my confidence to work in the new and challenging context, but also grounded my role as an ethnographer in the new culture. These efforts helped me to gain easy access to the classrooms, enabled me to engage with students and participate in school's everyday life. In the first school, students started watching me with care, but they perceived me as a new teacher in their school. I took a few classes informally when teachers were absent, talked with the students and engaged better. However, after a week, I realized that the power hierarchy of teacher and students created some barriers to have in-depth engagement with the students and gain their insider's view. Their perception towards me 'as a new teacher' was obstructing our conversation when the students started talking about their teachers' behaviour like sexual harassment, abuse and

corporal punishment. To overcome this chellange, I changed my role as a student coming from Kathmandu, so that the students could distinguish me with their new teacher and share their stories and experiences openly. I used this role in the remaining part of my fieldwork.

Rapport Building and Engagement

It was impossible to get the insider's view without building good rapport with students, teachers and other stakeholders. Dickson-Swift et al. (2007) discussed how to get access to the private space of the research participants. Getting access to the private view of the research participants was a privilege. However, getting into in-depth stories of the participants who are victims of violence is often challenging. Describing the characteristics of the participants, Parajuli (2007) highlighted that the illiterate, not much exposed to the outside world, and the women, poor, and low caste – *the others* generally decline to participate in research.

After building good rapport with the focal teacher in School-1, I introduced myself as one of the writers in the 'Teacher Magazine' which was found to be a popular magazine among the teachers in the field. This identity helped me to engage in serious discussions with the teachers as many of them recognized me as an author of the article that they liked.

I engaged in the field with many uncertainties and chaos. Van Maanen (2011) argued that fieldwork is like "learning to move among strangers-while holding themselves in readiness for episodes of embarrassment, affection, misfortune, partial or vague revelation, deceit, confusion, isolation, warmth, adventure, fear, concealment, pleasure, surprise, insult, and always possible deportation" (p.2). In many cases, my experiences were useful in the field.

I engaged in staff room, head teacher's room, classrooms, vacant/unused rooms, playground, cafeteria, and nearby communities. I found school's unused rooms, and canteen or cafeteria as important space/locations to interact with the adolescents and also trace some of the important symbols and practices of school violence. Similarly, staff room was another rich source of information because teachers spent a considerable amount of their leisure time in this room and some students involved in violent activities (rule-breakers) were also brought into the staff room. There, I observed teachers' actions, 'moods', characters, and likely prospects, and teachers' attitudes (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007, p.99). Further, the study setting provided me with a challenging setting to have in-depth and lived experience of violence while carrying out the fieldwork on school violence.

I used transformative dialogical approach of discussion in my research. In such process, when students shared their experiences of being victims of sexual and other forms of violence, I probed a bit more to help them think about possible alternatives and hope. While participating in everyday activities in school, some students may gain some may lose, some lives may be transformed, others may remain unchanged (Thapan, 2014, p.11). My field engagement aimed to understand some of the stories of pains and gains of students. In addition to the adolescent students, I also engaged with other stakeholders to have wider understanding of school violence. The major stakeholders participated in this study were school teachers, school-based child club representatives, parents, School Management Committee representatives, district and resource centre level education officials, police, and political leaders.

Exploring and Encountering With Stories of School Violence

Prolonged fieldwork was essential to understand the complexity of violence embedded in the school context and culture. Nordstrom and Robben (1995) argued

that the emotional intensity of the events and political and cultural division between participants can increase the perceived risks to the ethnographer. Due to the fragile and insecure context, the use of traditional ethnographic approach of living for a prolonged period of time became challenging and often counterproductive to me as it could trigger covert violence in school. However, I had to deal with such challenges.

I captured the impressions, scenes, and experiences of the field, which play key roles in making sense of realities, that are far too numerous to capture from careful participant listening (Ottenberg, 1990, as cited in Wall, 2008). Thus, informal observation provided me with in-depth understanding of indigenous social realities. When I was in the field, I observed the adolescent students' activities all the time. The informal observation helped me to make overall images of the context.

I used a range of strategies like organizing group discussions, classroom interactions, and pair-interviews. To guide my initial discussions, I prepared semi-structured interview guidelines, but gradually I engaged in open and natural dialogue. I spent a number of hours in the walk and talk process while they were returning home from school, and engaged with them in chatting during the breaks. Due to the sensitivity of the context, ongoing protest, strikes and uncertainty, I moved from one school to the other, friquently changed my plan. I carried out the interviews in open space – on the school's ground- mainly with adolescent girls, not approached them when they were alone to avoid individual risk and to respect the culture. I was culturally sensitive when discussing with the Muslim and Madheshi adolescent girls in terms of the use of language, seating arrangement for interview, and allowing two individuals to sit together while coming for the interview.

Exits From the Field

My exit from the field in three schools was unorganized and unplanned due to the sudden changes in the field context like strike, exam, and the Hindu religious story telling program called *Saptaha*, a seven day ritual of Hindu religion. From the last school, I had to rush back to my home because of my father's critical health condition whose soul departed towards the end of my fieldwork. However, this situation did not have any major negative impact on the thickness of my ethnographic description since my personal experiences were also part of the study.

I engaged in the field to understand deeper cultural roots of school violence, but initially, I started with a simple question of 'Have you heard the word 'violence'?' Different words are used that is similar to violence. Violence is *Maral (Physical assault)* for Tharu and Awadhi speaking students; *Himsa* for Pahade or the Nepali speaking students. However, these words do not fully represent the everydayness of violence in school e.g. corporal punishment, teasing or bullying. I wanted to understand physical aspect of violence which is represented by the local term, *Maral* and *Himsa.* My exposure to the overt violent context and school's multicultural context and student's experiences to structural and direct forms of violence guided me to use the ethnographic approach. In this process, I realised for the use of a new ethnographic approach that is suitable to study school violence in a violent context.

Realizing the Need of Ethnography of School Violence

In the field, I felt a number of risks including being wounded while travelling by night bus where protesters often vandalized the buses, attacked by Madheshi group as some of the protesters perceived me as researcher from Kathmandu, an anti-Madheshi agent, and some Madheshi youth also threatened me, they called it advice for my personal safety, to leave the field. In this situation, I applied the ethnography

of violence, using participatory and non-participatory observation methods, and unrecorded and informal conversations; assured and re-assured the participant's about the measures that I use to maintain confidentiality and the broader purpose of the study. The dialogical approach of my engagement was eclectic, particularly exploratory, empathetic, and transformative.

Ethnographic research approach is a broad and flexible process. Ethnography is an epistemology (Green et al., 2012), a research methodology and a research approach. There is no simple and single definition of ethnography (Atkenson & Hammersley, 2007). I needed a research approach that could capture detailed and in-depth description of everyday life practices of students (Hoey, 2014). Highlighting some of the key characteristics of this research approach, O'Reilly (2005) mentioned that ethnography produces a richly written account that respects the human experiences and acknowledges the role of researchers.

This definition indicates that the ethnographic process provides researchers a space to express their views in the research. Atkinson and Hammersley (2007) argued that reflexivity is a major contribution of ethnography which is important for the interpretive as well as constructive paradigm and also relevant for positivist researchers. In addition, the ethnographers get opportunities to gather information that are normally hidden from the public gaze (Reeves, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008). The critical ethnography help researcher and the participants to think and work against the oppressive social and cultural constraints like violence.

Ethnographic design provided me with flexibility and opportunities to be part of school's everyday life. For O'Reilly (2005), ethnography encompasses, "...watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions and producing a richly written account that respects the irreducibility of human experiences" (p.3).

This description demonstrates that ethnography is a simple and fascinating research approach because of its freedom to watch, listen and discuss and participate in everyday life and cultural lifeworld in the field. Similarly, this approach allows researcher to listen, observe and engage with self (ethnographer) as well. While listening to and observing participants, in the word of Van Maanen (2011), the researcher has to be ready to move among strangers to be embarrassed, confused, isolated, afraid, and insulted than feeling pleasure. I had to experience and listen to the 'lived stories of violence' and make meaning from those stories of the adolescents who lived in a violent context. I am not competent to apply cartoons and comics, the Lone Ethnography (Lapegna, 2009). As Willoughby (2016) suggested, I applied multi-sited ethnography with selecting five schools and concentrated in the two schools where students and teachers showed more interest to participate in this study. As Hannerz (2003) mentioned, the ethnography is "an art of the possible"(p.213), I applied ethnography as an art making it suitable to the setting.

Doing Ethnography of School Violence

School ethnography is different from traditional ethnographic approach because the culture in school is different from the culture in general. Litchman (2013) argued that ethnography in school can be done in a short period of time due to its limited dynamics cultural space. However, I do not agree that a short period of time is always enough to undertake school ethnography, as short time might not be sufficient to understand the complexities of the school culture. A school culture refers to its set norms, values, beliefs, rituals and stories, which can be both written and unwritten and developed over the time with the contribution from different stakeholders, including teachers and students (Peterson, 2002). Short time is therefore insufficient especially when the context is violent and ethnographer is new to the

setting. Therefore, ethnographers need to be engaged in school for a longer period of time in the context to get a thick description of information.

A number of important risk factors were associated while engaging in the field for six months. McLaren (1992, as cited in Carspecken, 1996, p. 170) argued that ethnographers should be ready to be 'wounded' in the field. I understood this idea in the sense that the researchers are forced to change their everyday habits and comfort in the field and forced to compromise their personal and emotional safety. While carrying out the ethnographic fieldwork for this study, I was prepared to be wounded both physically and mentally. My friends, colleagues and family members were worried about the ongoing violent context in the field. Two of my colleagues, the PhD candidates decided to change their field location due to the violent context in the Terai and earthquakes. However, I decided to go to the field despite the ongoing violent political protest, and maybe I was ready to be wounded, if not, I was ready to take some risks in the field. On this, I was consciously thinking and writing about the risks perceived in the field.

> I prepared to face difficulties and discomfort while travelling to the eastern Terai in mid-December 2015 as the political protesters were obstructing East-West Highway and vandalizing buses, throwing stones in the running buses, setting the running buses on fire were common violent techniques they were using. Many buses were damaged and hundreds of passengers were injured in the violent protest. Travelling was very risky. (Field note, 24 December 2015)

I resonate with Carspecken (1996) who argued that being 'wounded' means more empowering as it will help us to broaden our horizons, and help us to grow as human being (p.170). To cope with the context, I kept myself informed of the situation through the local contacts and media, was ready to change my plan,

remained in touch with the local police station, and frequently received updates from the focal teachers.

I was ready to experience violence in the field as Bornstein (2002) mentioned that the ethnographers cannot easily escape from the everyday violence in the field. Furthermore, the ethnographers need individual strengths as well as firm family support and reliable institutional back up. Ability to speak the students' language; careful eyes to understand symbols, words, gestures rooted in school's routine; prior knowledge and experience of working in school and violent context were extremely helpful. Participants' and my safety, dealing with my identity (race), unpredictability, knowledge of local language, past experience of working in similar context, use of transformative approach, researcher's emotional strengths were critical to this ethnography of school violence.

Listening to the victims and the wounded people is an important means of responding to the spoken and unspoken pains, trauma and emotions. Buckley-Zistel (2007) further argued that ethnographers need support from the institution as they have to face ethical and emotional challenges, especially in the fragile field setting. I wanted some support from my supervisors related to my physical and emotional well being like: advice to take frequent breaks from the field; counseling session after completion of the long fieldwork. During my fieldwork in active violent settings, due to the spatial differences, I could get limited access to support and guidance from my supervisors.

I could not find any single research method that could fully guide me to answer my research questions. Nordstrom and Robben (1995) developed a foundation of 'ethnography of violence' arguing for a need of a different approach of ethnography while carrying out fieldwork in conflict and ongoing violent contexts (p.4). During the

course of understanding violence, various changes took place in the context. Like power, violence is always a contested issue; therefore ethnographers need to understand the contested issues between actors and institutions. Similarly, other noted ethnographic works like "*Can the Subaltern Speak*" of Spivak (1988) and 'Death without weeping: The violence of everyday life in Northern Brazil' of Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992) prepared solid foundations of ethnography of violence. I used the following considerations during my ethnographic journey for my and the participants' safety.

Participants' and My Physical Safety

Safety was the most serious concern during my fieldwork. In a qualitative research, participants' concern for not putting them at risks and providing respect are common research ethics. It is one of the five quality criteria used by Atkinson and Hammersley (2007). Multiple safeguards for informants and confidentiality are major ethical concerns in a qualitative research (Scacco, 2010, as cited in Thaler, 2011). There was no formula for safeguarding the participants and me. I was honest but often also tried to hide my fear and sense of insecurity while discussing with my participants. In one instance, a girl shared a case of her friend being sexually abused. While sharing this story she was making sure that this story would be confidential. Another day, she mentioned that she was still not confident whether her sensitive story would remain confidential. This shows the difficulties, dilemma, and stress the participants face after sharing their sensitive stories with researchers. I had to reassure about my ethical code of keeping their stories confidential.

My safety was also an equally important concern during the field trip. Travelling on a public bus with tons of fuel was one of such safety concerns. I felt unsafe while travelling from one school during a general strike because the protesters

were vandalizing the buses frequently. On top of that, local public buses were the major means of transporting petrol, kerosene, diesel and cooking gas. Almost all buses were full of petrol filled plastic gallons and gas cylinders while they were returning from the districts bordering India. This had already become a cause of death of a number of people when buses carrying fuel were inflamed. I applied some security measures in the field.

I used the public transportation which was risky during the fieldwork. It was because there were no other alternatives. During the protest, though the protesters announced a general strike, some vehicles were running with the police escort. For safety, I minimized the frequency of travel, paid more for secure hotels to avoid risks and avoided travel when it was dark. In the ethnographic process, I and participants' emotional safety was an important concern in the field.

Participants' and My Emotional Safety

For me, it was essential to make ethnographic research process sensitive to self and to the participants. Ethnographers had to take double roles where violence is embedded in everyday life and perpetrators actively participate in violence (Bourdieu&Jean-Claude, 1991). In initial discussion, Sangita, an eighth-grader Madheshi girl mentioned that her family members did not discriminate her. However, after series of informal conversations she contradicted with what she initially mentioned. She told, "I am not treated equally like my brother. My family expects to do all household chores, spent less money, use long sleeves dress and come home before dark (Field note January, 2016).

I could feel the pain and surprise when Sangita realized that she was discriminated in her family and more importantly she was actively supporting such discriminatory behaviour by not asking her parents and brother for equal treatment. I

am aware that, her awareness of being a ‘discriminated girl’ in her family could create tension in her family but this tension might be helpful if she started challenging the gender-based violence at her home. Thus, unpacking cultural violence like gender based discrimination and religious discrimination might initially exacerbate stakeholder’s tension as, this process increase their awareness of being discriminated, othered or victimized. I engaged in such dialogue consciously, as I realised the importance of ‘transformative dialogue’ in this research process.

In another case, during the ethnographic engagement, I come to a close contact with a teacher. During the interview, an adolescent girl mentioned that the same teacher was frequently abusing her in school. I was shocked. After listening to that story, I was not able to continue engaging with that teacher, could not sleep well for a few days. It was more painful when I was unable to protect my participant from the peretrator. I still feel bad about my limitation. I learned a lesson from this incidence that ethnographers should be ready to listen to some of the traumatic stories and tolerate and continue working with some of the dogmatic faces, liars, abusers, and criminals in the field. As an ethnographer, I had to deal with such nasty faces and situations in the field.

In a violent context, researchers can undergo emotional ups and downs in the field, and which might influence the research activities as well. This could be more severe in the fragile and violent fields. Brown (2011) suggested that the novice researchers should be provided with support to navigate their relationships in the field. Emotional exhaustion is an important characteristic of sensitive research like researching on violence. Sluka’s (1995) suggestions of not working like a spy and not asking sensitive questions in the initial stage of ethnography were useful. I had to play double roles: make ethnography sensitive to ‘self’ and to the ‘participants’.

Dealing With Unpredictability

Unpredictability was another concern while working in the violent context. I had to wait for long to catch a public bus, schools could be closed in a very short notice or without notice. It was not possible to avoid the everydayness of violence mainly the covert form and the situation of overt socio-political violence in the field. As argued by Bornestein (2002), the ethnographers cannot avoid everyday violence in the field. Thus, I had to live and work in a violent context. I was prepared to witness physical and psychological stress and fragilities such as use of students in political protest, naming students on the basis of their political association. Selection of multiple possible sites to deal with unpredictability was important strategies of the ethnographic fieldwork. It was more important because parties often called general strikes and force schools to close for certain periods of time. In such situations, it was necessary to select multiple schools so that I could have options for the fieldwork. In Kapilvastu, when other schools were closed, one of the schools selected for fieldwork was open as it was in the middle of two police stations.

Dealing With My Identity

In the field, my identity as a 'Pahade researcher' was one of the major barriers for building a good rapport with the Madheshi and Muslim students. Similarly, my little knowledge about Muslim religious texts like Koran and Hadith, limited ability to understand Tharu, Maithili and Awadhi languages were additional barriers for effective field engagement. Brown (2011) discussed how the researchers' race could influence the trust and relationships between the researcher and the participants.

I had a discussion on the security situation in Kapilvastu with three Madheshi youths. I asked them if I could go to the Madheshi majority area of the district for fieldwork. They were friendly before I asked this question, but when I asked this

question, they started being offended and told me that my presence could make the Madheshi community angry due to my Pahade identity and they could perceive me as a spy or an agent of the government. One of them asked, "How can you imagine going and carrying out research on violence when your community (Pahade) is oppressive and responsible for all forms of violence against the Madheshi people?" Dealing with my identity was important as it could ignite violence if locals take ethnographic research as a means of conspiracy or oppression. This shows the limitations and the kind of blame the ethnographers' encounter in the field. Hence, I partially agree with Spivak (1988) who argued that the ethnographers coming from the west hardly give voice to the locals.

Further, the majority of the stakeholder and teachers advised me not to go into the southern part of the Madhesh due to the possible security challenges. This was primarily because of my *Pahade* identity. This conversation forced me to re-think to visit some of the sensitive places for fieldwork. Despite these challenges, I made an utmost effort to deal with my identity as *Pahade*, as suggested by Brown (2011) who advised ethnographers to engage in the field, "to produce research that is socially relevant and trustworthy should not feel trepidation to do so because of fears about how the larger scholarly community will view them or their work" (p.109).

Similar question could be raised whether Pahade elite, a major oppressor in the Terai-Madhesh, can give any affirmative support to the Madheshi communities. Parajuli (2007) suggested researchers to adopt the strategy of showing themselves as to the local people through behaviour, language, attire, food, participation, use soft and polite language, work through gatekeeper, and go for a short preparatory field visit before starting the actual fieldwork. I considered these suggestions but, in school,

I was easily distinguishable because both students and teachers were wearing the school uniform.

I used self disclosure as one of the strategies to minimize my Pahade-identity-effect in my study. Therefore I self-disclosed my address and purpose of the study as self-disclosure is one of the important good practices in the qualitative research (O'reilly, 2005). Self disclosure was useful but sometimes it could compromise my personal security. During my fieldwork, it was difficult to decide which of my identity can be disclosed as ethnographer carries more than one identities in the field. I was often confused whether I should share research participants about my multiple identities i.e.a researcher, student, development worker, high caste, person from capital city Kathmandu, NGO activist, writer and so on – or not. On this, I relied on my personal judgment and used different identities with different stakeholders. With the Pahade, it was easy as they trusted me as an insider; however, I could not gain similar trust from the Muslim, Madheshi, and Tharu. Similarly, my identity as a university student was relatively neutral for students and teachers. I participated in the classroom teaching learning activities as an observer, attended in sports and other extracurricular activities, engaged in class discussions, carried out prolonged conversations with some of the key participants. This allowed me to experience school culture both as an insider and an outsider (Bhatti, 2011). My identity as insider and outsider was helpful to analyse the ethnographic narratives from the both perspectives.

Importance of Past Experience

My past experiences of being involved in the teaching field, experience of working in violent conflict affected communities, practicing peace education training and curriculum writing and teacher training were useful in the field and also in writing

process. My prior experiences of working in various violent contexts, ability to listen the stories of rape and sexual harassment, exposure to corporal punishment and discrimination helped me to cope with similar situations in the field.

Speaking Participants' Language

Language was not a barrier for my study because the participants were able to speak Nepali language and I was able to understand a minimum level of Maithali, Awadhi and Tharu languages. In school, Nepali was the means of instruction and the students had to study Nepali language as a compulsory subject. However, some communication gap was realized, especially at times while interacting with the students coming from the Islamic religious schools; students coming from primary schools located in the southern area of the Terai-Madhesh where the participants' hardly speak any other language than Maithali and Awadhi. In such a case, I spoke slowly, tried to get simple words, and asked help from the students who understood both Nepali and their mother language.

A number of ethical and quality concerns arose while researching on cultural violence in school. Is this the right thing to explore victim's painful experiences? Is this ethical to uncover the pain and stress and leave participants to deal with it without any support? How can an ethnographer give back to the participants who are affected by violence? To me, these questions were related to the research ethics and quality.

Ethical and Quality Concerns

The quality of 'sensitive research' largely depends upon how far the researcher is sensitive towards the research participants, researcher, and the subject matter. Sensitive research is the study of the issue that is stigmatized or deviant human activity or behaviour (Li, 2008). Such sensitivity increases when the context is sensitive to violence. I consider being ethical, sensitive, transformative and used

honest self-reflection as the major quality and ethical concerns. My values were guided from my local cosmology and cultural orientation.

The Hindu notion of 'Non violence is ultimate Dharma' and the Buddhist belief of 'There is end to suffering' are my principle ethical guidance in this study. In the course of this study, I consciously used the non-violent and, non-threatening engagement, and avoided every activity that creates trouble to the participants, and others. These values not only guided this study but, I have been internalizing these values as the core-value of my life. I deeply believe that, the suffering of violence can be ended if everybody internalizes the value of non-violence, and consciously use power against sin or the evil force in a responsible manner. With the guidance from these values, I used different strategies and techniques to maintain high ethical standards of this study. As perpetrator and victim of school violence, it was my moral and ethical dharma to work for non-violence, and find ways to end suffering.

In this study, I described the process and tools used in my study, presented my self-reflection, provided lived information with appropriate discussion to maintain quality of this study. Similarly, I triangulated information gathered from different schools so that the nature and complexity of violence is better understood.

Echoing with Wills and Trondman (2002), understanding and representation of experience of violence is empirically and theoretically central to this study. For this, I used reflexivity to acknowledge my reciprocal interaction and influenced the field; used first hand information to the possible extent and presented deeper feelings, values and beliefs of the research participants. As everyday life is unpredictable in conflict and violent contexts, my fieldwork and this report is inconclusive as it is lived (Harris, 2002). I went back to the research participants; listened to the interview records; called three of the participants and checked their opinion on my major

conclusions. Maintaining the anonymity is important in general but it is more important in sensitive research (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, P. (2007), and it is sensitive to carry out study on violence Nordstrom and Robben (1995). The adolescent girls and boys shared their stories of violent experiences like rape, sexual harassment, beating and bulling, drug and substance abuse happened or happening in school setting. The teachers, family and peers were involved in many of the cases. Thus, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity was a critical ethical concern to this research. Discretion with meeting places, vehicle identification, and records was essential to the data collection process as well as the integrity of the research to maintain confidentiality. In addition to maintain anonymity, it was also important to consider the risk of dehumanizing or devaluating certain community, group, religion and culture than the others.

Apply conflict-sensitive or Do No Harm approach is very important while carrying out sensitive research because such research process could be traumatic for victims, perpetrator and researchers conducting research (Fontes, 2004). I applied do no harm approach, during ethnographic fieldwork, analysis and reporting and seriously considered the possible long and short term negative implications of full or part of this study.

I used the words such as Pahade, Madheshi, Muslim, Hindu, poor performers, *Bhuskuls* and *Jauwa*, the terms that represent certain group of students/communities in school as it is used by the participants. Similarly, the eight major participants also represent certain cultures. I used these identities to present the respective group of students' experiences to school violence, and not intended to create any forms of bias and stereotyping against such groups. I presented them as I observed and presented by the participants. To minimise the risk of creating biased image, keeping the essence of

the discussion alive, I located the research site and made sense of research context (Brown, 2011), and carefully presented the heated emotion and language used in the field situation.

In reference with ethical principles for researchers to study with children in violent contexts (United Nations Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2012), I adopted rights-based framework of ethics while carrying out this study. The UNICEF framework provided ethical criteria like: be kind, open and honest; and also consider the 'best interest of child' and keep the child protection at the centre of the research. I followed certain standard research codes and ethics such as not taking any sides of particular political, religious, cultural, community groups; respecting the local language and culture; maintaining confidentiality; showing due respect to the research participants and other stakeholders; taking informed consent. There were no any formula to be ethical to follow but it was more about being humane in the field and believing in non-violence and peace. I echoed with the idea of Bresler (1996) who proposed to go for deeper understanding of the issue and cultivation of a curious and compassionate frame of mind. Examining the public face of ethnography and its paradoxes of actions and inactions, Clarke (2010) argued that ethical codes are a central issue, which the ethnographers often undermined while applying the colonial approach of ethnography.

To be able to avoid colonial research approach, I used self-reflexive approach has the integral part of this study. It was essential as reflexivity was one of the major ethical standard to this study, as it made me sensitive to micro-ethical dimensions of research practice, made me alert to the context and prepared to deal with ethical codes (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

Buckley-Zistel (2007) highlighted that pre-fabricated questionnaire is inappropriate while doing ethnographic research in a post violence context as unspoken voice is often more important than spoken one (p.6). This idea helped me to use informal strategy to listen the unspoken voice of the participants.

Consideration of the informed consent, privacy, do no harm and exploitation, and consequences for future research (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007) were useful ethnical guidance to this study. Out of these five, harm and privacy were the most important ethical matters in the fragile field setting. Continued engagement to consider ethical concerns should lead confidentiality and multiple safeguards for informants (Scacco, 2010, as cited in Thaler, 2011). Considering the confidentiality and security of the participants, I ensured high level of confidentiality and followed the ethics of 'no harm' in the research process. I introduced myself, presented university's letter and my research proposal with school administration to enter in the selected schools. I spent 30-40 minutes in every classrooms sharing about my study and purpose and also get familiar with the students clarifying participants' general question of, 'how your research helps the students who are experiencing violence in school' was the most difficult question to deal with. I gave honest answer that this research may not be useful for the participants. Moreover, I introduced myself as a student like the participants, and working on the assignment to complete my study. This example was helpful for the students to understand my purpose of asking questions, observation and engaging in their school and reduced the potential power hierarchy with participants. Parajuli (2007) argued that the researcher needs to put considerable efforts so that they can avoid their power hierarchy with research participants.

To address some of these issues of power hierarchy, I maintained anonymity of my participants, schools and the community to maintain confidentiality and to avoid any possible chances of making or reinforcing negative image of participants through this report. While discussing with the adolescent girls, all the individuals were interviewed in the open ground or school's office room. Furthermore, being intrusive (Litchman, 2013) I respected time, space and culture of the participants and ensured that students and teachers did not have to leave their regular class to participate in my research. Similarly, I ensured that their regular school routine was unobstructed. To me, being ethical was the first and foremost quality criteria.

As part of my social responsibility, after completion of my fieldwork, through school, I supported school uniform to the 13 visually impaired students through school administration. I provided these little materials to the students with full consent with school administration and using principle of non-discrimination.

In the dialogical engagement, in Sunsari, a 16 year's Madheshi girl asked me, "How can we go out like boys?" She further added, "We have to stay under the control of our parents otherwise we will be ruined?"(Discussion with Madheshi Girls in Sunsari January 12, 2016). I asked a counter question: "Why not? What will happen if you go out like boys?" Such critical dialogue encouraged adolescent participants to re-think on the patriarchic base of gender discrimination.

Often, being critical might not be enough to challenge cultural violence in the context where people not only tolerate violence but also the oppressed actively take part in the oppressive process (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). The transformative dialogue applied in the research was an example of being compassionate and responsible to the research participants. I used the transformative dialogical approach (Siry, 2010) by encouraging the research participants to question the violence rooted

in school life. I asked some critical questions like: Why is speaking language other than Nepali or English disallowed in their classroom activities? Why are poor performers punished more often than the good performers? Why do teachers still use corporal punishment? These questions were helpful for the students to think about existing structural and cultural roots of school violence. My presence in the schools could be disruptive to the ongoing academic activities and also to the overt and covert violent practices in school. People's suffering can be reduced if researchers can broaden a morale, appeal and disrupt power holders to scare into concessions or collapse and for this ethnography has made effective humanist appeals through moral witness (Bornstein, 2002). Ethnographers had to take the double roles where violence is embedded in everyday life and perpetrators actively participate in violence (Bourdieu, 1991).

I realized my limitations as a research student. This study has established my life-long moral duty to work for my research participants who shared their knowledge, time and information for my academic gain. The adolescent students who were engaged in this research process that might release some of their pain and problems, but I am sure they deserve much more than this.

I knowingly went into the lived violent contexts for my ethnography. I had no idea how could I engage in the field and gain necessary perspectives for this research. Due to the increased violent protests, all other fellow colleagues who planned to go to the Terai for the fieldwork declined and changed their study site. Despite the foreseeable risks in the field, I engaged in the overt violent context.

In the fragile and contested field, I had to work with uncertainties, stay in the challenging context and encounter stressful situations. As an ethnographer, I had to take double roles where violence was embedded in everyday life and perpetrators

actively participated in violence (Bourdieu & Jean-Claude, 1991). I used different tactics and strategies to survive, and to maintain the prolonged stay in the field and engage with my participants. Often, I undermined a number of risks that I could encounter while sketching a broader picture of violence. I was informed about the research ethics appropriate to the conflict settings (Ford, Mills, Zachariah, & Upshur, 2009), and the research approach that is based on 'the best interest of child' (UNICEF, 2012). My experience and the ethical considerations will be useful reference for other researchers who work in similar contexts and culture.

Essence of the Chapter

In this chapter, I discussed the ontological, epistemological and methodological positions and procedures of this study. Basically, in this chapter I presented how I engaged with the research participants in the fragile field context that was affected by the overt and covert violence. I described the flexibility of ethnographic approach, a useful philosophical guidance as well as epistemological tool for sensitive research. Ethnographic research approach, with its inherent flexibility could be used being sensitive and ethical to study the issue of school violence in a fragile setting.

In Chapter IV, I have presented the existing policies that deal with school violence, particularly in Nepal's school context.

CHAPTER IV

POLICIES DEALING WITH SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Policies emerge out of the specific contexts. Education policies are not only texts rather they are the discourse, and social practices (Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004). School violence cannot be challenged without proper policy support (Fast, 2016), hence it is important to identify and assess the guiding policies that could prevent school violence. This chapter has been crafted to provide a brief review of policies that perpetuate or support preventing school violence in Nepal. In this Chapter, I have reviewed the policies that are in one or the other way referred by different stakeholders during my ethnographic fieldwork.

General Policies Dealing With School Violence

I begin with some general policies that are useful to prevent school violence; however, these policies are widely dispersed. Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Constitutions and National Curriculum Framework (2005) are general policies concerning school violence. These policies provide the overall principles and guidance to formulate specific policies, regulations and programmes to address the multifaceted issue of school violence. Recently, cultural forms of discrimination and inequality are recognized by the Constitution of Nepal (2015) that highlighted the need to address the marginalized community's rights, and to end discrimination and violence. The constitutional principles cannot be implemented unless they are translated into laws, regulations and programmes.

Constitution as a Principal Document to Prevent School Violence

The Constitution of Nepal provides broad principles that guide stakeholders to prevent and respond to direct violence. It also recognizes the issues of structural and cultural forms of violence in general and particularly violence against women and children in Nepal. Nepal's Constitution 1990 ensured children's rights to primary education in their mother tongue (article 18) and made state responsible to safeguard the rights of children and ensure that they are not exploited. Though it was less explicit and elaborative, the 1962 Constitution of Nepal also had similar inspiration as it prohibited any actions that could promote hatred, derision including caste, ethnicity, region, class, community, religion among others (Government of Nepal [GoN], 1960).

Nepal's CPA signed in 2006 laid the foundation for Nepal's new political reforms that directly influenced Nepal's policies. The CPA consists of a number of commitments related to unmaking school violence like ending the misuse of schools, teachers and students for political purposes; providing special protection to children and women; prohibiting all types of violence against women and children like child labor, sexual exploitation, harassment, and abuse. This laid the foundations for the 2007 Interim Constitution, and was also the basis for many other constitutional and legal provisions in Nepal.

The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 was clear and explicit on protection of children's rights against violence and discrimination. It mentioned, "Every child shall have the right against physical, mental or any other form of exploitation. Any such an act of exploitation shall be punishable by law"(Article 22). Further, the Interim Constitution also clearly made caste based and racial discrimination punishable by law. These provisions were useful for non-violence, non-discrimination, and to reduce inequalities in general. The Constitutions promulgated in 1990 was unable to prevent

Nepal from entering into the decade long Maoist armed insurgency (1996-2006) and the 2007 and 2015 Constitutions could not prevent violent protests in the Terai-Madhesh (2006-07 and 2015-2016).

The Constitution promulgated in 2015 is more progressive than the previous constitutions on recognizing the root causes of violence like inequity, disparity, and discrimination. The constitution prohibited physical, mental, sexual, psychological or other forms of violence or exploitation to address gender based violence (GoN, 2015a). Moreover, the 2015 Constitution also recognized structural and cultural roots of violence and is also overt in prohibiting personal forms of violence. Article 39 enshrined, "No child shall be subjected to child marriage, physical, mental or any other forms of torture at home, in school or other place and situations."

Similarly, under state policies, the 2015 Constitution is committed to end discrimination relating to class, caste, region, language, religion, and gender including all forms of racial untouchability (GoN, 2015a, p.6). It also reiterated the language as a major source of discrimination and deprivation and thus proposed that all languages spoken in Nepal be the language of the nation and Nepali language as the official language. It also prohibited its citizens from practicing cultural systems that foster violence based on religion, custom, and traditions or on any other ground. Furthermore, Article 31 of the Constitution of Nepal elaborated the rights to education with special provision for children with disabilities and the economically indigent citizens and highlighted the right to get education in their mother tongue.

National Curriculum Framework 2005 is a useful tool to promote peace and human rights through formal curriculum. Nepal has made an important move in curriculum reform as it included a number of issues like respecting diversity, rejecting caste based discrimination, promotion of peace, human rights and democracy.

National Curriculum Framework 2005 overtly included learning objectives related to peace, human rights, civics education to inculcate peace and non-violence in the mind of learners(MoE, 2005). This integration is clearer in level wise curricula aiming at helping the children dealing with the interpersonal conflict before it converts into a violent form (Smith, 2012). Similarly, National Curriculum Framework 2005 adapted inclusive curricular approach as it has included social inclusion as a fundamental principle of education. Inclusive education believes in the principle that all children can learn if they are given appropriate environment and support to address their needs and recognizes the importance of ownership (GoN, 2007).

These national policies are also reinforced by some of the guiding international development frameworks like Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The sub-goal 16.1, Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere and Sub-goal 16.2, End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children are important policy references for Nepal. In its preliminary report 2016, National Planning Commission of Nepal aimed to measure these goals with specific indicators related to internal homicide; direct death from armed and violence; displacement; child labor; child marriage; psychological aggression and physical aggression; child trafficking (National Planning Commission, 2015). These indicators are useful tools for the Government and stakeholders to look into causes and effects of violence in and around school.

In addition to these general policies, there are some specific policies that directly deal with one or more forms of school violence. During the course of review and analyzing these policies, I used cultural violence, critical perspectives of othering.

Policies Related to Specific Forms of School Violence

Nepal has recognized the issue of physical and psychological punishment, threat and torture as the personal nature of violence in schools. Recognizing this as a major longstanding problem of education, policies related to education and children's rights have explicitly prohibited the personal violence in schools.

Policies Responding to Personal Violence in School

Physical and psychological nature of violence targeted to the students is personal in nature. In Nepal, the use of physical and psychological punishment started with the beginning of school education in Nepal. In 1901, a letter sent by the then King and Prime Minister through the education supervisory body mentioned,

> If any student deliberately remains absent from school, bring the student from his home, scold him, close him in a room and teach unless he memorizes the given lesson before leaving him free.(as cited in Department of Archaeology, 199, a letter sent from His Majesties through Nepal Patashala to Bhadgoun Patashala on 26 August, 1901)[My Translation]

The controlling practices used in the 1900s are still continuing in schools. Such practices of using corporal punishment, scolding children and closing students in a room are still common experiences of Nepali schools (Mishra et al., 2010).

Generally, it is considered that the use of psychological threat of punishment and torture in school hinders quality learning. Education Act 1971 mentioned that the schools should be maintained as safe zones with free and fearless teaching learning environment (His Majesty's Government [HMG], 2002). Similarly, Education Rule 133 (11) mentioned that teacher should not use physical and psychological torture *tadana*, though it has not defined what the meaning of torture is (GoN, 2002). This gives teachers and school a room to define torture in their convenient. Hence, school

could exclude the corporal punishment, verbal abuse, psychological threat, and intimidation as *torture*. Learn without Fear (LWF) Policy 2010 is another instrument in Nepal which provides guidelines for teachers and schools to teach children without any forms of punishment (MoE, 2010b). As it is named, LWF was primarily aimed to reduce one of the consequences of violence rather than dealing with the roots of fear, which mostly resulted in the structural and cultural violence.

School Sector Reform Program (SSRP), 2009 was claimed to be the strategic shift from access to quality focus. SSRP restricted physical punishment in schools. It mentioned, "Teacher and school found guilty of practicing corporal punishment shall both be subject to disciplinary actions that may include suspension of teacher's grade and an official warning to the SMCs" (MoE, 2009, p.94).

Till 2005, corporal punishment was not prohibited in the Education Act (1971) and the Education Regulations (2003). Recently, this has changed as the legal defense available to teachers in Children's Act 1992 was rendered null and void by the 2005 Supreme Court ruling. In 6 January 2005, the Supreme Court directed the government to pursue appropriate and effective measures to prevent physical punishment as well as other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment against children (Mishra et al., 2010).

Elaborating the quality standards developed by SSRP, MoE developed Child Friendly School National Framework (CFSNF) 2010 including nine quality aspects. The quality aspects included the provisions that restrict teachers to use corporal punishment and encourage schools to reduce psychological neglect and harassments. It also provided guidelines to schools on developing rules that monitor physical punishment and ensuring that no one in school are mentally harassed, abused, neglected (MoE, 2010a). These policy instruments are to ensure students' rights to

study in free and friendly environment and restrict teachers to use corporal punishment, psychological threat and violence in schools. The term of child friendly education is used as rhetoric in schools but in reality teachers and school administration show many limitations that give them excuse for not implementing the provisions of this policy framework.

The prohibition of personal violence is dominant in Nepal's policies. Corporal punishment is articulated in different policies but these policies are less clear about prohibition of psychological punishment like the use of mental pressure, fear and torture. Political violence is increasingly recognized as a challenge of education but the policies are concentrated on restricting teachers' involvement in party politics. These policies are silent on making political parties accountable for their violent actions. Structural violence is lately dealt as one of the key reasons of inequity in education. The Consolidated Equity Strategy 2014 was developed to address the structural inequality in education. However, the new institutional structure and policies are not developed to enforce this strategy, which might leave this strategy in limbo in future. How these policies address specific needs of marginalized, deprived and weak student is still unclear. Cultural violence like caste based violence; language issue and ethnicity are recognized in these policies.

Political interference in education is not a new phenomenon in Nepal, but it was not a debate in the past. Discussion of how to protect schools from political violence is a new phenomenon. The use of schools for political purpose, attack in school, use of students for political purpose and forceful school closures are increasing in Nepal (Dharel, 2013) and these acts perpetuate political violence in schools. Though Nepal has formulated different policies to respond to such violence in school, political violence still prevail in Nepali schools.

Policies Responding to Political Violence in Schools

Education Act and Regulation and Children's Act, Regulation, and Rules stated that political violence that directly affect children's right to education and protection are prohibited in schools. However, Nepal failed to effectively enforce affirmative policies related to protection of children from different forms of violence as enshrined in these laws and policies. Child Rights Act and Regulations in 1992 prohibited discrimination against children at all places. However, these legal provisions were merely enforced for a long time due to the weak law enforcement mechanisms and the Maoist led armed conflict started in 1996 and more blatantly, during the Maoist Armed Insurgency, the schools were used as tactical targets and the violence against children increased (Pherali, 2013).

Education Act 1971 made some important policy provisions to prevent school violence but often these policies are infused with economic, political and ideological contradictions (Ball, 2012). Education policies also tried to limit the teachers' involvement in party politics. Education Act (1971), in its Eighth Amendment 2016 reacted upon teachers' involvement in political activities, attack in school and school properties, and school closure. The Act also restricted teachers from becoming a member of, or holding an official position within, any political party (GoN, 2016), aimed at reducing political interference in schools. The Rule 133 (10) mentioned that teachers should not be involved in any kind of strikes that restrict any officials to perform their legal duties.

In Nepal, though there are no clear studies of how teachers' involvements in political parties influence school violence, teachers' involvement in partition politics is criticized. When teachers participate in party politics, they often compromise their teaching roles and they are also used as political party's instruments to maintain their

control over resources and school's decision making processes. As a result, schools often become the space of political rift (Pherali, 2013). The Rule 133 (10) however, does not restrict teachers to organize protests, strikes or other programs that hinder students' right to education (HMG, 2002b) unless it hinders others to perform their legal duties. Education Rules provided codes of conduct for teachers. The conduct restricted teachers to influence or attempt to influence anybody politically with the intention of fulfilling anybody's vested interest (HMG, 2002b).

Most of the policies formulated in the post-conflict context in Nepal are to response reactive to post armed violence. In the aftermath of the decade long armed conflict 1996-2006, education stakeholders realized for a need to protect schools from armed violence and political interferences. However, these policies do not consider other forms of political violence like communal and regional tension in Terai.

In addition to the policies to prevent political forms of violence, there are some policies formulated to prevent cultural forms of violence as well.

Policies Responding to Cultural Violence in Schools

Education policies in Nepal also recognized and responded to different cultural forms of violence in schools. Education Act expected that the students respect teachers, be obedient, and behave in a polite manner whereas teachers are expected to maintain their professional ethics of teaching. Different cultural issues like discrimination based on caste, gender and ethnicity are recognized as problems in schools. I called this form of discrimination 'cultural violence'. Caste and gender based discrimination are prohibited in all policies and plans but violence based on religion, region, community, and ethnicity practiced in school, family and communities are blanketed under culture. Such practices are merely challenged.

Language is a major cultural facet of education that contributes to structural violence. Education policies continued the existing provision of Nepali language as a medium of education in schools. Awasthi (2004) highlighted that one language policy can have negative or positive effects on learning achievement. The Fifth Amendment of Education Act 1992 included the provision of getting primary education in one's mother tongue. This policy might be the reaction to the raise of ethnic politics in Nepal since 1990 (Hangen, 2009). In Nepal, the existing practice of Nepali or English language as a means of instruction is one of the barriers to quality education for children whose mother tongue is other than Nepali.

Addressing the language issue is one of the critical issues to deal with cultural violence in Nepali schools. In this direction, MoE developed Multilingual Education Guideline in 2010. The guidelines mentioned that all children can get primary education in their mother tongue; in grade 1-3 all subjects can be taught in mother tongue; in grades 4-5 all subjects can be taught in mother language along with Government official language and in 6-8 mother tongue language can be taught as a separate subject in schools. This policy is an important milestone to reduce violence based on language (MoE, 2009).

Poyck et al. (2016) argued that the authorities did not fully recognize the issue of the Muslim students who have to learn Nepali, English, and Urdu besides their mother tongue in their schools. Moreover, the Muslim students also have to adapt new curriculum when they shift from their religious schools to the community schools.

The School Sector Development Program (SSDP) 2016-2023 implemented from mid 2016 aimed to reduce educational disparities among different communities and foster equity in access, participation including learning and life outcomes in Nepal. More explicitly, SSDP focused on equity aspect of education. It has identified

eight dimensions of inequality including gender, socio-economic condition, geographical location, health and nutrition status, disabilities, caste and ethnicity, language and children of vulnerable groups (MoE, 2016). In addition, Quality and equity are identified as the major challenges to education (MoE, 2016). These two aspects are highlighted in the recent education sector program, School Sector Development Program (SSDP), which aimed to reduce disparities among and between groups having low access, participation and learning outcomes.

Department of Education (2014) has also highlighted that when weighing up against the outcome indicators in terms of enrolment, retention and completion, certain groups have not been able to adequately gain, and in some cases the existing disparities have been increased.

SSDP also recognized the issue of safety as one of the major challenges of quality education and also defined what actually safe environment means. It is an important move in education as SSDP recognized inequity in education, though it undermined the problem of symbolic violence against minority groups (Khanal, 2017). Moreover, SSDP also recognized the issue of rooted discrimination based on caste and ethnicity which is insufficient to understand the symbolic violence against minority and also increased political violence in the Madhesh.

In 2011, MoE developed Schools as Zones of Peace (SZoP) National Framework aiming at protecting schools from armed conflict and violence, political and other interferences, and all forms of discriminations, abuse, neglect and exploitation (MoE, 2011a). It is to reduce forceful school closure, political interferences and use of children for political parties.

The policies however also created a new class educated and illiterate or *Unpad* person (Parajuli, 2008). However, Nepal's policies like Children's Act and Regulation

and education policies are incrementally improvising policy provisions to prevent corporal punishment, gender based violence, and inequity in education. In 2014, Department of Education [DoE] developed a working procedure to carry out a national campaign against school violence and sexual abuse. The procedure recognized the need of fighting against school violence and declared the month of Baishak (Bikram Era) as the month of the School Enrollment and the Campaign against Abuse, Violence, and Discrimination. This document clearly and overtly mentioned that violence is one of the major concerns for Nepali students and education.

This procedure mentioned violence, abuse, and discrimination as the major issues of school violence. In one hand, it has taken violence as a direct form of attacks in school, school closure and political violence. On the other hand, it has considered abuse mainly focusing on sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation. The third issue of discrimination is presented as a common issue of discrimination in schools based on caste, gender, religion, language among others. It shows that, Nepal is moving ahead on recognizing the issue of school violence, however such policies are not effective due to its type (guideline, framework, policies) and the weak implementation structures established by these committees.

There is no monitoring system that could monitor the cases of school violence in Nepal. Pandey (1999) argued that Nepal's over 60 year's planned development shows that policies are primarily developed and kept as 'words' as most of the policies formed in Nepal are merely implemented. However, the implementation of these policies in schools and their effects on preventing school violence are yet to be evaluated as most of these policies were formulated quite recently. Many of these policies are voluntary and non-binding in nature therefore implementation of these

policies is based on institutional and individual understanding, level of support the policy enforcement agencies receive and commitment of the stakeholders to prevent school violence. Furthermore, often the Nepali policies and policy making process are criticized as these policies are developed in a centralized manner (Parajuli & Das, 2013). For example, during the *Panchayat* era (1960-1990), the aim of education was to foster monarchy. Nepali education policies were dominated by the Hindu religion and ruler's political ideologies (Poudel, 2007). Similarly, due to the structures of denial, the formal education was less accessible to the marginalized communities in Nepal (Bhatta, Adhikari, Thada, & Rai, 2008).

Nepal's national legal and policy frameworks were developed in response to certain issues of violence like caste-based discrimination, armed violence, political violence, inequity and practice of corporal punishment in schools. Likewise, the major policies formed after the decade long armed conflict in Nepal focused on protecting schools from armed violence and recently they are advanced to promote equity in access and quality of education. Nepal's Constitution and Consolidated Equity Strategy (CES) 2014 are latest policies. Similarly, Schools as Zones of Peace National Framework 2011 and Learn Without Fear Policy 2010 are other policy references for fostering non violence and prevent school violence.

The Constitution is largely exhaustive as it broadly recognizes the issues related to direct, structural and cultural violence. The other policies are targeted to specific forms of violence such violence based on language, gender, and political violence. For instance, eighth amendment of Education Act 2016 has discouraged the teachers' active involvement in political parties, and recognized school safety concerns. Specific policies on school violence are explicit and clearer against personal violence but such policies do not consider structural and cultural forms of violence.

The complex forms of violence are often responded through the general non-binding frameworks, guideline and strategies. These frameworks are used as resource for discussion and trainings but they are merely implemented. In addition, lack of integrated policy is another challenge because most of the policies are scattered in different laws, conventions, constitution, guideline, strategy and frameworks.

Essence of the Chapter

For many stakeholders, a school is like a family, but the policies are formulated to deal school as a state apparatus, instrument to implement state led education policies. I realized that most of the school violence prevention policies are targeted to prevent direct forms of violence. Most of the policies are concentrated to prevent school's general *lafada, but such policies are* ineffective when direct violence is accepted in school or is compatible with school's culture or norms. Second, I could not find any active mechanism and individuals responsible to prevent the negative consequences of structural, political and cultural violence in schools. Third, schools also had no clear system and policies to prevent violence. The school violence related policies are poorly connected and merely implemented in Nepali schools. Cultural incompatibility, low priority for the stakeholders (mainly the political parties and school administration), and absence of school-specific integrated operational plans are the major reasons for the poor connection and implementation of school violence related policies in schools.

In Chapter Five, based on my ethnographic engagement, I have described adolescent students' voices of how they experience, understand and make sense of their experiences of school violence. Considering the existing research gap, I have done deeper discussion and analysis on the first research question – adolescent student's experiences of school violence.

CHAPTER V

ADOLESCENT STUDENTS' INTERPRETATION OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Children learn from their cultural milieu traits, norms, and rituals that their society values. Gender, caste and class hierarchy, multiculturalism, multilingualism, and multiple religions are some of the fundamental cultural characteristics of the Nepali society. The different cultures then get entered and interacted into the school life (Thapan, 2014). The children live, learn and acquire some of these cultural norms before they enter into the formal school system. In school, students encounter many difficult and contested questions about their norms, rules and regulations set into their culture. Some of the practices in family and culture are different than the culture of their peers in school.

In this Chapter, I have presented how adolescent students have experienced school violence in their school life. The participants of this study were heterogeneous in nature. The student's response and participation in this study was influenced by their cultural background. Similarly, students' experiences and understanding of school violence are also influenced by how they are categorized by the teachers and peers. In School-3, a teacher mentioned, all students are not equal. On the basis of student's discipline and academic performance, we divide students into *Uttam, Madhyam* and *Aadham or* the good, medium and bad (Field note, November 2016).

In this study, I captured the voice of adolescent girls and boys coming from the multicultural setting. The general idea of school violence can be seen from what media reports on school violence. Using content analysis of over 50 online and print

media reports published during September 2015 to July 2017 the following issues were emerged as the most common headlines related to school violence.

- Student's eye damaged by teacher's punishment,
- Parents beat teachers for not allowing their children to attend SLC exam,
- Student beaten by teacher- hand broken,
- Schools closed during political strikes,
- Student punished for sitting exam without paying tuition fees,
- Politicization impacting teaching learning,
- Students and teachers wounded in clash between police and students,
- School padlocked in dispute between teachers of two groups,
- School padlocked on school admission.

These news making violent incidences in school demonstrates how the general public and other stakeholders perceive school violence as narrow as the 'incidences of violence in school'. This narrow understanding of school violence does not recognise the importance of its structural and cultural facets. Therefore, the cultural and structural aspects of school violence are very less discussed and recognised.

News Making Violence Is Counted

The headlines of newspapers and media show that the big incidences of school violence are considered as newsworthy or interesting for general readers. Usually, the media selects news when they find any incidences that break the social norms and expectations. Media do not priorities cases like, student is bullied by their peers, or teacher slaps students, and boys tease girls. Similarly, it is absolutely normal when a marginalized student fails in an exam or drops out from school. It does not qualify to be *news*! Journalists are attracted when school is vandalized, students die or maimed

due to punishment, or a girl is raped by her teacher. Media covers news when students or parents beat teachers as such acts are against the established social norms.

This analysis indicates that political nature of violence is more reported than the everyday incidences of violence in school. It also shows that for general mass, only the big cases of violence is recognized as violence while the student's everyday suffering of physical, psychological punishments, discrimination and structural forms of violence are accepted as school's internal matters. The media waits until the case becomes big enough to be interesting for public, 'the news'. Therefore, it is important that researchers explore the undermined issue of the everyday violence in school.

As an ethnographer, I had to go further deep to understand this issue. From the very beginning of my fieldwork, I started hearing the word *Lafada,* the physical fights and other direct forms of violence in school.

Lafada: A Common Form of Violence in Schools

Minor interpersonal disputes, fights, pushing, shoving, verbal abuse are common forms of violence in schools. Similarly, adolescents also witness and involved in inter-group fights in school. The students call such cases as *Lafada* in their words. Eshor, a seventeen year old student of School-5, shared that the fights between two groups in school are not new phenomena. He mentioned, "Our school is infamous for such fights." Eshor shared a fresh story of an inter-group fight,

> You know, last week we had a big fight in our school. Carrying stones and bricks in their hand, three 10 grade students aggressively rushed here and quickly went to grade 9 and 10 classrooms (pointing his fingers towards the classes) and started banging on the doors. After sometime they ran away when grade 10 students chased them. They came back again with other supporters to attack students in school. School administration quickly locked the doors and

> called for police support. We were in the state of fear for many days. The fight was between the supporters of two local *gangs* that is backed by two political parties.(Field note, 12 January 2016)

In school, the interpersonal and inter group fights are not the everyday happenings, but one incidence could affect school environment for many days and also contribute to new forms of fights. It is found that some isolated interpersonal *Lafada* can exacerbates into the inter-group violence triggering the latent tension between and among the students coming from different cultural backgrounds like Muslim-Hindu; and Madheshi-Pahade. Further, the use of substance like alcohol, drugs and others is one of the perceived contributors to *Lafada* in school. Geeta (14) from School-5 mentioned,

> There are many students who chew tobacco like *Neha, Bhola, Gutka, Surti*; smoke cigarette; and drink alcohol and some of them also use cannabis and other drugs. They not only use these things, they are also involved in *Lafada* in school. Boys drink or eat different things and create *Lafada*; our school is notorious for such *Lafada*. There is no peace in our school and our class is often disturbed.(Field note, 12 November, 2015)

In the schools, the students who use substance, smoke or chew tobacco identified as *Jauwa.* The *Jauwa* is also symbolizes the students who, wear untidy school uniform, don't wear school uniform, have long hair, chew tobacco, involve in physical fights, smoke and do not respect teachers. A quarter of the Nepalese population is consuming tobacco products. Of them, the proportion of boys is much higher than that of girls (Sreeramareddy, Ramakrishnareddy, Kumar, Sathian, & Arokiasamy, 2011). Thus, more boys are identified as *Jauwa* than the girls in school.

The concept of *Jauwa* and *Lafada* offered me some useful understanding about school violence as it provides certain category or identity to the certain groups of students. It shows that certain categories of students like *Jauwa* are not perceived as the perpetrators of school violence than the others. Similarly, school violence is triggered by students' particular behaviour or habits such as drug use, follow school's dress code follow school's norms, alcohol use, use of tobacco and cigarette. Mostly, the schools based *Lafada* are minor incidences like interpersonal physical fights, corporal punishment, and the verbal abuse –*Gaali.* Such incidences of *Lafada* are generally settled quickly. However, some of the incidences referred to the school administration and fewer cases could exacerbates and translate into the complex situation such as inter-group violence. Punishment is the most used approach to deal with *Lafada*, the direct form of school violence.

Punishment: Another Common Discourse of School Violence

In the initial stage of my fieldwork, I organized a few small informal discussion sessions on school violence. I invited grade ten and eleven students in the leisure class. During the discussions, the students shared the issues of domination, beating, corporal punishment, discrimination, abuse, and physical assaults as common forms of punishments. The Chanakya doctrine of teaching teenage student with '*tadana'* or punishment is applied when students involve in *Lafada*.

The nature and forms of punishment in school are changing over time. Mishra et al. (2010) presented the three types of corporal punishments: physical (like beating), emotional and negative reinforcement (like keeping them outside the school or class) and found that the use of physical punishment has been decreased over time. The Assistant District Education Officer of Sunsari said, "Physical punishments are decreasing in schools mainly in higher grades but it is still practiced in lower grades

4-7" (Field note, January2016). In general, both students and teachers agree that the use of corporal punishment has been less pervasive than in the past. Aryal (2010) also had similar finding in his study. However, the use of emotional punishment and negative reinforcements are still pervasive in schools.

In one of the group discussions, a 14 year's Dalit student shared, "Teachers do not do any mistakes; we are the ones who make mistakes. So it is obvious that we get punishment in school" (Field Note, October 28, 2015). It is important to understand why a Dalit student says that the'teachers do not make any mistakes? I assume that her cultural background influences her response. Generally, teacher represents higher caste groups in her school and higher caste groups are considered as educated and pure (Freeman, 1991).In addition to gender her cultural background and academic performance influenced her understanding of who is right and who deserve punishment in school.

Recently, the number of Dalit teachers has been increased in Nepal but it is still less than the high caste groups (MoE, 2011b, pp. 6-7). In the five study schools, only three of the over 60 teachers were Dalit. The idea of teachers do not make mistake indicates that the students' interpretation to violence is influenced by their historical and cultural backgrounds. When punishment is associated with school discipline, students also support that such punishment is a necessary part of schooling. In one of the focused group discussions (FGDs) in Kapilvastu, I discussed with a group of Madheshi boys about their experiences of punishment in school. In response, a 10-grad boy mentioned,

> We get one-two slaps, verbal abuse (Gali), or sometimes we are beaten by sticks. When we commit mistakes, we are punished. If we run away from

school than teacher beats us and gives threat to call our parents in school. But, there is no violence in our school.(Field note, December 2015)

This response shows that some students consider direct physical violence like verbal abuse and use of stick as normal part of schooling. Particularly, punishment is normal against the students who make mistakes, or who break school's set rules.

Dealing my identity was a challenge, and my identity was useful in some situations whereas in the other it was an obstacle. Considering the ongoing political violence, it was sensitive to discuss the issue of school violence with Madheshi adolescent students. Due to the school's location, and history of number of clashes between Pahade-Madheshi students in School-3, fieldwork was more sensitive than in the rest of other schools. In the beginning of my discussion, the Madheshi student's responded that, 'there is no violence in our school.' It means that, the Madheshi students were not willing to share their issues with the 'outsider'. This was confirmed when some other Madheshi students shared their experiences of school violence like forceful school closure, use of students in political protest, use of punishment, and poor management of school.

Parents view on punishment is also has important influence on how teachers use punishment in school. Yam Lal Aryal, father of a 10th grade student of School-3 mentioned, "In the global context it may be ok, but for Nepal, this is too much freedom in school. What a time came? Students obey neither the teachers nor their parents"(Field Note: December 2015).The social expectation towards adolescent students is higher as they are like adults to support their families, fall in the group of active and energetic age. However, most of them do not have easy access to money to fulfill their desires. Hence, there is a bigger gap between parent, teachers and

society's expectation towards adolescent students. I was also interested to understand how the vulnerable group of students like disabled experience school violence.

In School-2, I observed a case of violence against visually impaired students during my field visit. It was the case in which Indra (19) one of my key participants was involved. I was in a higher secondary school of Kapilvastu. Inside the school compound, 7-8 teachers were sitting on the plastic chairs where four visually impaired students and a caretaker of the visually impaired student known as *Didi*. They were sitting like culprits whereas teachers seemed angry with the students. *Didi* (caretaker) complained that the boys were breaking rules, creating problems, and abusing the visually impaired girls inside the hostel. In response, the head teacher said: "I heard many complaints against you. You can leave school today because you are not following the school's rules"(Field note, December 2015).

While sitting there, the head teacher mentioned me that he was not trained to deal with such the persons with disabilities. From 8 a.m. till 4 p.m., the students were sitting on the ground and teachers were not able to take any decisions. There was only one small and cozy hostel, a two rooms building, for 11 students (both boys and girls). There were no separate toilets for boys and girls, and the only common toilet was not assessable to the visually impaired girls. The head teacher does not recognize this issue, the structural violence.

The use of discriminatory words against the persons with disability is observed in school. A visually impaired girl School-2mentioned, "Teacher often mentions that, people becomes disable due to their sinful act of their previous life (November, 2015). Discriminatory word like *Aandho*, blind is used in grade four and five English and Nepali textbooks. In grade four, even a story about a blind and an elephant is included. A visually impaired teacher in Sunsari shared how he was

embarrassed when he was teaching the lesson about the Blind and Elephant. He mentioned, "A student asked me, do you also feels like a rope when you touch an elephant's tail? I have to face such embarrassing questions in my class" (Field note, January, 2016). Besides personal violence, the curricular tools like textbooks and teaching learning activities could reinforces discriminations against the teachers and the students with disabilities.

Punishment and *Lafada* are mainly internal affairs of a school as it happens mostly inside school premises. The external context also equally influences school violence. Considering the ongoing violent political protest in the field, adolescent students and stakeholders presented two major issue of political violence: prolonged and frequent school closure and use of school for political party's interest.

Political Violence in School: *Bandh* and Use of Schools

Any violent act carried out with a political or ideological motive is political violence. It can be direct or indirect in nature. Since power structure is involved in such violence, it is also similar to structural violence. Galtung (1990) presented political violence under the umbrella of cultural violence. I have presented it as a separate category of violence because it is one of the highly influential forms of school violence, particularly to my study context. It is important to present it as a distinct category of violence as it can be as broad as cultural violence and also as narrow as personal or direct in nature (Mider, 2013).

When I started exploring the present situation of school, in reference with the ongoing *Bandh* and political violence almost all the students and teachers immediately expressed the negative situation of school. *Bandh* is a common name for general strike called by political parties and other groups; it also refers to the act of forcing school and market close and transportation movement to stop. Galtung (1990)

has included political ideology led violence as one of the forms of cultural violence. A grade 10 student of the School-5of Sunsari shared, "Whenever somebody calls for a *Bandh*, our sirs (School administration) immediately close the school *Bandh*"(Field note: 14 January 2016). *Bandh* called by political parties are mainly guided by certain political ideological interest and associated with certain demands with the government. The political parties justify *Bandh*, the forceful closure of school, under the political ideology, however in many cases, such *Bandh* is also organised to serve the political leaders's certain political or personal interest.

Though, it is significant decrease over last decade, *Bandh* is continued to be the most common way of expressing political party or group's dissatisfaction with authorities, government and the concerned. Almost all political parties have used *Bandh* including school closure as a political tactics to impose pressure against the ruling parties and the government. Political parties are not only threatening school authorities to close schools rather they are vandalizing school buses, and attacking those who do not obey their orders. Attacking teachers and school administrators during the general strike and political violence was more frequent than in the other situations.

As the result of school closures, schools could not run for the 220 days in a year of teaching learning activities as mandated by the Education Act and students can't learn as expected. The use of children for political purpose increases much during elections and other political activities such as political rallies, demonstrations, strikes and others. In Nepal 58 percent students shared that they were used by political parties (Dharel, 2013).

The reports collected from online and print media showed that school attacks and closure are the major forms of political violence in schools. In addition, many

other incidences of school violence were reported such as: attacking schools by political groups during exams, vandalizing school property by political party affiliated students and party cadres, beating/manhandling teachers for opening schools during the *Bandh*, planting improvised explosive devices (commonly known as Bombs) in schools, attacking and vandalizing school property. These tactics and incidences were directly or indirectly enforced by the parties to impose their *Bandh* effectively. All students, teachers and parents expressed their concerns about school *Bandh*. Nepali schools are declared 'zones of peace', but political parties and groups are not respecting such declarations (Pherali, 2013), rather they have continued using students and teacher in political protest and rallies, and organising general strikes for their political gain.

Use of School for Political Party's Interest

Parties use children in their political campaigns, and demonstrate common form of school violence in Nepal.

Use of children in political activities. Some students reported that they were used by political parties, mentioned some cases of teachers being involved in politics, students 'death or injury in political party's protests and fights during the School Management Committee elections. Pherali (2013) argued that schools have become the de facto political centers where party cadres exercise their political power (p. 64). Most of the teachers do not see that the use of students for political parties is a serious problem. In many cases adolescent students are used or voluntarily participate or trapped into the violent political protest, and also vandalizing activities. Dharel (2013) argued that 47% of the total students experienced one or other form of involvement in party political activities in school. Further, Dahal (2016) reported that, in Khalanga area of Jumla District, hundreds of children were presented half naked in one of the

demonstrations in Karnali. In School-3, a SMC Chair who is also a political party leader shared, “There is no any official policy to use students for political party but unfortunately all parties are using them for their political interest”(Field note, 24 December 2015).

The use of students in political activities put the students’ lives at risk as students might get trapped into violent riots or political clashes and they miss their school. Likewise, their minds get influenced by the political slogans which are often biased towards certain groups or ideologies. Many students are aware of the possible risks to be involved in political party led activities. Like a boy of School-3, students also consciously participate in political activities to gain power. Policies like School as Zones of Peace National Framework 2011 prohibits the use of students in such political campaigns but parties merely comply with this framework and students willingly as well as unwillingly participate in such activities. Use of children for political gain is continued as in 2017 Local Elections; the Central Child Welfare Board 2017 issued a press statement stating that parties widely used children in their election campaigns in the first and second phases of Local Level Election 2017.

Use of teachers for political purpose. Teachers, as conscious citizens of the country, are involved in political activities since the beginning of party politics in Nepal. Hence, the party politics has directly influenced teachers institutionally through teacher unions and also on the individual basis. Political parties are interfering school’s authority to mobilize teachers in school. The head teacher of School-5mentioned,

> In my school, there are eight extra teachers at the primary level. Due to direct political protection to these teachers, neither the District Education Officer nor the SMC can mobilize these extra teachers to the needy schools. These

> teachers are openly engaging in party politics through union and working to please the political leaders. (Field note, January 2016)

National Human Rights Commission (2016) found that during violent protests in the Madhesh, schoolteachers were actively participating in the agitation. Teacher union's role was limited to organizing their members. A District Education Office's Resource Person (RP) said,

> Quality education is not the priority agenda for most of the teachers; particularly the teachers who are associated with political parties' unions are interested in political party's agenda. In return the political parties always try to protect teachers including those who are unqualified and ineffective in teaching. (Field note, December, 2015)

The political parties often create a system that offers additional advantages or risks for the teachers who support or oppose their parties. Siyum & Gebremedhin (2015) mentioned that parties intimidate teachers by excluding them from training, discriminating during promotion, transfer and other services or delay transfer based on their support to their parties. Political protection to the teachers who serves the interest of political parties is common in Nepal. Smith and Novili (2011) argued that the use of children for political interest, school closure, and attack in school bus are some common forms of political violence in Nepal. I also looked into how School Management Committees' (SMC) are coping in the ongoing political violence.

Use of School Management Committee (SMC). SMC is an elected body of the parents of each school to manage the school as provisioned in the Education Act and Regulations in Nepal. Education Act 1971 has foreseen SMC as the determining force in school management. Among the total nine members of SMC, the chair and remaining one member is nominated by teachers and head teacher works as the

member secretary of SMC. However in reality, SMC election is politicized and the political parties determine this election process. Among five schools I worked with, all schools had visible conflict among members of the SMC members. In School-1, SMC was formed and functioning with less conflict among the members, but due to political interferences in School-2 and 3, the SMCs were not formed since the last four years. In School-5, a newly elected SMC was involved in a legal case against one of its members nominated by one of the political parties.

The SMC election is a sensitive business of school as many schools witness election related clashes and violence. The news like "Four people injured when opposition fired gun in SMC election at Dhanahari Village of Rahautat District" (Yadav, 2016) were common during the fieldwork. The school-5 head teacher mentioned,

> SMC is formed based on political party's consensus where each parties nominate their representatives and the parents' meeting is organized merely to formalize the party's decision. None of the political leaders send their children to public school. Our real parents are poor manual workers, who are concerned about their daily earning; even many of our students are working students. The parties nominate someone who follows their party leaders' order. Thus, the SMC members do not care about quality education.(Field note: January 8, 2016)

The headteacher's narrative gives some idea of why the political parties are interfering in the SMC election. In countries like China, the political parties take accountability for providing quality education, however in Nepal, the political parties mainly work to gain power, and secure their political influence in school but it is an undermined and under theorized issue, particularly in non western contexts (Casella,

2014). Parties however are closing schools for many days, and using children, teachers and SMC members to serve the political interests.

Students and schools were largely affected by the ongoing political protests, general strikes in the field. I tried to understand the roots of and influence of the ongoing political protests in school. I also sensed the increased differences between the 'Pahade and Madheshi, the two major communities living in the Terai.

We Don't Play With Them? Categorization and Othering in Schools

In School-1, the students have choice to study in English or Nepali Medium education where the students have access to school bus and have to wear different sets of school uniforms. The school has two blocks, Block A -English Medium (paid) and Block B- Nepali Medium (free). I engaged with students in Block B, who perceived that they are less valued than the students in Block A. A boy studying in grade seven mentioned, "The students studying in private school dominate us, behave us like poor. I really don't like such behaviour" (Field note: September 2015). The students of these two blocks were not mixed up even in the playground. However, both schools were running by the same head teacher, located in the same school compound, and managed by the same SMC. This shows that some schools are creating parallel systems of private and public education in same premises and creating two different categories of students in school. A Pahade student of School-5 mentioned that he might have gone to the private school if his parents were able to pay the tuition fee and other associated cost. Except a few students like the Muslim boy of Sunsari who joined in a public school, the majority of students think that they joined in the public school due to poverty. He mentioned that, "I joined in the public school to get priority in the government scholarships in future"(Field note, December 2015).

Adolescents living in the Madhesh were witnessing everyday violence like school closure, violent protest, and physical attacks in school. They expressed their concerns of inter-community violence as they heard and witnessed in the past. Students were concerned from the increased communal differences in school as it can create lasting violence in the society. During my fieldwork, I sensed some communal tension between the Pahade and the Madheshi communities in the Terai. I observed and sensed the biggest difference in School-2. In an informal discussion with Om, a 16 years' Pahade boy of School-2, who has been living in the Madhesh since his birth, shared his feelings about the ongoing situation in the Terai. He mentioned, "I was involved in one clash with the Madheshi boys in the recent past; I am feeling unsafe to live in this area after that case" (Field note, September, 2015).

This case shows that some of the adolescent students get involved in clashes, and fights during violent protests and consequently feel more at risk of being victimized. This story also shows the communal differences are not limited to differences between communities, but such differences are also converting into communal tensions, and affecting the life of adolescent students. Nonetheless, there are very few students who involved in such group clashes; the impact of one incidence of inter-community clash affects the school environment for longer period of time. A Madheshi student who was studying in the same school with Om in School-2 was more provocative and aggressive. He mentioned, "Our friends are Madheshi, not Nepali [for him Nepali means Pahade]" (Interview Note: October 2015).

Similar to Pahade and Madheshi, since my childhood, I heard the commonly used similar other local terms such as *Lekaali,* those who live in High Mountain area; *Sahariya,* those who live in urban area; *Kaathe,* those who live in buffer zone between

urban and rural area; *Pakhe*, those who live in infertile hill area. Such words are used to identify people on the basis of their home location. These identities were often used by out-group rather than in-group members. The political tension in Terai was not only affecting students' association with the group and selection of friendship but it was also visible in classroom setting arrangement. In School-2, students were seating in four clusters – Madheshi, Pahade and Girls. However, I do not observe similar divide in four other schools. It was the first 'shock' I felt during my fieldwork. At the time of political violence in Terai, the Madheshi and Pahade students' feeling of 'we' versus 'them' had increased.

I continued exploring the issue of the reflection of communal tension in all five schools. I asked one Pahade girl studying in grade 10 in School-3. She responded, "I heard that some of the Madheshi leaders are giving speech against Pahade communities" (Field note: 13 October, 2015). The Pahade girl's statement, 'Even Tharu people say so' shows that they expect support from Tharu community to live in the Terai even if the Madheshi communities tried to confront with them. The students coming from the Tharu communities were found in the middle of Pahade and Madheshi communities. The Tharu students were equally mixed up with Pahade and Madheshi, interacting with all and relatively less involved in the contested issues.

In some schools, the Tharu students were closer to the Pahade students but they were also trusted by the Madheshi students. In School-5, I sensed that the differences between Pahade and Madheshi were less than the other four schools. Even though a Madheshi student of grade 10 mentioned, "The Madheshi think negative about the Pahade and the Pahade think negative about the Madheshi. In boarding schools, students tease us saying *Madhese* so, I left that school and came here" (Field note: January 10, 2016). The negative thinking about Pahade or Madheshe indicates

that the categorization of Madheshi and Pahade community in general was separating them into different groups and creating different stereotypes about each others. Such stereotypes were further strengthened by the political protests in Terai.

As a result of communal differences and violence, Pahade students and teachers were feeling unsafe in some schools located in the Madheshi majority communities. The Assistant DEO of Sunsari confirmed the existence of communal tension in school. He mentioned, "Due to the violence in the Terai, Pahade teachers are feeling insecure. In some cases Pahade teachers are hesitating to go to their assigned schools"(Field note, January, 2016). Such tension is further cemented with the existing stereotypes and prejudices at the community level.

The stereotyping is often used as a tool to maintain superiority of one group over the others. Vincent (2012) explained this kind of human relationships into a continuum of violence into six steps: separation, stereotyping, superiority, dehumanizing, scapegoating and demonization. The reorganization of Pahade and Madheshi students as different category has created possibility of separation of students in school. Teachers' and authorities' hesitate to speak about this issue, as they consider this issue a highly sensitive. It is dangerous when individual, group or nation remains passive about such differences and tension, as one group may see violence against other as acceptable (Staub, 2003). This shows that the increased overt violence and tension made the schools less suitable for quality education.

The recent incidences of violence challenged the existing communal harmony between Pahade and the Madheshi students and teachers in schools. I tried to further explore the cultural interpretations and meaning of the manifestations of violence in schools. Due to the context and students' exposure to and experience of punishments,

the frequency of *Bandh*, the incidences of *Lafada* directly and indirectly influence students' learning abilities and performance.

In my report writing phase, the overt political violence in Terai has been less pervasive and covert since February 2016, and the political violence in school is minimum level. Similarly, a significant decrease is observed on some forms of political violence, such as school closure, use of students in violent political protests, and attack in school. Nonetheless, the violent political protest induced negative effects on communal harmony between Madheshi and Pahade community might be sustained for some time. Unless it is reminded and reinforced, this issue may be slowly minimised over the time. The risk of political violence in school is still high, as political parties are yet to be committed to keep the party politics out from school.

I assumed that the students' academic performance and their exposure to *Lafada*, punishment, categorization and othering might mutually reinforce the adolescent students' exposure to violence in schools. To understand this issue, I discussed how students with lower educational performance in schools have been exposed to violence.

Who Will Be Punished if Not the *Bhuskul?*

I talked with two girls Ritu and Nita, sitting on the ground of School-5, when their teacher was taking his English language class. To me, it was normal to see that the teachers ask students to go out from the class as part of punishment, or students voluntarily leave their class without informing or asking the teachers. However, Ritu and Nita voluntarily left out their class; they believed that their English teacher was perfectly OK with their action. There were a total of 14 students seating on the ground during the English language class on that particular day and they were chatting with

their friends and some of them even left the school early. I observed that Ritu and Nita were enjoying their chat. I decided to sit and talk with them.

Me: Hey, how are you?

Ritu: We are OK(hesitant and feeling a bit uncomfortable)!

Me: It seems you are enjoying being out of the class?

Ritu: Yes, we are not good students (saying it but not so serious)!

Me: Why so?

Nitu: Because teachers do not care us, they don't ask why we are out of the class; they care only the good students, they don't care about us.

Me: Why don't you go into the class?

Nitu: The teacher says, "Those students who disturb my class can go out from my class." So we feel good staying outside of his class.

Me: Do boys also sent outside the class like you?

Ritu: No, many boys stay out from the class, basically they go out from school after attendance is taken in the first period because they have to work for their livelihood. And others just go wherever they want and come back only in the last period.(Field note, February 2016)

This conversation shows that students' image of being 'good' or 'bad' or problematic influences their behaviour in school. When students feel that they are neglected, not appreciated, considered 'bad', they often become stubborn and violate school's norms and rules. When teachers categories them as 'bad', they found such categorization as one of the justifications to skip such teacher's class. However, I was surprised to see that the school administration (head teacher) also does not take action against the teacher who was allowing students to go away from his class.

Education structure, more specifically – their class structure, pushed Ritu and Nita out of the class and eventually they are pushed out of school. But, even being neglected, and considered 'bad', they could make their way to continue their schooling and change their life (Parajuli, 2008). But, they should have resisted teacher behaviour and stayed inside the class. More importantly, school system and structure created for all is suitable for those who are full time free from home, who are ready to listen to all the lectures of all teachers assigned, and tolerate different forms of violence in school. Whether the school system is suitable for all categories of students like those who have poor family support for their education, and those who have to work for their livelihood are important questions. The response would be more 'No' than 'Yes'. Nepal's education structure provides equal financial and other opportunities for students with unequal needs and capacities (Lamsal, 2014), which is also a form of structural violence.

Nisa, who admitted that she is a *Bhuskul* student in her class, mentioned, "Teachers only talk with good students, allow them to sit on the first bench, and not punish for their mistakes"(Field note, 24 January 2016). Why is Nisa not suitable for a certain class? Why do some of the friends studying with Ritu never come back to school? Ritu says, "Who cares whether we go into the class or not"(Field note, 24 January 2016). These anecdotes demonstrated that the school system was not good enough for the working students, or the weak *Bhuskul* students, and the school systems was not useful for all students (Epp & Watkinson, 1996). Many students silently dropped out because they were not able to cope with the exclusion and violence they experienced in schools.

These unequal opportunities are primarily created through the educational policies, programs and systems like curriculum, scholarship policies, and education

plan among others. The problem of inequity in education is also acknowledged by DoE (2014) in Consolidated Equity Strategy mentioning that Nepal's historical hierarchical social structure marginalized some of the groups and thus inequity in education and society is continuing and such marginalization is also negatively affecting their education.

In School-3, I discussed with Assistant Head teacher about the issue of education performance of students. In the conversation he mentioned, "Generally the *Adham,* stubborn or slow learner or disobedient students cannot be disciplined without punishments"(Field note: December 17, 2015).The meaning of *Adham* is, the student who has some characteristics of *Bhuskul* (poor learner) and *Jauwa* (who do not follow school's norms and aggressive). Lallan, a Tharu boy (grade ten) mentioned me that, "Teachers punish weak and gentle students for minor mistakes but they are afraid of the *Jauwa* boys" (Field note, January 2016). Teachers' and students' preconception about students' perceived learning achievement determine which category they fall into and such categorization also reflect different fronts including classroom.

Students' learning ability is reflected in the classroom set up as well. The students who are perceived as weak generally sit on the last bench so that they can avoid direct eye contact with the teachers. Nisha, student in School-4 shared,

> We are weak students. Teachers say that we are dumb; we know nothing (*tu Bhuskul che; Padai nai janaiche)*. They shout at us and beat us, but they don't say anything to *Irfan* (a good student in their class). When we are late to the class, teachers do not allow us to go inside the class but if Irfan comes late, it is not a problem. (Field note, December 2015)

Aiming to gain more understanding of how teachers discriminate *Janne* or good students and the *Bhuskul*, I observed the same group of students in their class. I observed,

> It was 11.15 am, after the bell, Social Studies teacher entered into the class and spoke, 'OK class, open your book and write answers to questions four and five on page 25. I realized after asking students to write the answers, the teacher came near the class topper Irfan and spent 5-7 minutes' time with him explaining how to write answers clearly. While doing this, the teacher came to him three times and the student went to the teacher twice to ensure that the answer is correctly written. In the class there were 51 students and Irfan was one of the luckiest students who got teacher's personal attention in the class. (Field observation note, 26 January, 2016)

The *Badhiya or Uttam* student is a fast learner, regular to the class, and can speak teacher's language, confident and gets good marks in the exam. Such students get more attention and support from the teachers. In contrast, the *Bhuskul, Jauwa* or *Aadham* students remain frequently absent in the class, do not get attention and support from the teachers. In general, I could not get into the detailed information on which cultural groups' students were more *Bhuskul* than the others. Nevertheless, most of the *Bhuskul* students were coming from Madheshi *Dalits*, Muslim, and Tharu, but less from the Pahade community. Among Madheshi, the Madheshi dalit students were performing poor than the high caste groups. For instance, in School-4, I found that most of the students categorized as *Bhuskul* were the students from the Terai Dalit families including *Fakir* of the Muslim community. Similarly, in some schools, there are very few Pahade students. The minority Pahade students are 'at risk' due to

the political violence and they are othered in school; nevertheless, they are considered as majority and privileged in the national context.

Language of Instruction and School Violence

Nepal has officially adapted multilingual policy but almost all schools use Nepali as the medium (language) of instructions. This also applies to the schools where the majority of population speaks Maithali, Tharu, and Awadhi language. Nepali language competency positively affects students' learning whereas non-Nepali speaking students' academic performance is generally lower than Nepali speaking students (Awasthi, 2004; Khanal, 2017; Yadava, 2007). I asked with Sima, a Awadhi speaking student, whether she feels the Maithali speakers equal to the Nepali speakers in school. She responded, "Awadhi speakers get less number because we are weak in Nepali language. We need to do extra efforts to compete with Nepali speakers"(Field note, 28 January 2015).

Like the Emani, most of the students whose mother tongue is other than Nepali language noted that he is weak in Nepali language that also affect his performance in other subjects. Awasthi (2004) and Yadava (2007) argued that there is high dropout, low achievement and repetition of class among the children who are taught in languages different from their home language. When students join school with other than Nepali language background, they have to face difficulties in competing with Nepali speaking communities. In addition to the discrimination against the slow learners, Nisa, a Maithali speaking student from Sunsari mentioned that he interacts less in his class because he does not feel confident to speak in Nepali. He mentioned, "We don't speak in the class because we can't speak Nepali properly. So, our friends laugh listening our mistakes"(Field note, November, 2015). Such humiliation is also a reason for the adolescent students dropping out from school. A

Maithali speaking teacher from Sunsari further argued, “Those students who can read Nepali language can catch up the course but it is difficult for those whose mother tongue is different. So they don’t feel comfortable to speak and interact in their class”(Field note, November, 2015).

This narrative of teacher and students shows that language competence is one of the major determents to academic performance. This argument also confirms another head teacher’s idea that, “some student’s life is enriched due to their culture”(Head teacher, School I). This shows that the Nepali language as the means of instruction prorogated by the Nepali education policy considering that all children now understand Nepali language. Thus use of one language in school is one of the major symbolic violence (Awasthi, 2004). Despite having multilingual policy use of one language provides some student’s favourable learning opportunities than the others. None of the five selected schools were implementing mother tongue education.

Nepal’s multilingual and mother tongue education has not shown any impact on learning outcomes (Poyck et al., 2016). This shows that the language of instruction remained a major challenge to the Nepali education system. The Assistant DEO of Sunsari said,

> Students coming from the minority language groups generally sit behind the class and their educational performance is poorer than the average students. Existing efforts are inadequate to support schools for equitable learning opportunities in multilingual classrooms.(Field note, 2016)

These reports and discussions show that the Nepali speakers were more privileged than the students who speak Maithali, Bhojpuri, Tharu and other language.

Primarily, after 1990, teachers were encouraged to teach in student's language as article 6.2 of Constitution recognised all the local languages or 'mother tongues' in the various parts of Nepal as National languages of Nepal (HMGN, 1991). Similarly, Pherali (2013) mentioned that the privileged class and the caste groups continued becoming educationally privileged even when the provision of education was relatively egalitarian. Bush and Saltarelli (2000) argued that negative face of education is contributed through reproduction of social and economic disparities. Various cultural factors like masculinity, habits of conformity, discipline and morality, the reproduction of inequalities, the intensely competitive examination regimes that lead to high levels of stress and anxiety are major causes of school violence (Barneset al., 2012, p.71). This discussion confirms that monolingual classroom has created unequal opportunities in the classrooms.

Language is one of the key deciding factors when students are categorized whether he/she is Madheshi, Pahade or Tharu because they have their distinct languages. This is not only unique case in Nepal, because five percent languages in the world is spoken by 95 percent of the world's population and thus dominates the remaining 95% language groups (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Hence, it is important to note that the Madheshi community speaks Maithali, Bhojpuri and Awadhi get equal opportunity as the Nepali speaker students.

Besides language, caste is another important factor contributing to students' educational performance in school.

Caste-Based Violence in Schools: It's a Private Matter

School is the place where students learn about equality, human rights and justice, but ironically schools in Nepal are still influenced by the hierarchical caste-based system. A SMC chairperson from Sunsari shared, "In our school, a number of

students are from backward communities. Our school administration and teachers do not think positive about poor Dalit students" (Field note, January, 2016). The manifestation of caste-based discrimination is less visible in public domain; however it is still practiced at the community and family level.

A women Dalit SMC chair in the school-3 stated, "Teachers and schools hesitate to express their discomfort to behave equally in schools but now, there is no open discrimination against Dalit students in school." On the basis of interactions and observations of students and teachers, I felt that the caste-based discrimination in urban schools with large diversity was lower in comparison with the schools located in rural setting with the domination of one cultural group. I observed more discrimination in School-4, where the majority of students were Terai Dalit and remaining others were from the middle and high caste Madheshi caste group students.

Supporting the fact that caste-based discrimination in school was less, a 15 year Dalit student of School-1responded that "there is almost no caste based discrimination in school but it is still practiced in our community, mainly at the private spheres of family"(Field note, December, 2015). In response to my question on whether there were any caste-hierarchies in the communities and school, a Maithali speaking teacher in School-5 shared, "In some districts Caste-Based discrimination it is still there. Educated people are more open and practice of caste based discrimination is less prevalent in school"(Field note, January, 2016).

In School-4, many children were coming from the Dalit communities and the majority of them were economically poor compared to the non-Dalit communities. A child club representative said, "There is high dropout rate among the the *Dalits* students"(Field note, January, 2016). Responding to the current status of caste based discrimination in school, a 15 year Dalit girl responded, "I do not tolerate if somebody

discriminates me. In school, I have never experienced such behaviour; it might be because I am good at my study" (Field note, October, 2015).

These anecdotes present the current situation of caste based discrimination in schools. A SMC chair from Kapilvastu informed, "Caste based discrimination is highly reduced in public areas but it is still practiced in private life"(Field note, October, 2015). This shows that, in school, caste based discrimination is less but it is still practiced in private sphere of life. A Madheshi teacher explained, "We can't break our traditional norms like with whom we can marry, who works as a priest, who can come in our worshipping room because these are our private matters"(Field note, January 2016).

The students studying in the school with high diversity and located in an urban setting experienced less caste-based discrimination than the students who were studying in low-diversity; one community group dominated school; located in the rural setting. Further, I explored the students' experiences of gender-based violence in school.

Izzat Is Our Most Important Treasury: Gender Based Violence in Schools

Gender based discrimination is one of the major forms of school violence. There are different types of gender based violence. In general, adolescent students and teachers view that boys and girls are equal in the initial conversation but after a while their views contradict with each others. The gender based violence at home influences adolescent students in school. A ninth grader Madheshi student shared how her education was constrained due to her gender role,

> You know, after completion of grade 8, my father and brother gave me pressure to leave school for their honor –*Izzat*. If we go to school and speak with boys, they think we run away with boys and that will bring *dishonor* to

> our family. They want me to work at home and get married as soon as possible. (Field note, November, 2016)

Honor or *Izzat* is one of the most referred reasons for imposing social restriction on girls. This practice is associated with the idea of fulfilling parental dharma or duty to marry their children on time; and to ensure that their children do not marry with the culturally prohibited mates. Thus, Izzat is the social constructed to bind parents to perform their duty and to the children to marry with the culturally accepted mates. When girls do not follow the family and community expected behaviour that includes marriage, education, choice of job, the family considers them *bad*. Emani, a grade 10 girl mentioned, "My parents denied sending me to a private school because girls had to wear a skirt and a shirt in the private school which was prohibited in our culture" (Field note, December 2015). The adolescent girls not only become victims of cultural restrictions but they are also actively taking part in creating and reinforcing such gendered social norms in the name of prestige. A rural Madheshi girl from Kapilvastu mentioned, "My family expects me to strictly follow their guidance. We have to follow social norms. What our parents say is the rule of our family"(Field note, October, 2015). As such, she perceives that following social norms is the rule of her normal life.

In other words, adolescents experience that social practices like early marriage, dowry, etc. restrict girls' movement and promote domestic violence. Her friends living in a mixed community, who are coming from educated or better exposed family, and living in urban market centers, however, do not easily accept such social practices so that they prove themselves as cultured (*izzatdar*). In an informal discussion, a Pahade high-caste girl shared how she believes in rooted gender stereotypes. She mentioned, "Whatever we say, a daughter is a daughter, they

can't be equal to boys" (Field note: October 2015 School-1).This way, gender stereotypes and discrimination are rooted in different forms in school. One grade 8 student from Kapilvastu shared a game in which he had been involved since a year.

> We play one game in school. This game is called *Satya* (truth) *or Himmat* (courage).To start; one had to spin a pen on a desk. If the tip of the pen went to my side, my friend would ask me, "Truth or Courage?" If I chose truth, then my friends would ask me difficult questions like: Do you have a girl friend? Do you love this girl? In response, I had to tell the truth. If they realized that I lied, then they would humiliate and bully me. To avoid such bullying, sometimes boys choose 'courage'. Then the boy would be asked to select a girl. When he selects a girl, the rest asks the boy to kiss or hug the selected girl. Boys select weak girl because they don't complain to the teacher.(Field note, November 2015)

This case shows that the students created games that establish sexual harassment, particularly against the weak girls in school. Similarly, the rules of the game were created that suited boys, so they could justify the reasons of harassing girls. This shows that there are many forms and facets of sexual violence in school. Vaisali, a13 years old student shared,

> One sir (male teacher) behaves me differently than other teachers. He behaves like showing love, touches in sensitive parts of my body, looks badly, and speaks bad things when I am alone. He gives high marks in exams to those who tolerate his activities and fewer marks to the others. It is happening in our school. He always calls some of us (girls) in his office room, ...(long pause) comes near us when we are alone, offers snacks in the school canteen. He also

> calls me to his office and offers money, gifts and good marks to accept what he asks for. He is very bad (crying.....). (Field note, 10 November, 2015)

This case shows that one abusive teacher could target as many girls as he can. Unless it is exposed, the teacher may continue abusing girls. This at least exposed that he had already trapped some girls and would also continue finding new targets. There are more stories of violence in schools. The political violent context directly and indirectly contributes to the increased sexual violence against school going adolescents, especially girls. Such violence is much painful for the students who need special care and support. In School-3, a visually impaired (VI) girl shared a story about her school,

> Our school toilets are dirty, they are far and out of our hostel campus, so at night we can't go to the toilet. Sometimes, outsiders come to this hostel and ask us to open the door at night. So we do not feel safe in this hostel as there are no security guards. During menstruation period, we are asked not to touch the food and go into the kitchen in school. Our *Didi* (Caretaker) behaves us like untouchables during our periods, and say that this is inauspicious. I feel unsafe here (crying)...but I want to continue my education.(Field note, 3 November 2016)

This narrative informs us that school life for adolescent girls with disability is much difficult in schools as they have been facing multiple forms of violence in school. They were experiencing gender based violence as well as violence based on their physical condition. It raises many questions about the education system that brings children with disabilities away from their home and keeps them in an isolated hostel with little support and protection. The students with disabilities are special but

they are generally not treated with special care and attention; thus they feel as *others*, the marginalized group in school.

Most of the cases of sexual violence are unreported in schools and the perpetrators are often the powerful persons, like teachers, head teacher or senior students. Many such cases of sexual harassments and abuses are unreported for many reasons. Responding to the question of why the cases of sexual violence are underreported in schools, a tenth grade girl responded, "We don't report the cases of sexual violence because if we report such cases the teachers, parents and friends mostly blame girls for being characterless"(Field note, October, 2015). Furthermore, an eighteen years' girl mentioned in a conversation that, "Teachers do not listen when we complain against these boys. One of our senior students could not tolerate '*Beizzat'* or lost of prestige and committed suicide"(Field note, November, 2015).

Izzat is the major notion that prohibits the adolescent girls to expose the case and publicly complain against the perpetrator of sexual violence in and around schools. A Pahade-girl from School-1 mentioned,

> If the victim complains against sexual abuse, the victim will be the first one who will be ashamed, and the victims' family's prestige and pride will be down; and even after taking all those risks there is no guarantee of justice. So it is better to be silent"(Field note: October 14, 2015).

In a qualitative study, Poudel (2017) found that social expectations like expectations from son and daughter; teacher's differentiated behaviours, socio-ethnic discriminations are some of the major causes of gender based violence in schools. However, his study did highlight the women's honor or *Izzat*, one of the major reasons why the victimized girls tolerate violence and thereby silently accept perpetrators act. Staub (2003) argued that the small action of victims could make an

important difference in prevention of violence if the victims and the perpetrators could use their capacity to take action against such violence. As long as the victims remain silent in the name of *Izzat*, the perpetrators may continue their violent acts.

The gender, caste, knowledge of majority's language and academic performances are major cultural aspects that determine who have power and authority and who are underdogs in the society. The popular metaphor in the Terai, *Jiski Laathi Uski Bhaish* is dogged in the society and culture. Such metaphores establish the authority of power holder elites, and further cemented by the religion. Though most of my professors and stakeholders mentioned that creating academic discussion on religious violence is difficult and it could also be a sensitive issue.

I recognized the challenge of understand the borderline between religious and cultural practice versus cultural violence during fieldwork. It was more challenging in report writing stage. Hence, I presented two anecdotes and also acknowledged that religion is associated with the individual, community, group and state's sentiments. My attempt here is not to criticize or question the importance and holiness of any religious community's faith and respect, but to highlight some incidences of how religion can be used and misused to justify different forms of violence in and around the schools.

It Is a Matter of Religion, You Better Keep Quiet!

The large majority of the students and teachers in my study area were Hindu. The Hindu majority students did not feel that there were any forms of religious discriminations in school. The complexity of gender based violence based on religious beliefs can be presented through a brief interview transcription of Emani, a liberal Muslim adolescent student.

Me: How is your family support to your education?

Emani: When I was studying in grade 7, my father and brother wanted me to leave the school. But my mother supported me and mentioned us that she will take care of my education. So, they allowed me to continue my education.

Me: Can't you start teaching profession after school?

Emani: This is what I want. I want to do the job, but my families will not allow me to work. My brother is very strict in this matter. He thinks that I am a bad girl because I am not strictly following the Muslim religion.

Me: What is your hobby?

Emani: I don't want to marry soon. I want to earn and help my parents, which is my interest.

Me: How beautiful hobby!

Emani: Yes. But what can I do, everybody wants to kill my hobby.

Me: If you keep trying you can do this. In Nepal Muslim girls have done so. And you have the capacity to go much higher.

Emani: Yes, there are many who studied much and are working. But, our community does not allow girls to work outside, but how can I break our culture? (Field note, December, 2015)

While saying the last word, Emani looked very sad and low. In the beginning, she was talking like happy and smart girl who wanted to fight against violence and study much higher and work to help her mother. However, when she reached to 'culture' she looked like she was helpless. When Emani was saying that 'Everybody wants to kill my hobby', she was referring her gendered family which was influenced by the religious belief. However, Emani was enjoying special freedom than the large majority of Muslim adolescent students in her community. Unlike most of the grown up girls, Emani was studying up to 10 in general school, not in the religious school,

and she was wearing non-traditional outfits like *Kurta Salwar* and actively taking part in extra activities in school. On top of that, against her family's wishes, she wanted to complete grade 12 and before marriage wanted to do some job to support her mother.

Emani's classmate, another Muslim girl mentioned, "I wanted to go to a Boarding School but my family did not allow me to go because in private schools we have to wear a frock as school uniform." This discussion shows that the middle class Muslim families do not send their girls to English Medium private schools because they have to wear school uniform which is not suitable to the Muslim culture (cover the full body). Thus, Muslim families send their girls to the Muslim Religious School, Madarasha. This means, Muslim girls do not have freedom to choose whether they want to go to religious school, private or public school, rather their schooling is determined based on whether the school is compatible with the Muslim culture or not. I met fewer girls in higher grades like grade 9-10 in comparison to the middle grades like 4-5 grade levels.

Praying goddess Sarswati is part of school's everyday life in most of the Nepali schools. Some of the Muslim students said that they like such practice but some of the Muslim students expressed their discomfort to participate in such practice as worshipping anyone besides Allah is against their religion. This is especially a concern for those students coming from the Muslim religious schools. A Muslim boy (16) argued, "In our school we learn dancing and singing, and also worship Sarswati, but it is prohibited in our religion"(Field note, November, 2015). The Hindu religious groups get more days of holiday during their festival whereas the others do not get such privilege. Providing one culture or religion high priority and space and not giving such priority to the other in school is a religious discrimination.

In November 2015, I was doing my fieldwork in School –III. In the morning, I got a call from a teacher, "Sir, if you are planning to come to our school, revise your plan because our school is closed for next 10 days because there is *Saptaha* in our school." *Saptaha* is a seven or nine-day long Lord Krishna's story telling program organized by the Hindu communities. Two weeks ago, I was attending a mass rally of over 1,000 people including about 500 students from School III in a *Kalash Yatra,*a walk by carrying a holy water filled bronze pot, in the school area. I was participating in the *Kalash Yatra* and taking pictures of some of the Muslim students who were carrying water pots and chanting, 'Long live Lord Krishna' (Shree Krishna Bhagaban ki, Jaya!!!*)*. During my fieldwork, the *Saptaha* was organized next to the school premise and thus in School. Tika Sir, an assistant headteacher mentioned, this is a matter of religion, so it is better to keep quiet on this matter. In most cases, such Mahayagya is organized in school, using the religious means, to collect donation for school construction or improve school's physical infrastructure among others.

The few experiences shared by the adolescents and some cases of religious rituals or performances provide some clues to understand how religion influences our culture. In reality, religion determines our norms and values in much deeper level. Our priests, parents, elders in our everyday life and also in particular functions like festivals, and rituals remind what is right and what is wrong, what is ok and what is not. Discrimination during menstruations, caste based discrimination and worshipping power, and stories of self-sacrifice for the honor of family are part of religious stories and myths of our culture. The Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist have their unique religious and cultural practices. Do's and don'ts are enshrined in all religions and such practices are enforced and reinforced by the traditional healers, and religious leaders, the influential agents of society.

We are always asked to discuss the role of religion in making peace but why we restrict children to have open discussion on the role of religion in violence? Noddings (2012) argued that there are many incidences in the human history where people involved in violent wars in the name of religion, but why can't we have rational and civil debate on the role of religion? Realizing the importance of research in this field and also the research gap, I support Noddings' (2012) call for the researchers to "carry out a rich and non dogmatic study of the connection between religion and war" (p.94). It is important to understand the role of religion in promotion of peace and non violence and how the religion is also used to justify the use of violence.

Essence of the Chapter

Adolescent students experiencing various forms of school violence in Nepal which is further rooted in language, gender, caste, and religion. Each forms of the violence are interrelated and mostly one form of violence has positive relation with the other. Hence, it is impossible to fully understand without considering and knowing other forms of violence. Direct *Lafada* is rooted to the cultural face of school violence. The direct forms of violence like punishment and or student's involvement in bullying are interpreted based on student's identities constructed in school culture. Power is involved in all forms of violence like punishment, creating *Lafada*, discrimination, violence against girls, *Dalits*, poorly performing students, the religious minorities, and children with disabilities. The poor students are categories as *Bhuskul* or *Jauwa* or *Beizzeti.* Such violence has consequences in life.

In Chapter VI, I have presented the adolescent students' major perspectives on how school violence has been affecting their education and studies.

CHAPTER VI

EFFECTS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE ON ADOLESCENT STUDENTS' EDUCATION

Adolescents have many negative effects when they observe, listen, and experience different forms of violence in school. School violence has negative effects on emotional, personal, social and spiritual aspects of the students, teachers and others. From direct violence, students are physically injured, and psychologically stressed, and traumatized. From the structural and cultural violence, students are directly affected by the broader environment like media, political party's activities, and government policy. The students who are once victimized or have experienced the severe forms of violence like rape, maim, physically attack, threat to death, loss of property are more affected by and involved in school violence. Similarly, the students who are recognised with negative identities like *Bhuskul*, *Jauwa*, and *Adham* experience more violence than others.

I remember, due to the fear of some strict teachers, I skipped a number of days from school. I do not know what the effects of my memories of school violence in my life; however, from this fieldwork I gained a better understanding of the negative consequences of school violence on education. The major consequences observed in this study are: loss of school days; unable to complete the expected course; less attendance; lower educational performance and dropout, sense of insecurity, loss of hope about future. These consequences also culturally varied among the *Bhuskul* and the *Badhiya* students.

Disturbances in Teaching Learning Activities

Teachers, students and other stakeholders mentioned maintaining discipline at present is more difficult than in the past. Teachers believe that students are going out of control because schools have stopped using corporal punishment and the adolescent students are increasingly involving in political activities. A teacher from Kapilvastu shared, "Every year, students are becoming more and more aggressive and arrogant. We are forced to call police to control students's fights. We called the police more than three times in the last three months"(Field note, 22 January, 2016).

When Sima said that 'Lafada is the regular phenomenon in our school', I realized that *Lafada* is a representative word to capture the overt forms of violent activities in school: somebody drink alcohol and comes to the school, a student fights with his or her classmate, a political party or group calls for *Bandh*, somebody is expelled from school, and one student is bullied. These incidences disturb the schools' normal teaching learning activities. Such overt or visible situation is considered as *Lafada*. However, there will be no *Lafada* when a student dropout silently from school, punished for not doing his/her assignment, or expelled from the class for not being able to give correct answer in their class. Such actions in school are considered as normal. In any case, increasing *Lafada* is a concern for adolescent students as it disturbs their classes, and teaching learning activities. In addition to *Lafada*, loss of school days, due to *Bandh* and or political strikes is another serious issue having negative affects on teaching learning activities.

Loss of School Days due to Political Violence

School *Bandh* has direct negative impacts on formal education because the school is closed abruptly any days of the academic cycle. Violence negatively affects students' body, mind and their context and so is the education. In academic year 2072

B.S., many of the schools in the Terai remained closed for about five months. The number of incidences of school closure due to *Bandh* in 2007-2013 was significant and in 2015-16 the number of *Bandh* was less but two major events: earthquakes and prolonged protest in the Terai-Madhesh contributed to the highest days of school closure in any academic sessions in Nepal. The number of school closure incidences was 707 in 2008, 1205 in 2010 but reduced to 218 in 2013 (Dhungana, 2014). In 2015 and 16, though the number of incidences of *Bandh* were decreased, due to prolonged general strike and earthquakes, the total days of school closure was higher in the academic year 2015 and 2016.

Presenting the effects on education during the Madheshi protest in the Terai, National Human Rights Commission (2016) reported,

> During this period even the right to education has been badly affected. Until the preparation of this report, schools had functioned only for five days out of 122 in Parsa District and minimum 16 hundred thousand students were deprived from their right to education. Total six of the school going children has been killed during this period.(p.2)

This report shows the intensity of violence in and around schools from September 2015 to February 2016 in Nepal. *Bandh* is one of the major forms of school violence imposed by political parties and other similar forces in Nepal.

Loss of education, course incompletion and feeling of fear of being failed and uncertainty are major consequences of school *Bandh* for many days. Based on the economic condition and social class, the effect of school *Bandh* is unequal among children. A Dalit teacher in Sunsari described how school closure had more negative effects among the marginalized students. He mentioned,

> Economically strong and literate middle and high class parents can send their children to the private schools; and during *Bandh* they can afford private tuition for their children. But, poor parents had to work hard to get two meals a day. Due to the lack of parental guidance and support many children from poor and marginalized families often get involved in smoking cigarettes, chewing tobacco, gambling, drinking alcohol, and teasing girls.(Field note, 2 January, 2016)

About the effects of the long political protest, a student of grade 8 mentioned, "During the *Bandh* many students were used in the political rally and violent protests, so we missed our chance to learn many good lessons" (Field note, January 2016). The effect of long school closure among children is unpredictably high. The chance of school dropout has increased due to political strikes and *Bandh*. When children are out of school for prolonged period, the risk that they may never come back to the school is increased (UNICEF, 2015).

Due to political violence, the adolescent students were less regular to school; they were feeling less confident about course completion and being passed in the exam. Anita, a grade 9 student from Kapilvastu said; "I am not hopeful that the situation may change any soon, because political parties don't care about our education" (Field note, December7, 2015). Anita's feeling of hopelessness represents the psyche of majority of the students I met and discussed. They were not optimistic that there will be positive change any soon.

When parties announce closure from social media, public announcement, and organizing public rally, there were no practive actions such as organize discussion with students and parents, call schools' meeting and decide whether schools should be closed or not, appeal to call off such strike or engage in dialogue with concern parties

to discuss about the consequences of *Bandh*. Closing school is the simplest option for school administration as they do not have to take any risks. In this sense, *Bandh* is accepted by the school and take active part in school closure by informing their students about *Bandh* and close school.

Loss of school hours and days are other consequences of school closure. Though, such loss is varied based on school's location, leadership and the parents. Similarly, some students have more capacity to recover the loss than the others. A Madheshi teacher in Sunsari mentioned, "Some parents gives high importance to education and support their children to study at home and some of them send their children for extra tuition class during and after school closure to cover the lost school hours" (Field note: January 14, 2016). This shows that the effects of school closure are more to some of the students than the others.

Sense of Fear and Insecurity

The adolescent students are feeling less secured in their schools due to covert and overt violence prevailing in schools. Similarly, they could not concentrate on their study due to the frequent school closure, fear in schools, and other forms of violence in schools.

> *Question (Me).* Do you feel safe in this school?
>
> *Participant (student) responded*: To me it is 30%. There is no safety in this school because not only to the students but teachers were also beaten by local people so even teachers are not safe in this school. In this context, how can the students be safe?
>
> We don't feel safe because the Madheshi and Pahade groups made their own gangs; invited gangs from outside and fight in school. Fighting is an everyday business in this school. (Field note, November, 2015)

These responses inform us how students felt insecure in schools and how the political contexts and the othering process create the state of fear and uncertainty among the students. In addition to the political violence, corporal punishment, and school bullying are other major challenges affecting students' academic performance.

Insecurity and decreased mutual trust and harmony between the Pahade and the Madheshi during the long violent protest in the Terai-Madhesh have negative influence on the adolescent students. Referring to a case of Pahade-Madheshi community's tension, which was ignited two weeks ago in his area, a Tharu student of grade 10, Lallan shared, "Here, a Madheshi leader threatened the Pahade communities to leave this bazaar within 24 hours. So, I had to protest against his speech. How can he threaten the Pahade to leave this place" (Field note, 29 October 2015)? Lallan's conversation shows that the students are not only affected by violence but also directly involved in some of the political activities supporting or rejecting violence.

The Assistant Head-teacher of School 3also expressed his concern about security challenge in the area. He mentioned, "I do not feel safe here, nobody knows when Madheshi and Muslims attack us here"(Field note, December 2015). Similar to the Assistant Head teacher of Kapilvastu, another Tharu teacher mentioned, "I can't say anything to the students, because they could call their parents in school against our action. They can beat us." The communal tension and sense of insecurity was more visible in two schools while it was almost invisible in other two schools. Nonetheless, after the violent political protests ended in February 2016, such communal tensions seem gradually decreased.

During the initial months of my fieldwork, the tension between Pahade and Madheshi was high, but such tension was much decreased towards the end of my fieldwork. Hence, despite the increased sense of fear among teachers and students the

risk of widespread communal violence was very low. In School-3, a Madheshi teacher in Sunsari said, "Violence is pervasive in the Terai, but it is not against the Pahade people. Our Head teacher is also a Madheshi as he is living here since last fifty years" (Field Note, 26 January 2015).

Due to political violence the pain and fear of being categorized and discriminated are increased in school. Jha (2016) opined that, the political actors are competing to be more radical however there is a risk that the political actors might not be able to control the anger and frustrations of large portion of under-20 aged populations.

The political tension also influenced the level of cooperation among teachers-teacher, and student-teacher in school. A Madheshi teacher of School-3 mentioned,

> I and Mr. Sharma are teaching in this school for the last 14 years. He used to come to the school on my motorcycle regularly during these 14 years. We were like brothers. But last week when I asked him to go to the school by his own for a day, he seriously questioned, 'Now, you don't want a Pahade friend? (Field Note: October 26, 2015)

Explaining the increased tension in Terai, a Madheshi teacher shared that "The distance between Madheshi and Pahade is increasing. I don't think we can regain that respect" (Field note, December 2016). This clearly indicated that whether communal tension can be reduced or not, increased violence in the Terai has been negatively affecting the students' education.

In addition, school's routinized violent activities like corporal punishment; sexual harassment and bullying also made students unsafe. Though corporal punishment is officially banned, I observed teachers using corporal punishment in schools mainly targeting the smaller kids. Due to this, students mentioned that they

were not able to concentrate on their education rather they wanted to avoid punishment, sexual harassment, and other forms of violence in schools. A 12 year-old-boy said, "Everybody tells me '*phuchhe'* [small boy] because I am the smallest boy in my class. Big boys and even girls push me and tease me. Because of this I don't like this school. Bullying has negative effects on adolescent students' education.(Field note, October 2015)" Wormington, Anderson, Schneider, Tomlinson, and Brown (2016) in a large scale survey found that there is a quite strong association between peer victimization and academic outcome as the victimized students are less engaged in schools, remain more absent and perform poorly (p.14). My observation also reveals that often weak and poor students are subject to such bullying and victimization.

Hence, in a fragile context, the adolescent students were sensing more insecurity and high risk of exposure to direct violence in their school than in the normal situation. Likewise, lower academic freedom is another important consequence closely interlinked with the sense of insecurity in school.

Lower Academic Freedom and Culture of Silence

The political violence also created fear among students and teachers in schools that led to self-censorships in teaching learning activities and thus teachers feel that their academic freedom is curtailed. There is evidence of decreased inter-group harmony between different groups in the Terai-Madhesh. Online news portal Edukhabar.com reported, "During the protest in the Terai-Madhesh area, some Madheshi blamed Pahade teachers as anti-Madheshi elements. As the result of the ongoing protests, the relation between Pahade and Madheshi students was negatively affected"(Edukhabar.com, March, 28, 2016).

Due to the issue of decreased inter-group harmony, teachers and students had to limit their open interaction in school on the sensitive issues like political protest, school closure, and others. One Tharu teacher in Kapilvastu shared,

> Nowadays, teaching is not an easy job. If we mistakenly say something or punish Madheshi or Muslim student, they could call their parents in school. Some parents come to the school to threaten us without listening us. It is more serious when students interpret our action as a racially biased.(Field note, 24 November 2015)

As a result of increased tensions in school the teachers were unable to speak freely in their classes. A teacher mentioned about the increased need of self-censorships in teaching learning activities. He mentioned, "We have to think three times before taking disciplinary actions against the Muslim and the Madheshi students. It can be counterproductive to us"(Field note, December 2016). When teachers and students' academic freedom is challenged, they might not be learning, when students are not interacting freely and openly in the class, it is very likely that the teaching and learning activities are negatively affected. The decreased academic freedom restricted students' to engage in constructive and critical dialogue in school.

Low Priority to Education

Education is not prioritized when students perform less, fails in exam or the parents do not see any positive incentive of education. Because of high exposure to multiple forms of discrimination and violence at home, school and community the *Dalits*, girls and other disadvantaged students' performance is negatively affected. A grade 9 Madheshi student from Sunsari shared how cultural background affects their education.

> Among the Meheta and Yadav caste groups (higher caste), there are a few like 2-3 school dropouts in our village. But among the Terai Dalit castes, there are many out of school children who, never admitted to school and even if they are admitted they do not attend the school regularly. They fail in the exam and many of them dropout from the school.(Field note, January, 2016)

Gender and caste-based discrimination have negative effect on the students' academic performance. The Dalit girls have generally lower educational performance due to their socio-cultural situations (Poudel, 2007). In 2011, literacy rate of the Terai Dalit girls was 21.1 percent, the lowest among all other communities whereas the literacy rate of the high caste Madheshi community was 73.9 percent (CBS, 2012).

Sexual violence, exploitation and harassment made schools unsafe for girls. In this regards, Rana (2008) argued that bullied students' learning ability and academic achievement is negatively affected. Vaisali (13) shared, "I don't like this school because of one teacher. He always tries to touch me and also in my sensitive parts. I don't feel safe and therefore I am not able to concentrate to my study when he is around"(Field note, September, 2015).

On March 28, 2016, the online news portal 'edukhabar.com' published a news story on how the prolonged violent protests in the Terai-Madhesh affected children's mind and how students behaved in their classes. Many students lost their interest in education rather they started being involved in political rallies and programs. In some schools, students even started chanting political slogans in their classes (Edukhabar.com, 2016). While discussing the ongoing school *Bandh* and other forms of school violence a Pahade adolescent student mentioned, "When schools are forcefully closed, teachers could not complete the assigned academic course, due to

rumors of violence, we can't concentrate on our study at home (Field note, January 2016).

Low academic performance contributes to the high exposure to violence (Akiba, LeTendre, Baker, & Goesling, 2002), and the dropout students' involvement in violence is higher than others (Staff &Kreager, 2008). Burdick-Will (2013) argued that "school violence can have more direct negative effects on student's learning through cognitive stress and classroom disruptions, than changes in perceived safety, general school climate, or discipline practices" (p.1). The poor performing student's are further trapped into early marriage. Timsina (2011) also argued that adolescent girls' educational opportunities are largely curtailed as higher priority is given to their marriage and chastity.

I observed that the community schools have higher number of girls in the Terai-Madhesh whereas more boys go to institutional schools. Parents' inability and lack of willingness to invest in girls' education was one of the reasons for having a higher number of girls in the community school. The overall literacy in Nepal is 65.9 percent but this rate is 57.4 percent for women (CBS, 2012). This also shows the negative effect of gender based violence on education. Girls' education is still less valued than educating boys in the Madheshi communities as they think that girls need to spend time for household chores (Pokharel, 2008).

Low educational achievement is the most important negative consequences of school violence. As the result of violence and increased sense of insecurity, students are unable to concentrate on their studies. Low performance of student is also positively contributed by individual's cultural background like their caste and language, and the context like school closure. This finding also confirms the finding

of UNICEF (2001) which mentioned that learners who witnessed violence in their school or at home may not consider education as a priority in their life.

When students have to cope with cultural self-concepts like Madheshi, Tharu, *Badhiya*, *Janne*, Pahade, *Bhuskul*, *Jauwa*, they start believing about their superiority or inferiority or start developing rational to justify such identities. Staub (2003) argued that such cultural self-concepts can contribute to the tendency to turn against others (p.297). Hence, when one group start considering school as not suitable for them and create self-concept as lower than the others, it could create foundation for more tensions in and around the society.

School Dropout and Continued Violence

Dropout is the last resort for adolescent students when they cannot cope with school violence. It is a sign of positive development that most families are sending their children to school but the high dropout rate of adolescent girls is one of the major challenges of education. Gender based violence is one of the contributors to higher dropout rates among the adolescent girls. Adolescent girls are more absent from school as they have to help their family members in agriculture and family chores. Nisha, a 14 year-old Madheshi Dalit girl, shared her situation,

> I have to collect fodder for goat and buffalo, cook food and wash dishes before coming to school. I have to stay at home and look after my small brother when parents are busy. My sister got married and dropped out when she was studying in grade seven.(Field note, January, 2016)

The adolescent girls who got married in the early age are forced to get involved in the household chores and they are not able to prioritise education (Pokharel, 2008). Moreover, girls are more vulnerable to teasing (bullying) in schools; they are sexually abused and even exploited by teachers. Consequently, they

experience stress and trauma pushes them from school before they complete their school education. After experiencing sexual violence and gender discrimination and early marriage, girls are forced to leave school. The Dalit girls are more absent as they have to work at home, but their names are continually registered in school for Dalit scholarships and other associated benefits. Though, considering poor governance system in the schools, I was unclear whether such benefits allocated for Dalit students are distributed to the respective students or not.

The marginalized and poorly performing students might get involved in violence for their identity; however, it undermines their educational attainment (Staff & Karager, 2008). The adolescents who experienced violence mentioned that they will take revenge and punish the perpetrators. This feeling of revenge and counter violence can increase the risk of violence in schools.

Generally, the violence creates more violence in schools as victims are more likely to become victimizers and thus become part of the vicious cycle of violence (Zur, 1995). Therefore, both the victims and the perpetrators have to pay the price of violence (Eisenbraun, 2007; Estevez et al., 2008; Rana, 2006). Most of the poor performing students belong to the oppressed communities who lack proper family support and come from economically poor families. Such situation is exacerbated through the structural violence like gender or caste based discrimination or lack of access to basic health services. When the victims of structural violence enter into schools, they are more likely to be victimized with direct violence such as corporal punishment, bullying and sexual harassment. Hence, the victims of one form of violence are more likely to be trapped into the vicious cycle of violence.

When adolescents are involved in violence, their academic performance is negatively affected. As a result of restrained academic performance, the adolescents

who experience different forms of violence could lose many positive life opportunities that are associated with academic qualification. The adolescent's who is dropped out before reaching to the grade 10 may not realize that he lost his or her important life opprtunities. The consequences of violence on adolescent students' education are not only having negative effects on individuals but also to the broader societal level. When adolescents are neglected, discriminated or humiliated, they are more marginalized in schools and in the society. Some neo-Marxists argued that education is organized in such a way that through the cultural reproduction (Bourdieu & Jean-Claude, 1991), some are more marginalized than the others. As such, poor performing students are neglected and are prone to school violence than the student who is good at the academic performance. This way, the low performance in school means the higher exposure to violence and higher the chance of school dropout and higher the chance of missing many positive life opportunities in future.

Essence of the Chapter

The cultural concept of school as a family is problematic as long as the school keeps tolerating and neglecting different forms of violence in school. School violence is contributing to produce low performing students, students with poor psychological and emotional health. As the result, the students may loss many future life opportunities. In addition, students who leave school with experiences of violence are more likely to be perpetrating violence and contribute to continue the vicious cycle of violence in and around school.

CHAPTER VII

STAKEHOLDERS' ROLES IN RESPONDING TO SCHOOL VIOLENCE

In the last two chapters of this thesis, I presented the darker sides of schooling in the Terai. It was ironic reality that our school culture and norms silently tolerate and support such dark facets of schooling. In addition to this irony, the schools were more vulnerable because of the violent schooling, poor school management and the not favourable cultural context. The public school's situation in Terai was under the shade of multiple forms of violence. Despite having many challenges and violence in school, schooling in Nepal also has many positive facets like high school enrollment rate and increased access to education. The stakeholders are actively making efforts to prevent school violence, and promote non-violence in school. In this Chapter, I have highlighted some of the ongoing school violence prevention actions and initiatives.

There are many actors and factors that are actively contributing to prevent violence and make schools a safe and enabling space for education. Individual, community, family, peer and schools are major factors that affect both positively and negatively to school violence (Rodney, Srivastava, & Johnson, 2008). The adolescent students often responded school violence at their personal level as they are both the victims of violence and the actors responding to violence. Spivak (1988) argued that the subalterns or the marginalized victims can speak, but it is unclear whether their voice is heard or not. The *Bhuskul* students also respond to violence, but their means and ways of response were not loud enough. Their voice raised against the violence perpetrated with the influence of religion, ethnicity, caste, political ideology and

school norms has been less effective. However, the actors like students, teachers and other stakeholders are actively engaged in responding to school violence.

Buddhist idea, 'there is an end of suffering' (Bodhi, 1984) and Vedic idea of 'non-violence is our ultimate karma' are useful eastern philosophical guidance to take action against violence. These ideas guided me while finalising this chapter.

Himmat is Important to Respond to School Violence

When a school is defined as a family, it is important to note that the use of violence against one family member is generally taken as family's internal matter. However, the idea of school as family helps to protect external attack in school. I was interested in understanding how school's students, teachers and administration jointly work to prevent school family from external attack and violence. I engaged with students, teachers and school management committee members and explored the stakeholder's approach in preventing school violence. The students who have some *Himmat*, courage or capacity to fight against violence, are taking different actions in responding to school violence.

I witnessed that avoidance of violence as one of the most common strategies to deal with violence in the schools. Some adolescents ignore some forms of violence like discrimination so that they can avoid confrontation and aggression in schools. Largely, students and teachers perceive institutional schools as better in comparison with the community schools. A girl studying in Nepali medium community school mentioned, "The students studying in the private schools feel proud of their school; they always look down on us. But, we don't care with what they say" (Field note, October 2015). Though it is not the best way to respond to school violence, but avoiding risk of violence is another proactive way of preventing violence in schools.

Violence avoidance is almost like being docile. Some students also reported that they remain docile against violence. They tolerate the general incidences like *Lafada*, though it could encourage the perpetrators to continue their violent activities. A 17 year-old visually impaired boy responded, "We need to accept our problems and fight for success" (Field Note, October, 2015). Like being docile, acceptance and tolerance of certain level of discrimination are also used as strategies to respond to violence. However, this could encourage perpetrators to continue using violence in and around schools. Thus, accepting and tolerating violence could be useful for a short period of time as they give adolescents some time to prepare for more effective violence response actions.

In general, girls and boys applied different strategies to deal with school violence. For girls, responding to sexual and gender based violence is their first priority. Recognizing the symptoms of violence is the first step of preventing violence. The adolescent girls recognize that mostly boys get involved in gender based violence, and they usually start from getting close with the girls. In the beginning, the boys use verbal and body gestures and symbols and tease girls; write text messages, love letters, ask for phone number and start sending texts and other things but later, some of them create opportunities for sexual violence.

Devi said, "We can recognize perpetrators by their body language, activities and behaviour, their ways of speaking and looking are different"(Field note, October 2015). As Devi remarked, other students also recognize bad intentioned teachers by their behaviour. They also know how teachers put traps on girls before targeting them. Niki 17, mentioned, "Teachers give false promise of giving high marks in the exam, try to give us money, offer snacks in the school canteen, give some gifts, and call when we are alone, offer free private tuition class"(Field note, October 2015). This

shows the students' ability to understanding perpetrators' behaviour is useful for taking proactive actions to prevent sexual violence.

Education enables girls to speak up about their situation and rights. A Muslim girl Emani explained how she has been responding to different forms of violence that she experienced at her home and school. She elaborated,

> There are many bad boys in school. Whenever they see girls, they say this and that, they try to do things. But we need to have courage to fight against them. Once a Nepali boy asked me, "Where are you going?" And his intention was not good. Therefore, in response, I loudly mentioned him to stop saying that kind of rubbish things. After that, he stopped speaking with me, which is OK. We need enough *Himmat* or courage to fight against bad boys.(Field note, November, 2015)

Courage or '*Himmat'* was the major source that helped her to fight against violence. For her, *Himmat* means the mixture of psychological and physical power to fight against violence. She further said that she needs a lot of courage to fight against so many social and cultural barriers. She was also questioning her ability whether she could also break many forms of chains of violence or not. Girls' *Himmat* doesn't work when they are trapped in the situation like early marriage. From quantitative analysis of the relationship between child marriage and girls' dropout, Sekine and Hodgkin (2017) argued that the married adolescent girls studying in grade seven to ten are 10 times more likely to dropout from school than their unmarried peers.

In one of the discussions, Gita, a 16 year-old girl described, "Sometimes we complain and protest against violence, and sometimes we also fight with such boys. When we complain, normally teachers give punishment to the boys who tease us"

(Field note, November 2015). This shows that report or complaint against teachers, peers or parent is a common way to deal with violence.

Emani's experience is much similar to another girl, Nita, a Madheshi girl of grade 10 who shared how she has been struggling with her family members to continue her education,

> After completing the School Leaving Certificate (SLC), I want to continue my education in any cost and for this I am fighting with my family. One of my teachers is helping me by offering free coaching for SLC exam preparation. But how can I pay school fee if my parents don't support? It may be possible, but it is difficult to continue education without family support. To get success in education, I am doing all the household chores and study at night when everybody goes to bed.(Fieldwork, November, 2015)

Girls value education because they believe continuing education means avoiding many forms of violence in their life. If they avoid early marriage, they could avoid being pregnant and mother in early age, thus they can be avoiding risks of being trapped into the household works. So, for girls, continuing their education is not only for education rather it is the most effective way of avoiding many forms of cultural and gender based violence, too. To continue their education, they are using different strategies. A Dalit girl (15) shared how she has been rejecting proposals of early marriage. She mentioned,

> I mentioned my sister (who loves me much) about my interest and I mentioned her that I do not want to marry. If they force, I will call the police. When I was studying in grade 7, my father and brother wanted me to leave the school. But my mother supported me and mentioned me that she will take care of me. So,

I will keep her trust, and do what my mother tells me to do.(Field note, October 2015)

In addition to *Himmat*, the students also were using their intelligence to recognize the possible threats and take preventive actions to deal with violence. Emani further shared how she has been protecting herself from sexual harassment in school. She mentioned, "In our class, there are many bad boys, but when we (girls) are firm, the bad boys can't manipulate us, they can't make us bad if we are good" (Field note, November 2015). The adolescent students are aware that the experience of teasing is more or less based on their individual capacity and agency. Some students are targeted more and some less by the perpetrators. Providing some characteristics of the possible target of perpetrators, Devi a 16year-old girl added, "Boys don't dare to tease girls who are bold, strong, can speak loudly and can argue with them. However, boys tease more to the girls who are shy and less reactive and those who tolerate such behaviour" (Field note, September 2015).

Devi's argument provides useful information about the characteristics like more or less assertive skill (one of the important elements of *Himmat*) as influential forces to prevent violence. In addition to courage, and assertive nature, those who work hard can proactively avoid violence.

Similarly, recognizing the possible target of sexual violence is important to prevent such violence. Knowledge and capacity to recognize 'possible victim' and 'perpetrator' is important to prevent school violence. Devi further uttered, "Boys do not tease us when we walk with a man like a brother, a relative or a teacher. Teasing is less scary when we are in a group, but it is more serious when we are alone"(Field note, September, 2015). The avoidance is not always a good approach to respond to

violence. K. M. Williams (2005) argued that avoidance of violence as a problem could be taken as a 'justified behaviour' by the perpetrators.

When perpetrators are more powerful, it is more difficult to resist and prevent from simple preventive measures and thus we need help from others. Similarly, every adolescent girl is not like Emani, who owe *Himmat* to fight against and cope with violence. Some situations are more complex that even Emani could be a victim of violence. Emani stated, "I am not sure if I can break so many chains of violence without my family support"(Field note: December 14, 2015). So, the students need support from peers, teachers, family, school administration and other stakeholders to prevent and cope with school violence.

Peer support is one of the ways of preventing peer victimization in school. A ninth grader Madheshi girl responded, "We help some of the weak students and also ask teachers to help them because they are neglected most of the time"(Field Note, December, 2015). The adolescent girls recognize such challenge of abuse, harassment and exploitation and take actions to protect such students who are more targeted by the perpetrators. A 14 year old grade-8 girl responded: "It is difficult to say anything against teachers when they beat or use violence. But we can hide our friends far from the teachers who try to abuse them"(Field note, 2 October 2015). Girls take action to protect their peers from sexual harassment and exploitations but the majority of them can't be bold enough to complaint against their teachers.

Girls believe that perpetrators are primarily responsible for sexual harassment; abuse and exploitation. They also believe that the victims are also responsible. It is because girls are not aware of perpetrators' character in advance. However, sometimes, girls' certain behaviour also allows perpetrators to victimize them. Emani further expressed, "It is also the mistake of girls. Some girls are like that. They invite

trouble, try to be close with such teachers and boys, and unnecessarily try to go closer"(Field note, October 4, 2015). Though her friends shared that they generally can identify whose intention is bad and whose is not, it was not always easy.

Both boys and girls also use violent means of responding to violence. A 17 year old girl shared a story of her friend who tried to commit suicide when she was sexually abused by a teacher. She said, "My friend tried to chop her hand to commit suicide. Now she is OK, but she mostly remains absent from school"(Field note, September, 2015). In another case, a 13-year old boy shared, "Today, girls called me Ox (*Goru*). I also tease those girls who say such things to me"(Field note, October 2015). The bullied students often engage in bullying others. There is also a practice of violent resistance against violence. A 15 year old girl shared, "I slapped some boys who teased us, I am not afraid of boys"(Field note, October, 2015). Adolescents not always use constructive and non-violent ways of responding to violence, they sometimes turn out to be violent to combat violence against them.

To understand this issue, I discussed with some students who were perceived as good '*Sojho*' – gentle students - by their teachers. When I asked, what they could do when they experienced violence, a grade nine boy responded, "We can do anything. We can beat teachers, we can beat *bad boys*, we can be violent if we want" (Field note, January, 2016). When boys heard or noticed that teachers sexually abused a girl studying in their class, in the beginning that issue became an issue of 'gossiping' because nobody was complaining about it. In another case, students attacked the teacher who was involved in sexual abuse. A ninth-grader adolescent mentioned, "When the victim is close to our community or is a relative it is more serious. One year ago a teacher was beaten when a sexually abused girl shared that

she was abused by her teacher"(Field note, October, 2015). This discussion demonstrated that many adolescent students respond violence using violent means.

In addition, this conversation also shows that the school violence is responded differently based on the victim's gender and social identities. It also indicates that the existing violence response mechanism needs a careful re-investigation considering the increasingly politicised and gendered nature of school violence.

Self-confidence (another important element of *Himmat*) is important to cope with and prevent violence. A 16 year old disabled student, who lost his right hand in an accident, shared his idea about his situation, "Many disabled people invented new scientific tools, others became pilot so why I can't get success in my life. I can! I can cook; study and I can do almost all the things as others"(Field note, October, 2015). This conversation reaffirms that the hope and positive attitude towards life help adolescents to cope with different forms of violence in and around schools.

The adolescent students were found to be the frontline responders to school violence. They use proactive and reactive; violent and non-violent; short term and strategic approaches to respond to school violence. *Himmat* and positive attitude were the key aspects of adolescent students which encouraged them to cope with and respond school violence. The students' approaches to addressing school violence were more informal, ad hoc and reactive in nature whereas teachers respond to violence were mostly guided by school policy and the social norms.

The adolescent students could challenge many forms of school violence if they get morale support to boost their *Himmat* from the school administration. During my schooling, I used my *Himmat* to skip two weeks of studies to avoid punishment from *Bhairab Sir* and many students might have used similar tactics and strategies to avoid punishment from such teachers. I doubt that my reactive response to the punishment

made any positive help to address the school's routine and norms towards defining what the acceptable behaviour towards the students is.

School, teachers and families expect adolescents to use their *Himmat* in a responsible manner; the manners are mainly guided by their culture. Hence, student's individual *Himmat* is insufficient to challenge violent practices that are rooted in the religion, caste, gender and language among others. Due to the multiple approaches and perspectives used by the different students, the complex issue of violence has been responded differently by different types of students and stakeholders including adolescent students. Primarily, the adolescent students responses are not well organized, coordinated and they do not have appropriate support from school and their communities. Rather, family members often ask adolescent students to tolerate violence to avoid possible counter violence and social complications.

Teachers: The Primary Co-Responders to School Violence

Teachers are also said to be the major perpetrators of violence as students are getting many support from teachers to deal with violence. A Muslim boy recognizing the role of teachers said, "Teachers allow us (Muslim students) to go home when school is celebrating a Hindu festival in school. Teachers understand that praying sarswati is not accepted in Muslim religion, and so the teacher are sensitive that the Islam religion does not allow the Muslim people to participate in the Hindu religious activities" (Field note, October, 2016). Teachers can proactively prevent possible violent conflicts. A female primary teacher shared how she handled a case of dispute between the Muslim and the Hindu students in her class. She shared;

> I have been teaching in this school for the last 12 years. Quite recently there was one case of dispute/fight between two grade four Hindu and Muslim girls. When I knew about their fight and heard them blaming each other for their

> mistakes, I called them in front of the class and asked why they were not willing to share their food? I mentioned them that both of them were equal, no one could discriminate the other based on their religion, caste and gender. 'If we 'put ghee on fire' violence can easily spread around', but teachers can prevent such violence in its early stage.(Field note, December, 2015)

Teachers' role, mainly in the primary grade level is critical to prevent conflict and violence that are exposed in school in the form of dispute, and minor interpersonal conflicts. Such violence could be more complex and difficult to handle in the secondary and higher secondary levels. Connecting to the local context and curricular objectives, teaching verifiable facts, based on what was observed, is seen as part of teacher's job. Noodings (2012) suggested that teaching people to make listen each other and maintain lines of communication among different groups is important.

A Muslim lady working in a local nongovernmental organization (NGO) supported that language is a major connector between different communities. She shared, "In Madarasha [Muslim religious school], our teachers used to teach us in the Awadhi language. This helped me to understand Nepali and Madheshi cultures"(Field note, December, 2015). Multilingual teaching is helpful to promote good learning environment in the class as everybody gets equal opportunity to learn. A teacher from Maithili speaking family background shared, "I learned Nepali when I was shifted to a school in the Nepali speaking community. Now, I can use multilingual teaching in my class which makes my class more interactive" (Field note, October, 2015). Teachers' ability and skills to handle multilingual class is an effective approach to reduce disparity in teaching and thereby also to reduce the chances of violence in schools.

Teachers' response to violence is determined by different factors including gender, school climate and their experience of school bullying among others.

Sulkowski and Bauman (2016) argued that teachers' gender, school climate and past experience of school violence determine how they respond to school violence, including school bullying. Thus, all teachers may not have the ability to assist students affected by school violence.

In all interviews and interactions, students mentioned me that only a small number of teachers involved in sexual harassment and abuse. Importantly, other teachers were helping adolescent students to keep them safe from sexual violence. A Madheshi girl from Kapilvastu, whose family has been giving pressure to her to leave school for marriage, shared, "*Yadav* Sir is helping me to continue my education by giving me free tuition in his own coaching centre and also by giving some educational materials. Due to the teacher's support, my parents are not able to forcing me to marry and to leave school before completing grade 10"(Field note, January 2016).

In school, teachers and peers including other stakeholders provide support to such students who are perceived weak or bad. When asked how teachers deal with *Bhuskul*, *Jauwa*, and *Aadham* students, a Madheshi student in Kapilvastu said, "Some teachers give the bad students extra home work, call their parents to school to discuss corrective measures and help the weak students"(Field note, September 2015).

Most of the students recognized that the teachers' role is important to prevent violence in school. One student involved in a violent physical fight in school asserted, "When two groups were fighting in our school, our teachers closed our room and tried to protect girls from such violence, restricted us to go out from the school compound and also called the police for security"(Field note: November 2015). Christie, Petrie, and Christie (2000) argued, in addition to the teachers' role, higher academic achievements, better aesthetic structure; proper staff training is other major ways to reduce the risks of violence in school.

Students seek support from teachers to prevent bullying. A 15 year old girl mentioned me, "Once a boy wrote a short letter saying 'I Love You', I complained it to my teacher. The teacher took me to the head teacher's office and the boy was badly beaten" (field note, October, 2015). Teachers often punish those students who are involved in different kinds of *Lafada*. Another girl shared her experience of how she got help from her head teacher when she was sexually harassed by a boy. Teachers are playing an important role to prevent negative effects of political and communal violence in the Terai. In a long discussion about how school can minimize and prevent violence, a headteacher mentioned,

> We invited Tharu students studying in grade 9-10 and organized a discussion on the ongoing school closure and Tharu community's involvement in violent protest in some places of the Terai. Our aim was to understand the underlying issues about the ongoing violence and get their support to keep the school open. We also wanted to make sure that they were not blamed and humiliated by others in the violent context. We discussed openly and allowed students to speak what they heard and thought about the ongoing political violence. (Field note, October 2015)

Teachers' efforts to reduce violence were noteworthy particularly when they started dealing with students' real life situation. The headteacher's narrative provides an important example of how teachers can reduce the chance of violence by engaging students in constructive dialogue.

The classroom structures were mostly hierarchical as the teachers and headmasters were considered as superior in school. Rotating the students' seat location is used to reduce the Badhiya (good performing) students sitting on the front row and Bhuskul students sitting on the last bench. I interviewed a Muslim boy

coming from a lower secondary school to study in a secondary school where 116 students were sitting in a single room for study. He shared how the rotation system in the class helped them to increase the access to better interaction in the class. He mentioned,

> What to do? We have to sit in this large class. We hardly hear the teacher's voice when we reach the last benches like on the 6th or 7th row (I observed that in each row 12-14 students are sitting). Our classroom is not silent; some students always talk rubbish in the class. But, due to our rotation system we could hear some of the classes better than others. Because each week the last bench students move to the second last the next day; and the students sitting on the first row come to the last bench. This system is helpful as it allows us to sit on the front seats of the class for a few days in a week.(Field note, December, 2015)

This system of student rotation in class was followed in three of five schools I engaged. The rotation of students' position in the class based on their roll number or alphabetical order not only reduced the risk of students categorized as 'back bencher' but also provided the weak students with an opportunity to sit on the front seats.

Students' perception of school, teachers and school administration is an influential determinant of school violence. Some students feel that their school is safe because their school administration was strict against the perpetrators. A boy mentioned me, "Our school is very strict, if boys tease girls; teachers suspend them from school, so this school is safe" (Field note, December, 2015). Eisenbraun (2007) presented three tiers of violence prevention structure which can be established to improve student and community's perception about schools as safe zones. First tier

includes the community organization, second tier includes school district task force and third tier involves school based team. These tiers are formed to respond to school violence. However, in the field context of Terai, such support mechanism was unclear and unstructured.

In school IV, after violent clash between two groups, school invited parents and police to deal with the case and in School III, when students broke rule, teachers were discussing to invite the parents. Thus, involvement of parents is given high priority when school administration can't handle the case. Whereas, in case of structured and violence rooted in school's norms like corporal punishment or discrimination against certain groups, involvement of parents and communities or community based organizations are not involved, except in School-3, where one of the local Non government organizations (NGO) involved to increase awareness on caste and gender based discrimination in school.

School building and physical environment also affect students' actions, attitude and motivation (Dwyearet al., 2001, as cited in Eisenbraun, 2007) to respond school violence. In three of the five schools in the field, there were minimum 63 to 130 students in a single class. This situation must have influenced much on the students' behaviour and learning. While dealing with such large classes, the teachers had little idea on how to handle them. Similarly, such large classrooms it was difficult to implementing child friendly education. Teachers viewed school violence as synonymous to 'students' discipline' and thus opined to implement strong disciplinary measures to prevent school violence as teachers and administrators see the world differently, having different perceptions of the same event, issue, or program (Beckner, 1985; Blase, 1987; Doan & Noland, 1988; Roesner &Sloan, 1988, as cited in Marshall, 1995). In the schools, due to lack of uniform and coordinated school

violence response mechanisms, the different management committees and members were using different strategies and ways to deal with school violence.

The adolescent boys were more vulnerable to some particular forms of school violence. A Tharu girl, who experienced multiple forms of violence in and out of school, mentioned me, "I want to join the police force so that I can beat the bad boys" (Field note, January 2016). Physical punishment (violence) against students who are involved in violent activities is widely reported by students. A girl mentioned me, "The six or seven *Jauwa* boys who were involved in drugs and alcohol abuse were expelled from the school"(Field note, January 2016). Chin, Dowdy, Jimerson, and Rime (2012) argued that suspension is not suitable for children rather we need to explore and use better alternatives to suspensions. In case of the Kapilvastu and Sunsari, the public schools do not suspend student from school rather the public schools have to accept the students who are suspended in private schools. Sharkey and Fenning (2012) found that black male students were consistently overrepresented in school suspension studies in the United States. In this study, there is no evidence of suspension to the student associated to particular community or groups.

The students categorized as *Jauwa* and *Bhuskul* are more likely to be punished, expelled from school. Teachers were responding to personal forms of violence but many teachers were also contributing to mitigate political and cultural forms of violence. Though, teachers were not following what they learned in theory, but it was positive to note that they were aware of some of the policies such as child friendly education, prohibition of corporal punishment and schools as zones of peace.

School Administration as Immediate Responder to School Violence

School and family are the second closest institutions to respond to school violence. Family value and norms, and schools' rules and practices contribute to

lessen school violence. An eight-grader boy mentioned me, “We don’t fight, because our parents taught us not to fight with bad boys, so we keep quiet” (Field Note, January, 2016). Boys more often accept bullying in comparison with girls (Gini, 2005). Gavine (2014) highlighted the school administrators’ role to prevent school violence mainly by providing positive environment in school. Usually, the adolescent students themselves are the first responders to school violence. An SMC Chair from Kapilvastu said, “School can’t stop students bringing caste, religious, political stereotypes, prejudice in school and thus they continue practicing discrimination and violence in school” (Field note, December 2015).Violence comes cross school compound and enters from communities and also influences school environment.

Policy enforcement is an important tool to reduce violence. School administration punishes students who are involved in the violation of schools’ rules including involving in fighting, bullying among others. Students are informed about the consequences if they are involved in violent activities. One Tharu girl studying in grade eight expressed, “We know that if we do any mistake or fight in the class, our teachers call our parents or call us into the office and try to mediate the case” (Field note, January, 2016). When school management takes a strong position against the political interferences, they could resist against such action for necessary changes.

Presence of security personnel near the school can also prevent school from violent attacks and risks of violence. A visually impaired girl in Kapilvastu mentioned, “In the past, our school was not safe but now we feel safer when the government established a police camp nearby” (Field note, October, 2015). Therefore, support from police administration is also used in some cases to prevent violence in school. School administration has also made a close contact with the local police to deal with violent incidences. In case of inter-group physical fights in school, the

school invites the police to handle the case when many students are involved infighting. A grade 10 boy remembered, “The Head sir mentioned that he called the police. After that, we went to the police station where the police called our parents and the head teacher to settle the case”(Field note, January, 2016). This shows that school is now working closely with the local security forces to deter violent conflicts and clashes in school. For a short term, use of security force might be helpful to reduce violence in school but Gerlinger and Wo (2016) found that tight security measures were less effective to deter school violence rather; it may enforce the authoritative school discipline. This poses an important question on whether schools should promote authoritative school system or use security measures to prevent school violence. In general, reactive and punitive approach is applied in response to school violence (Christie et al., 2000; Foucault, 1977). Such approach is also equally relevant to this study.

District Education Office is also involved in addressing some cases of school violence. Sharing how his office has been dealing with the cases of conflict and violence in school, the Assistant District Education Officer mentioned,

> Our office receives complaints from schools when such violence cases and fights go beyond their control or when such cases come in mass media. The DEO interfares3-5such cases of violence every year. Recently, we dealt a case in a school where students beat a science teacher. We settled that case with the support of regional representative of National Human Rights Commission and the police.(Field note, January, 2016)

From the policy level, the government also distributes scholarships to promote equity and reduce discrimination. Incentives like scholarship are useful to reduce discrimination and violence in schools. A female teacher shared, “Scholarships

provided by the government for Dalit, girls, children with disability are helpful to continue their education"(Field note, January, 2016).

The scholarships for disfranchised students are given but such support is not integrated or tailored with other violence prevention initiatives. Therefore, some focused violence prevention programs can be useful to reduce school violence (Kongsuwan, Suttharargsee, Isaramalai, &Weisss, 2012) but there were no any specific program/project implemented to prevent overall forms of violence in the schools I visited.

Teachers, school administrators and parents can play greater roles to prevent violence in schools. They can control/prevent 'violence when it is small' and also maintain positive school discipline to prevent school violence. Making class rotation for seating arrangement, implementing knowledge and skills of child friendly teaching learning, maintaining discipline, the teachers are preventing possible number of violence in schools. Similarly, teachers can play a vital role to diagnose the causes of violence, assess how school violence is practiced in their school and can take necessary measures to prevent or respond to school violence. Violence based on religion and caste was considered sensitive, so such cases are generally covered in schools and thus students are not allowed to discuss on such issues. Till now, the support system is still poor that restricts students to prevent them from the violence that is rooted in the cultural norms.

Social Practices Helpful to Prevent School Violence

The political violence in the Madhesh negatively affected the inter-personal and inter-group relationships between the adolescent students in schools. The stakeholders including the adolescents identified for the urgent need of reducing communal tension and promoting social harmony in the Terai. The Tharu community

is accepted as a common connector of both the Pahade and the Madheshi communities. Both the Madheshi and the Pahade students had good relationships with the Tharu communities. Similarly, there were a number of cultural practices like Maghi (for Tharu) or *Maghesankranti* (for Pahade) and Sankranti (for Madheshi) in which both the Pahade and the Madheshi people celebrate together. I also attended the Maghi festival in 2016 as invited by both the Tharu and the Madheshi teachers during my ethnographic fieldwork. The festivals and rituals provided some positive hopes to the adolescent students to engage in dialogues to reduce communal tension.

In the Tharu community, *Jewar* (community leader) is active in dispute resolution in their community matters and also on the inter-community disputes. Indigenous practices and language are not only creating tension and violence but also contributing to reduce violence. Conflicts and violence can be minimized or settled easily if perpetrators and victims or parties involved in violence speak a common language. A Muslim boy mentioned me, "We do not fight with the Madheshi and the Tharu people because we speak the same language, Awadhi, and thus we are close to each other"(Field note, January, 2016). Language and culture connect different communities, help inter-community harmony and prevent violence. Echoing with an argument of language as connector, a Tharu leader (*Jewar*) shared how his language competency and inter-cultural exchange was helping to bind different communities in a common place. He mentioned,

> I speak Maithili, Hindi, Nepali languages and also take part in cultural activities of other communities including the Muslim. We celebrate *Jitiya* festival but it is also celebrated by the Madheshi communities. My daughter was married to a Pahade boy. I observed the marriage which is not much different from our marriage culture. (Field note, January, 2016)

Inter-community cultural exchange was another important driver for preventing violence in schools and communities. Both the Pahade and the Madheshi students shared with me that they were close to the Tharu students who lived in the middle of the Madheshi and the Pahade communities. A Pahade girl told me, "I can mix up with the Tharu students, and they are our friends. Some Pahade have got married with the Tharu and they are doing fine. I can marry a Tharu boy if he is good and well educated" (Field note, November, 2015). Another Pahade student studying in grade 10 said, "We live in a Tharu majority area. They invite us in their festivals, and family functions. They invite us in Maghi (A major festival that is celebrated by the Tharu and other communities in Nepal). They use liquor in their festivals but they give us other food"(Field note, November, 2015). This shows that the adolescent students are participating in each other's cultural activities.

Indigenous practices of dispute resolution are noteworthy at the community level to reduce inter-community tension and disputes. The *Jewar* (Tharu Community's traditional healer) mentioned, "Now some people take some of the internal disputes to the police station but the police call us for advice and they (police) take decisions based on our advice. We take the final decision on our issues" (Field note, January 2016). Jewar's traditional healer has the role to help his community members to connect their present lifeworld with their 'spiritual lifeworld' and ensure wellbeing. He performs special worship and sacrifice to make the spiritual gods happy so that their community members feel safe from 'violence from unknown forces', the spiritual violence. This method of spiritual healing and maintain good order between the human and spirit can be further enriched with more study on 'spiritual violence'.

My co-researchers in the field opined that only one or more cultural blocks like caste/ethnicity, academic performance, outlook, family background, and age are

not decisive for selecting their friend and partner or to consider ‘others’. Students’ capacity, academic performance and outlooks are the major attributes that they look upon while deciding their partners or friends. Categorized as a ‘good student’ means, being privileged in school as teachers and students behave well with the good students. Particularly students choose friends based on their compatibility and interest. A Pahade student told me, “We mix up with those Madheshi students who are good at study and perform well in the classroom” (Field note, November, 2015). Presenting Tharu as a connector between the Pahade and the Madheshi communities, the *Jewar* further shared, “We are not far or close with the Madheshi and the Pahade rather we are neutral to them. Our relationship with their communities is good”(Field note, January, 2016).

In comparison to the adults, adolescent students are becoming less rigid towards their traditional religious practices and are open to learn and participate in each other’s cultural and religious activities. One Hindu boy mentioned me, “My Muslim uncle called me at his home to celebrate *Bakara Eid* (one popular festival of the Muslim communities), offered meat and other delicious food” (Field note, November 2015). Such cross-cultural sharing and inviting friends in each other’s festivals are common.

A Muslim student shared how they share their culture in school and community. He remarked, “We invite Hindu friends in our cultural activities and they also invite us during *Dashain*. Both Hindu and Muslim speak the common Awadhi language in our community and when we come to our school we speak Nepali that gives more knowledge about the Pahade” (Field note, October 2015). Such cross-cultural sharing practice is an important social connector that can reduce the possibility of communal violence. Noodings (2012) presented how we categorize

those whom we disbelieve, distrust and who are from different groups as ‘others’. The cross-cultural sharing could be helpful to reduce distrust and disbelief between students and teachers with different cultural backgrounds.

Though caste based discrimination is less in schools, a disabled (blind) Madheshi Dalit teacher shared his experiences of caste based discrimination as one of the factors of his successful life. He shared his story of how he learned from his past experiences. He mentioned,

> My violent experiences were painful at the time when they happened, but they also helped me to get success in life. As a Madheshi, Dalit and blind, I experienced many challenges but I could continue my education and now succeeded to be a secondary level teacher.(Field note, January, 2016)

This story shows that experience of violence is not always negative rather it could have some positive effects as well. It is so mainly when the victim learns from the violent incidence and makes additional efforts to get out of the legacy of the violent past. This finding also reaffirms the Social Learning Theory of Bandura (1971) who argued that people learn from the consequences of their action and also learn from watching other people’s behaviour. Such stories could be good examples of how individuals are trapped into violence based on caste, ability, language, class, and communities in Nepal.

Political Actors’ Roles in Addressing School Violence

In Chapter Four, I presented the adolescent students’ views on political actors’ roles as one of the key contributors to school violence. However, some students and teachers also expressed their hope that the political parties also contribute to prevent school violence. A headteacher mentioned, “Political parties are also bringing more resources for improved facilities in school, and allocated resources for children

coming from conflict-affected families"(Field note, January, 2016). Another ninth grader Dalit student shared, "Due to political party's policy and influence, the government is changing and improving curriculum and they have increased scholarships for the Dalit students" (Field note, January, 2016). A SMC chairperson who was also a local Dalit women leader mentioned that, "Political parties are advocating for free education, scholarships, providing support for girls (sanitary pads), and health kits"(Field note, December 2015). Similarly, recognizing political party's positive contribution to reduce structural violence, another head teacher mentioned, "Political parties have contributed positively to bring three years' diploma course in our school, as a result, our students are getting access to technical education close to their home"(Field note, November 2015).

Saltmarsh (2012) argued that politicisation in schools is problematic. It is partially true that the partition politics invites tension in school for their political interest (Dharel, 2013; Pherali, 2013) but sometimes such political support and debate is necessary to resolve critical and complex cases of school violence. A student union leader shared a case where he was trying to prevent violent conflicts between school administration and the students,

> Recently, there was a big fight in our school. The cause was the students' demand to go for an educational tour. The school authority denied taking us for such a tour but the students were doing everything to make this happen. In this case, students padlocked the classes to put on more pressure against the school management and later two groups had a fight. Then, I took the lead and settled the problem with school administration's cooperation.(Field note, January 2016)

This was an interesting example of how political party led students' union plays a constructive role in resolving problems in schools. However, there were no any other such examples found that help to support this argument.

Similarly, political parties often organize political protests which were causing school closure for many days in Nepal. The stakeholders were concerned about the children's loss of education and taking initiatives to open schools. A Madheshi teacher mentioned me, "After getting continuous pressure from the parents, education stakeholders, human rights activists and others, the Madheshi Morcha agreed to let the schools open in the morning shift"(Field note, January, 2016). In this process, children also participated in a peaceful rally in the Terai which was organized by different private schools and college associations. In November, the protesting parties let the schools open but due to the cold season, opening schools in the morning was inappropriate. Students together with other stakeholders organized a peaceful protest to open schools. A grade 9 student who participated in such a rally shared, "We walked in a number of rallies. We wanted to keep our schools open"(Field note, January 2016). As a result, the Madheshi Alliance agreed to let the schools open. This shows that peaceful protests have the power to challenge political violence. Creating a forum where stakeholders can continue engaging in dialogues can be a good approach to prevent violence.

The adolescent students and teachers are the first co-responders to the direct forms of school violence like *lafada* and punishments. Small but some useful actions against violence were observed in schools. The practice of rotating students' seats inside the class; making small groups for teaching; solving small disputes at the interpersonal level; using peer support; using local language in teaching and classroom interaction are some examples of such small actions. However, in some

cases, such violence response practices are also gendered and politicised. The school violence response practices were less systematic and unstructured and the teachers and school management were mostly considered policies related to school violence only as the non-mandatory reference.

Essence of the Chapter

Students, teachers, school administration, parents and political parties are actively responding to school violence. More attention has been given to address the visible and direct forms of school violence and *Lafada.* The adolescent students' responses to school violence were mainly personal in nature, like supporting peers and raising voice against the violent incidences. Many students also use violent means and take revenge or counter attack the perpetrators. Hence, without revisiting the existing school violence response policies, systems, institutions and practices, it is not possible to effectively prevent and minimise the prevalence of school violence. For this, the Buddhist idea, 'there is an end of suffering' (Bodhi, 1984) and Vedic idea of 'non-violence is our ultimate karma' and the traditional dispute resolution techniques can be useful references to deal with cultural roots of violence.

CHAPTER VIII

SCHOOL: SPACE OF CULTURAL VIOLENCE FOR THE OTHERED

I have organized this chapter in three broad sub-sections: student's understanding and experiences of school violence, effects of school violence on education and practices and policies to respond to school violence. With the guidance of my subjective nature of relationships with the adolescent students (Green et. al., 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1994), this chapter has been informed by Galtung's idea of cultural violence (1990), local perspective that is helpful to understand power relation in society and the critical idea of othering (Kumsairo, 2000).

I used the idea of cultural devaluation of others primarily referring to the students who are less privileged due to their cultural backgrounds. For Brewer (1978), Tajfel (1982), and Bundy (1971), the cultural devaluation is "differentiation between in-group and out-group, us and them, tends by itself to give rise to a favoring of the in-group and relative devaluation of the out-group and discrimination against its members" (p. 295, as cited in Staub, 2003). This differentiation is influenced by the students' cultural backgrounds such as the Hindu, Muslim, Madheshi, dalits. In the schools, these cultural groups interact and construct student's new identities such as *Bhuskul*, *Jauwa*, *Uttam*, and *Badhiya.* These new identities were primarily based on student's academic merit, discipline in school activities, and their relationship with teachers and peers. Students' cultural background contributes to construct such new identities in school. The intensity and forms of violence the students experience can be varied based on their cultural background and their social identities.

School Violence as a Cultural Construct

What is violence and what is normal part of life in school were understood differently by different adolescents. I could not find one particular word or expression in Nepali, Tharu, Maithili, and Bhojpuri languages that captures the multifaceted meaning and nature of school violence. Therefore, I used '*School ma Himsa or Vidyalaya Himsa*",[school violence] with some examples to make this issue understandable for the participants. The Tharu students could not translate '*Himsa'* in the Tharu Language; rather they called it '*Maral ba*' or '*Maral*. *Maral* means hit or kill somebody. When I asked about *Himsa* in schools, instantly students provided list of different forms of violence such as physical punishment, psychological and sexual harassment among others. I have presented some concepts of school violence emerged in the field.

Most of the of violent cases emerged in the field were visible forms of violence such as armed violence; bullying and peer victimization; child labor; beating; corporal punishment; cyber bullying; early marriage; dating violence; categorisation and differentiated treatment to the slow learners; sexual violence; substance abuse, verbal abuse; physical fights. Political forms of violence were also visible in the field. The other forms emerged in the field were political in nature such as the inter-party violence; armed conflict; political riots; one community's dominance over the other communities; forceful closure of school; school graffiti.

Similarly, the other forms emerged in the field were less visible such as the policy that institutionalise the discriminatory behaviour in school, political dominance; discrimination between students in the public and private schools; psychological violence; caste and gender based discrimination; racial hatred; school's

poor physical environment and facilities; categorising and othering; religious violence; disrespect, dishonor the studnets with particular cultural background.

The adolescents also shared a number of issues, which can be categorised as cultural violence. The issue of communal violence, caste based discrimination, religious violence were some examples of cultural violence. Such forms of violence were mostly found in a covert form in school as the school system institutionalises such forms of violence as part of schooling. The violence occurs in school both as incidence and part of everyday occurring in school. At the beginning, students understand violence as it is visualised in school. School violence was mostly manifested in school as the violent incidences or *Lafada*.

Students and teachers consider that the incidences of punishments, physical fighting and bullying are part of school life. Many of the students also consider punishment as a necessary means to maintain school discipline. Students' cultural backgrounds influence how they understand school violence. Visible incidences of violence in school are often accepted as school's norms and many of the student's considere *Lafada* as part of their normal schooling. In one hand, culture can foster values of cooperation, mutual respect, unity, equality and, co-existence on the other hand, the same culture can be used to justify inequality, discrimination, physical assaults, bullying, and sexual harassment (Galtung 1990; Nodding, 2012). Gender is one of the major cultural facets influencing school violence.

The sexual violence, primarily for the girls, found less visible but a common form of school violence. Boys are more exposed to personal and political violence like inter-personal and intergroup fights, corporal punishment, and bullying in school. Girls are more concerned about gender based violence like sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation. This finding contradicts with Eisenbraun (2007) who argued that

violence affects more boys than the girls as boys are involved as perpetrators as well as victims. This might be true in terms of physical fighting and bullying, but in the cultural forms of violence, girls are more victimized than boys in schools. This finding also echoes with Leach and Humphreys (2007), who argued that the violence against girls is normalized in schools. The normalized violence are often not defined as violence, are less visible. Hence quantitative studies often mislead that boys are more victimized than the girls in school.

Different types of student's experiences violence differently in school. For boys, school violence is another name of *Lafada* (interpersonal fights, and political violence, *Bandh*, use of alcohol, lack of discipline, bullying) and punishments (use of corporal punishment and other means to maintain docility and set routine in school) but for girls, violence means about sexual violence and gender based discrimination, risk of early marriage and drop out from school. For the Madheshi students, the domination and discrimination based on their language, their identity and early marriage were the major concerns whereas caste based discrimination was the major issue for the Dalit students. The caste based discrimination is important concern among the Madheshi students. The Muslim students expressed their concern about discrimination based on religion. Many of the Muslim students go to Madarasha in their primary level education and do not get necessary support when they move to the general school. The Pahade students expressed their concern on the increased tension with Madheshi communities. For the visually impaired students' violence was mainly related to the inadequate support from the school authority and inappropriate behaviour from teacher and students. The experience of the Muslim and the Madheshi girls on school violence was influenced by the gender based discrimination whereas such experience among the Pahade ethnic groups was relatively less. Hence, based on

the cultural backgrounds such as gender, caste, academic performance and regional identity the students' experiences to school violence are different.

The multiple forms of violence and student's cultural background influence the students' academic performances. When the students perform poorly; they are victimized based on their academic performance and merit. Moreover, discrimination based on the students' affiliation with the English medium, private and Nepali medium public schools, discrimination based on students' educational performance, and naming students based on their academic performance or their personal characters were other important underlying causes of violence in school. The contemporary social, political, and social context also influence school culture. Hence, the issue of school violence is dynamic with the culture and social context.

In school, the forms of school violence are changing because it is influenced by external changes in its broader context as well as the internal dynamics, politics and culture (Blase, 1991). During my schooling, teachers' use of corporal punishment was the most common way to maintain discipline; mainly the use of stick in the classroom. This trend seems to be gradually reducing after the Children's Act 1992 banned corporal punishment in schools. However, there is no evidence that this act contributed to reduce corporal punishment in school. As the result, the teachers, parents and students are increasingly aware that the use of corporal punishment is not a normal way to maintain discipline in school.

These legal provisions and the The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989 were useful references to increase awareness against corporal punishment in school. Compared to the past, the use of physical punishment, especially, the use of sticks in the classroom, has reduced at present (Aryal, 2010).However, these policies and limited awareness have not been able to transform

teachers' behaviour as they are still using corporal punishment. Teachers, believe that the reduced corporal punishment is one of the major causes of poor school discipline. In School-2, a female teacher mentioned that she attended a workshop and learned the child friendly teaching techniques, but such techniques are not practical in the multicultural classroom (Fieldnote, November 2015). The use of violence based on students' social identity or category has been consistent but new categories like the Madheshi and the Pahade have already become dominant in school.

The ways of manifestations of school violence has been changing over the time. Teachers and stakeholders often perceive violence as a problem of discipline not as an issue in itself. My only girl classmate in grade one was the *Pradhanpancha's* (village chief's) daughter, but another Dalit family in my neighborhood could never enroll in school. After 30 years, a large majority of the girls, including the *Dalits* and minority children are going to school. In the past, the use of corporal punishment was expected by the parents so that their children were afraid of the teachers and would therefore concentrate on study. Presently, teachers are informed that the use of corporal punishment, caste based discrimination and gender based violence in school are officially unacceptable, but these aspects are part of schooling. Students' arrogance also contributed to reduced corporal punishment in school. The Assistant Head teacher of School-3 mentioned, "Nowadays, the grown up students can fight back with us. Many teachers already experienced such cases in our school"(Field note: December 2015). This discussion opened up another area of research, 'Violence against teachers in schools'. When the teacher was referring to the big boys, he was referring to the boys who are grown-up, studying in higher grades, physically stronger, and therefore can resist against teachers in school.

However, newer forms of school violence like direct political violence, school attacks, frequent school closure, and communal tension, and cyber violence have increased in the last three decades. Similarly, substance abuse, mainly the use of tobacco and alcohol, has increased than in the past. Despite these changes, lower educational performance among the disadvantaged communities particularly of the Dalit, ethnic minority, and Madheshi has remained one of the major challenges to achieve the goal of equity in education (Poyck et al., 2016). The uneven distribution of quality education due to their caste, religion, class and others can have both immediate and lasting negative effects in society (Bush & Staralli, 2000). The new generation of students might be more affected by cyber violence if timely and effective preventive actions are not taken.

I observed that the nature of school violence is dynamic. In School-1, school violence means gender based violence and discrimination between the students studying in private/English medium and Nepali medium public school. In School-5, the students coming in school premises, fighting, and use of alcohol were common issues. TheSchool-2 was concerned about communal tension and structural violence that hurt more to the 'at risk children' including children with disabilities. For the School-4, caste based discrimination and differentiated treatment against the *Bhuskul* students were primary issues of school violence.

The five schools located in the multicultural context did not equally value the diverse cultural facets including language, caste, class, community, ethnicity, caste, gender, and religion. Rather, schools valued mainstream/majority's culture as the 'school culture' and the rest of the other cultures were given less or no space in schools. The devaluation of a certain group's culture was problematic as it could increase the chance of one group turning against the others (Staub, 2003). Further, I

discussed how students' exposure to *Lafada* and normalised school violence could construct negative image of some students and increase the risks of violence.

Construction of *Bhuskul* in School

School system constructs student's identities based on their different characteristics. Such identity is constructed based on student's innate and cultural characters like gender, caste, ethnicity, color, and religious background. Student's academic capacity and their relationships with their peers and teachers are other basis of such identity construction.

In school, perpetrators implicitly select their targets based on the victims' social position and identities such as gender, caste, ethnicity, race, religion, language, and academic performance. In school, such social position is branded into three broad categories: good, medium and poor. The poor students are categorized in school by different names like *outsiders*, *Bhuskul* (academically weak), *Najanne* (less knowledgeable), *Adham* (stubborn), and *Jauwa* (freaky and undisciplined) among others. In this study, I used '*Bhuskul'* to represent the culturally constructed 'other student who is categorized as poor'. The numbers of *Bhuskul* students'were significant in the five selected schools.

In my schooldays, I was categorized as an *outsider* and was often bullied by local boys. As an outsider (a student coming to a new neighborhood), I was expected to be obedient and docile in school. I was bullied due to my 'outsider' status. However, my native language (Nepali), my Brahmin caste, Hindu cultural background, and moderate learning ability helped me in quick adjustment in the new school. In addition, my family name was also useful because it was the same with the head teacher's family name. Once my head teacher mentioned, 'You have to keep my prestige'. The, cultural prestige exerted an important influence on me which reminded

me to be good in school. I realized that the categorization of any student in school based on their socio-cultural background and their academic performance plays an important role in creating the student's identity. Identity as *Bhuskul or Badhiya* pushes students into a bounded space in school and defines their roles while participating in school's everyday teaching learning activities including in violence. Categorization or creating certain 'identity' in school is a normal part of school.

The personal experiences of violence are important but it is more important to understand why the *Bhuskul, Adham, Jauwa* and 'outsiders' are more prone to school violence. Student's cultural background might be an important reason as cultural expectations and socialization often promote pride in fighting (Noddings, 2012). Similarly, those who believe that they lack social capital try to prove their masculinity through the use of violence (Klein, 2006). This means, the prejudice and bias against certain categories of people exist in the society and culture.

Identity like *Bhuskul* constructed in schools reproduced and strengthened in school (Bourdiue & Passeron, 1990). The *Jauwa, Bhuskul* or *Adham* identity are often reinforced through schooling. The student's categorization into *Madheshi, Pahade, Bhuskul*, and *Badhiya* creates a ground for othering in school. Othering, a post-colonial theory, is also explained as a process of identity formation in everyday life (Jensen, 2011). Further, such categorizations and stereotypes against each other have been increased due to the increased regional politics in the Madhesh. As a result, some adolescent students shared that they were involved in fights against each other (Madheshi vs. Pahade) in and around schools. However, the sustained and radicalized debate of the Pahade as oppressor and dominant and the Madheshi as threat to the Pahade people has increased risk of communal violence the Terai. In such a context,

adolescents in general and politically active in particular were feeling unsafe in their schools.

Nepali students had to continue their schooling during decade long armed violence in 1996-2006, and after that the post-insurgency context; the students continued experiencing political violence explicitly-implicitly. The political process in school is both conflictive and cooperative as school is a space where power, conflict and cooperation are part of school life (Blase, 1991). In the last two decades in Nepal, due to the high prevalance of the political violence, many students were killed, maimed, abducted, and schools being attacked. Some of the students recognized the political parties as helpful to improve school infrastructure. Referring to the frequent cases of school *Bandh*, the majority of the other adolescents perceive political parties as perpetrators of school violence.

The political and ideological violence in the Terai-Madhesh have two broad features: first, partition politics in school and its general effects; and second, violent protest in the Terai-Madhesh. Often, teachers, and SMC members are associated with different political parties or groups and they generally fight in school for their group's hidden interests. The political parties' conflicts in the Terai have been reinforcing the communal tension and stereotyping between students who are categorized as the Pahade and the Madheshi. The adolescents have heard of or witnessed political party or groups' attack in school, use of students and teachers for political purposes, political party's interferences in some of the school affairs like in SMC election. Political violence and increased tension between the Pahade and the Madheshi mainly influenced economically poor and *Bhuskul* students like Sima as they are at risk of being used in political campaign, dropout and early marriage.

The students are also influenced by the external environment like political graffiti with radical messages on the school walls, access to the media reports about violence like bomb plantation in schools. As a result, the adolescent students felt insecure and unpredictable in school. Such unpredictability is particularly high among the culturally less valued students. The life in school is shaped by the school's internal-external, and formal-informal norms, rules, and systems. Stakeholders use the broad cultural parameters like religion, gender, language, class, ethnicity and education to judge what is useful and harmful practices (Waldron, 2009). Similarly, local cultural knowledge and practices are also influential for shaping what is right or wrong, and how to approach school violence.

The *Jewar* (a Tharu Community Leader) mentioned that, "Traditionally, Madheshi *Dalits* worked as agricultural and non-agricultural laborers with low wages and their primary role was to help the local landlords"(Field note: January 2016). The historical background and roles of the Madheshi *Dalits*' have been reflected in the life of their children in school as most of the adolescents coming from the Terai Dalit families have to work hard at home to help their family. Hence, they often remain absent in school as they can't prioritise education.

The cultural norms and values are influential on student and teachers' belief and behaviour. Hence, school violence is a social construct (K. M. Williams, 2005). Due to the social identities like *Bhuskul*, the student like Sima is subject to multiple forms of violence in school. For the students like Sima, these experiences are normal part of schooling. Similarly, it is normal to be humaliated at home. Like Sima, many students are humialated both at home and school, particularly when, they are culturally devalued and categorized as *Bhuskul*.

I am bothered about the situation where teachers do not bother when a student leaves his/her class. Why teachers do not bother when two self-declared *Bhuskul* Dalit girls leave their class and sit on the school ground? Why does Sima, a non-Nepali speaker student does not get some extra support from school to enhance her language competency? Why are parents, teachers and students not united to protest when schools are closed by political parties? It is not possible to prevent school violence unless these questions are better answered.The school culture is responsible to maintain the legacy of violence in school. The ethnic minority students' experiences of school violence (Khanal, 2017), the legacy of Maoist Armed Insurgency (Pherali, 2013), and political use and manipulation of school and students (Dharel, 2013) also confirm that Nepal's school environment is influenced by socio-political culture. Sima's narrative shows how school violence is depicted in culture. Awadhi speaking Madheshi adolescent girl Sima mentioned,

> I can't speak Nepali (language) well. At home we speak Maithili (smile...) and till grade five, I went to a school where all teachers were speaking *Awadhi*.,…You know, I don't speak with teachers in this school, and I have a few friends. Teachers think that I am *Bhuskul* and so they don't care me. They speak with other smart students like Rahman (first boy of her class). My father beats and shouts at me saying that I am dumb. He says that I have to leave school and get married. I think I will fail in the exam. What can I do? ... Silence.... (Field note, January 17, 2016 Sunsari)

Sima's narrative shows that the multiple cultural facets like language, religion, educational capacity, family environment made herself a *Bhuskul*. I explored the schooling process that made students like Sima a *Bhuskul* girl. Such categorization of students creates and reinforces discrimination. Further, these categories could be the

major sources of conflict particularly when such categories are based on religion and culture (Sen, 2006).Thus, favorable and non-discriminatory learning environment are considered as essential elements of quality education. Barnes et al. (2012) in their quantitative study concluded that the better the school culture and school climate at a school, the lower the rate of school violence.

The violent practices in schools are often covered under the religious norms and rituals. Likewise, language and caste also make number of students *Bhuskul* who are often involve in *Lafada* and punished in schools. In addition, an overt form of violent context like political conflict also pushes students into the cycle of violence in schools. Culture is also the major roots of peace, tolerance and justice but, often along with peace, traditions and cultures, that are often distorted, are also used as a basis for violence in general including against children (Noddings, 2012). For instance, *Chanakya Niti*, one of the well-known Hindu values mentioned,

> The father should let his son do as he likes until the age of five. He should teach him until the age of ten by threatening and scolding; he should treat him as a friend when he reaches the age of sixteen. (Chanakya Niti, 3.18 [My Translation])

As a result of distorted religious beliefs, the children studying in Nepali schools are becoming the victims of various ruthless traditional practices (Mishra et al., 2010). The roots of these violent practices can be traced in religious beliefs, rituals and practices.

The religious practices have been negatively affecting the teaching learning activities. The five schools I visited were also frequently closed for more than a week owing to a Hindu religious storytelling function called *Saptaha.* Similarly, the use of loudspeakers in a Mosque was disturbing one of the schools' teaching learning

activities. On religious violence, Salam, a tenth grader Muslim student in Kapilvastu mentioned, "School promotes the Hindu religious practices in school, teaches the Hindu culture and gives more holidays during the Hindu festivals"(Field Note, November 2015). The issues raised by Salam were not recognized by the school administration and the majority Hindu classmates because they considered following school curriculum and worshipping Sarswati in school are essential parts of school life. The Head teacher of School-2 mentioned that, "We should not question our religion"(Field note: November 2015). This means, nobody is allowed to challenge religious practices, even if it promotes violence. Any attempt to challenge the activities organised under the cover of religious rituals are not tolerated.

The language of instruction is another major facet of school culture. It is also one of the reasons for symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Pesseron, 1990; Galtung, 1990) in schools. Nepal officially adapted multilingual policy but a vast majority of schools use Nepali as the language-of-instruction (MoE, 2016). The adolescent students recognized that some students are more privileged than 'other' in school due to the language policy. A headteacher of Kapilvastu argued, "Some students get advantage due to their language whereas others' language is presented as less important" (Field note, 3 October 2016). Though Awadhi, Maithili and Bhojpuri language speakers were in majority, schools were not providing education in their mother tongue nor were the teachers using local language to explain the lessons. This means, language influences students' learning outcomes and therefore the students who speak other than Nepali as mother tongue may be more likely to get low marks in the exam are categorized as *Bhuskul*.

School is a gendered space in Nepal and it is a more violent place for girls than for the boys (Poudel, 2017). Nisa, 18 year old Madheshi Dalit girl was expected

to do extra work at home than her brothers whereas, another 16 year old Pahade boy Om was expected to complete his school and join army force. The girls are restricted to make male friends as their families afraid of losing their honor and prestige. Similarly, the discrimination based on menstruation is rooted under the Hindu religious concept of purity and pollution. On this, Bennett (2002) described how the Hinduism constrains Nepali high-caste girls to grow as equal to their male counterparts.

During my fieldwork, some adolescent girls shared their pain of sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation from their peers, senior students, and teachers. Poudel (2017) further argued that the girls who experience violence are irregular to school, perform poorly, and dislike the schools. This means, there is a high chance that the girls who experienced gender based violence perform lower than others can remain absent from school, categorise as *Bhuskul.* Tripathi (2016) noted that categorization or different identity creations are very often done by their own group members having been influenced by others. However, in schools such categorization is informal, illusive and primarily created by teachers and peers.

With the increased universal education, individual's academic qualification or performance has also been increasingly accepted as part of social prestige. In schools, low performer students are less valued in comparison with the students who perform better. Likewise, in one hand, the rich students who have better academic performance in school were appreciated by both the students from the Pahade and the Madheshi communities. On the other hand, the poor Madheshi students who perform lower than average students and slow learners are categorized as *Bhuskul*.

Learning is constrained by fear and insecurity, language of instruction, lack of academic freedom, and discrimination. The existing schooling in the Terai, through the cultural devaluation, has been continuously producing and reproducing *Bhuskuls.*

Othering the *Bhuskuls* in School

School violence affects students' body and mind at the first stage which further advances and affects their relationships and interactions with school, and broader social systems. The violent actions like bullying, discrimination based on gender, religion, caste or academic performance in school are considered normal behaviour when such behaviour is targeted against *Bhuskul*s as the use of certain forms of violence is acceptable against 'them'. Such categorization creates stereotypes and thus the use of violence against *Bhuskul* is justified by the school norms and culture and also by the victims.

When violence is looked in a larger cultural setting, the victims are blamed for their own fate (Unnever & Cornell, 2003) and perpetrators are seen as the means to enforce cultural norms. The marginalized students, many of them are identified as *Bhuskuls*, are more victimized from direct violence as they lack family support, their values do not match with the schools' norms and culture as school culture is generally determined and defined by the dominant culture (Khanal, 2017). The adolescents also gain some form of peer status through violence (Staff & Kreager, 2008) so they knowingly choose to get involved in violent activities.

Masculinity is one of the many contributors to othering in school. Hughes and Witz (1997) described how men are regarded as the norm and women as the *other*. It sounds perfectly Okay when Sima had to work at home before coming to school in every morning and cook food for her family in the evening, and have to skip school to help her family's chores. These kinds of social norms are limiting Nepali girls'

opportunity to get equal chance to spend their quality time in education. Further, often family members consider their lower marks in the exams as the major reasons for early marriage or taking out from school. Similarly, poor performance in education means they will be named as *Bhuskul* in school.

Students' language background is also important reason for being victim of discrimination and violence. The studies carried out by Awasthi (2004) and Yadava, (2007) have sufficiently discussed how language has disadvantaged students whose mother language is other than Nepali language. These studies highlighted the high school dropouts, low learning achievement and high repetition of class as the major consequences. A Maithili speaking student mentioned, "We don't ask questions in the class rather we try to write whatever we can. If we speak some mistakes all the class laughs at us. So, we remain quiet in our class"(Field note, November, 2015). The schools have not created any system to support students who are weak in Nepali language. Hence, students who speak *Awadhi*, *Maithili*, and Tharu language may have high dropout, low learning achievement and high repetition of class and thus it is more likely that they categorized as *Bhuskul* in school.

The students' identity or category like *Bhuskul* is therefore constructed on the basis of their academic performance which is influenced by their caste, color, religion, language learning ability, physical appearance. Sen (2006) mentioned that when we put ourselves into a narrow identity, the human life becomes lost. Accordingly, in schools, student as a general identity was less recognized because more than the general category, the narrow categories such as the Hindu-Muslim, Pahade-Madheshi, *Badhiya* (good)-*Bhuskul*, and Dalit-Brahmin are more friquently used in school. As the result of such divided identities, in some cases, the teachers and students are

avoiding to engage in the discussion on some of the critical and disputed issues like school closure and protest in the Terai-Madhesh.

The dominant groups, often use school as an instrument to create *Bhuskuls* and engage them in the process of othering so that they create 'self-concept' of vulnerable and weak (Staub, 2003). The *Bhuskuls* also participate in creation of self-concept as weak, docile, and vulnerable, students consider the majority and powerful group as stronger, wise and intelligent. Violence restricted academic freedom in schools therefore; to cope with such sensitive situation, the teachers in the Terai started using self-censorships in their teaching learning activities.

Some of the Madheshi students studying in the Pahade dominant school mentioned that being a Madheshi means less valued than the being a Pahade. I observed that the communal tension reflected in the classroom interaction, classroom's seating arrangements, and extracurricular activities. Such tension contributed to the decreased academic freedom in teaching learning activities in schools. The teachers started self-censoring while teaching in the schools.

It is confirmed that the risk of teachers being beaten by the community was higher as students would call their family and community members in school. Therefore, it was important for teachers to use self censorship as they afraid of being trapped in a controversial and sensitive issue and being biased towards one of the communities. As a result, students who do not have access to alternative sources of information like radio, television, newspapers, extra tuition class and parental guidance at home might easily be misguided by the self-censored knowledge in school. The students who are relatively poor in studies like Bhuskul may end up with getting very limited and biased information in school.

The effects of school violence on adolescents like Emani, Sima and Eshwor are not only negative for their personal life but they are also harmful for the broader society. Violence would ultimately affect the children's equal access to quality education, and discourage their peers to continue schooling. The neo-Marxists scholars have argued that education is organized in such a way that 'others' are marginalized through cultural reproduction (Bourdieu &Jean-Claude, 1991). The low performing *Bhuskuls* are more exposed to violence than the good performers. In other words, when school violence contributes to making more *Bhuskuls* and put them into the vicious cycle of violence. It is important to understand that othering the Bhuskul means preparing more students trapped into a vicious cycle of violence (Zur, 1995).

The explicitly or implicitly manifested school violence can have direct negative effects on students, teachers and school environment and culture. Out of many different consequences, this process creates *Bhuskul* in school who experience othering and discrimination and other forms of violence. This othering process, to some extent, has increased students' awareness about their group identity, history and culture. The othering and labeling one group of people by the others may not promote diversity and free environment where people can celebrate their cultural diversity (Sen, 2006). In Nepali schools, students come from diverse culture but due to the school's cultural set up they are largely engage in school family and forced to follow the set school culture. Such culture is largely dominated by the official norms and systems of the Government and interpreted within the framework of dominant culture.

Himmat and Efforts to Prevent Making More *Bhuskuls*

The adolescent students are the first responders to school violence and their responses are mainly informal, non-authoritative, and flexible in nature. They use different ways and means to respond to school violence. Many adolescents avoid

violence but others confront with non-violent means. Similarly, some of the students also use violent means while responding to school violence. In many other cases of violence, schools and families are also involved as part of problem as well as part of solutions. Complexity, actors and risks are increased when individuals are unable to deal with violence on time.

The explicit-implicit forms of violence are often dealt as school's internal affairs and thus external actors are kept out from such issues. In my research context, the personal forms of violence were mostly settled at the personal level as the adolescents are involved as the first responders to violence. When the adolescent students got involved in face to face fight with their friends but failed to settle such issue at their level, they would take the case to the school administration. These positive relationships with peers seem to indicate that the students have a social support network and that such a network may be beneficial in protecting students from becoming victims of school violence (Clark, 2011).

Similarly, school authority also often used physical or psychological violence to enforce school discipline. Often, psychological courage and physical power were used to resist violence. Moreover, *Himmat* also emerged as an effective means to respond to the personal forms of school violence and peer support could be complementary to *Himmat*. In addition to students, teachers also played an important role in reducing personal forms of violence in schools. Corporal punishment and other day-to-day violence were accepted as part of schooling that the adolescents resisted in their personalized ways such as avoiding the situation and attack the perpetrators. The students were also informally dealing with some of the serious forms of violence such as rape and sexual abuse in home and school.

Political violence in school was found as one of the major contributors to school violence. Some of the policies were referred useful in responding to some of the political forms of violence. The policy instruments such as Schools as Zones of Peace National Framework, Learn Without Fear and the Education Act (eighth amendment) have included some provisions to protect schools from political interferences. In addition to these policies, incidences of political violence were responded by adolescent students at their personal capacity and in one instance they together with parents organized a rally against the long school *Bandh*. The students participated in the non-violent rally to open their schools, the SMC negotiated with political parties to keep schools open and the media also raised this issue as political parties' action that was violating children's right to education.

The responses against political violence in school both at the micro and the meso levels had limited influence over the political parties. Similarly, the efforts to prevent political violence were generally limited to the local level hence; such localised actions unable to influence the political decisions which, is generally negotiated at the central level and unable to hold the key the political parties accountable for the negative consequences of political violence in school.

Improving the overall school culture is critical to challenge school violence. Barnes et al. (2012) in their quantitative study also confirmed that the better the school culture and school climate, the lower the levels of school violence. The violence prevention policy and programs can reduce the incidences of violence but these initiatives are insufficient to change the existing school culture. More importantly, students coming from other cultural backgrounds often experience more violence in schools, when their culture is different from the school culture.

Cultural forms of violence are not always visible, written, open and well corresponded with legal frameworks as they are often implicit. Due to the less visible nature of cultural violence in school, the stakeholder's actions were mainly guided by their own individual's judgment. Such preventive actions are used based on the local culture and school's norms and practices. These milieus are found influential in school violence. Teachers were not ready to take risks of discussing with students on some of the controversial happenings and issues in and around school like corruption, sexual harassment, and communal discrimination. Such discussion could create risk against teachers if teacher is not well prepared to deal with such controversial issues.

There are some challenging questions: Who will ask a Hindu religious leader stopp using school premises for religious functions; who will ask a Muslim community to relocate the Mosque out from the school premises; who will ask the school administration not to construct the Saraswati temple in school? Who has the courage to speak for school and children's best interest? Researchers have responsibility to raise this question in public debates. Preventing schools making more *Bhuskul* others means enabling students to ask these difficult questions which challenge the existing values and norms that justify and accept violence.

Galtung's cultural violence concept is also influenced by Gandhian approach of unity-of-life that eliminates the differences between 'we and other'. The Hindu concept of 'unity' of 'soul' or *aatman* with 'the ultimate soul' *paramatma* is the source of Gandhian doctrine of unity and non-violence. This is presented as violence triangle. The Buddhist teaching of 'there are ways end suffering' provides inspiration to work against school violence, whereas the Hindu concept of unity guides us to reduce the difference between 'privileged' and the 'othered'. In addition to religious values and teachings, Nepali culture is also equally influenced by the spiritual

lifeworld (Holmberg, 1989 and Askarinec, 1995). The violent acts that is justified by after-life-spiritual-world, is spiritual violence.

Taking the Hindu and Buddhist idea of 'next life' rebirth and spirituality, I come to the conclusion that the Galtung's violence triangle can be further expanded including element of *spiritual violence.* Spirituality is a multidimensional construct of cognitive, metaphysical and relational dimensions and it can be used faith as way of knowing (Jankowski, 2002). The *Jewar* in the Tharu community and their dispute resolution practice, as described in chapter six, is an example of how spirituality contributes to address some of the complex issues of violence at the community and school. The violent actions' negative consequences to the next life are one of the important forces that students can learn from their families. Hinduism teaches that performing owns *karma* in a non-violent way as the ultimate *dharma* of human being. Such *karma* can unite human with the ultimate soul, the *paramatma*, and liberate from the troublesome cycle of birth and death, *mokshya*. Hence, 'spiritual violence' is any form of human action that creates obstacles to achieve *mokshya*. Deriving from the metaphysical and religious lifeworld, the idea of spiritual violence can be useful to explore violence from cultural and psychological aspects of school violence.

Nepal principally adopted multilingual education policy; however, due to limited implementation; for the majority of children whose mother tongue is other than Nepali, access to education in their language was far from reality. The monolingual teaching learning system is one of the highly criticized policies in Nepal that created more trouble for the *Bhuskuls*. For instance, Koirala (2010) argued that there are ample possibilities to improve quality education in Nepal if used multilingual education but School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) evaluation report shows that the multilingual policies are yet to make any positive contribution to

quality learning (Poyck et al., 2016). The policies have valued Nepali language more than the other languages spoken in Nepal. Most of these policies are not explicit, rather they are implicit and covert in nature and also, such policies are manipulated and misused for the benefit of certain groups. The policies related to violence, poverty, crime, accidents, disease look like local issues but in reality they are associated with broader political economy and macro-structure (Farmer, 2004). Besides Nepali, the other language skills are less valued in schools.

The *Bhuskul* experience multiple forms of violence in school and at home but being *Bhuskul* boys and girls, Dalit and Tharu, Muslim and Hindu have different cultural contexts. Thus, the students categorized as *Bhuskul* were also living in different lifeworld. The *Bhuskul* girls may be exposed to sexual harassment, bullying, abuse and may further end up with early marriage and early pregnancy whereas boys may get involved in substance/drug abuse, physical fights. By making more of low performer *Bhuskuls,* schooling is perpetuating inequality in society. The disfranchised 'others' cannot afford the cost of school violence unlike those who have higher social and cultural capital. Farmer (2004) also discussed how some sections of the society are more vulnerable than others. Similarly, Pherali (2013) argued, "… privileged social group is still dominant in curriculum, the medium of instruction and assessment that favor those who hold the power"(p. 61). The *Bhuskul* others are not able to always effectively respond to violence because of their cultural norms. Silence, docility and tolerance of violence are some of the major reasons of continued violence in and around schools.

Violence has negative effects on the victims as well as perpetrators. Dhammapada (Verse: 138-140) also explained the consequences of violence to the perpetrators. The perpetrator will have cruel suffering, loss, injury of the body, heavy

affliction, loss of mind, misfortune from state, fearful accusation or loss of relation, destruction of treasures. Depending upon the forms of and intensity of the violent actions, most of these consequences mentioned in Dhammapada are also applied to the perpetrators of school violence.

Emani's and Sima's idea of *Himmat* was important instrument to fight against violence. However, their voice *K Garne* (what to do?) kind of attitude shows the difficulties and challenges they have to go through while fighting against cultural violence because they have to fight against the values and norms of their family, religion and culture. Emani and Sima rejected violence, but their voice was not loud enough to challenge the norms which their family members (primarily the elders) were strongly adhering to. The other students who remained silent, means they accepted the violent norms and also indirectly invited or motivated the perpetrators to continue the use of violence (World Health Organization, 2002).

The use of violence in community is justified by various means, religion, language, community, and race but such violence begins in schools with categorization like *Bhuskul*. On this, Galtung (1990) mentioned, "Any self-other gradient can be used to justify violence against those lower down on the scale of worthiness; any causal chain can be used to justify the use of violent means to obtain non-violent ends"(p.302). This shows that the categorization, othering, and dehumanization are the foundations of violence which could be more serious when they are embedded in the everyday life of school and justified by the culture. Nepal's experience of violent armed conflict and the ongoing political protests and strikes are affecting the students' present life in school. The othering process might, in a short run, satisfy the students but in the longer term such activity is likely to lead to harmful actions against others. When teachers give a tag of 'Bhuskul' the teachers' intention

could be to help the students to study better. However, against such expectation, when students are tagged as *Bhuskul*, they generally are unable to come out of such a derogatory identity. The local metaphor '*Jo Hocho, Usko Mukhma Ghocho*', 'the one, who is weak, deprived and constrained experiences oppression, domination and discrimination and thereby is prone to violence' is justified as the *Bhuskuls* are discriminated and punished in school.

As a result of such violence, in the community schools of the Terai-Madhesh, students are not able to go to school regularly, they are unable to complete the course; they suffer from fear as they are exposed to stressful political violent incidences like *Bandh*. Students are unable to learn the required lessons and their academic freedom has reduced as teachers self-censor in their classes. The racial sensitivity particularly between the Madheshi and the Pahade has been increasing in schools due to the political party leaders' public opinions and activities. Political violence is less effective in institutional schools but the community schools, where a large majority of the others go, are more affected by the political violence.

In school, the culturally deprived communities were not considered as the *Badhiya* because; their cultural norms were less compatible with the school norms. Therefore, teachers favor those students who are better at their studies (Khanal, 2017). As a result, the majority of the deprived communities' students end up being categorized as *Bhuskul*. Moreover, the school norms, policies, and system are also found to justify the use of punishment like corporal punishment, expulsion, name calling against the *Bhuskuls*. In the Terai, the students coming from the high class, caste, Hindu, Nepali speaking students are expected to do better than the *Bhuskuls*. These social expectations are formally and informally expressed by the teachers, peers and parents several instances in the school and home.

The uses of violence like discrimination, corporal punishment, expulsion from school against the others are considered as 'expected' or normal in schools. Teachers and parents are not surprised when such students are absent from schools, fail in an exam, fail to do their class work and are unable to bring their homework, break school rules, or dropout from school. They take such instances as normal part of schooling because such expectations of school and family have also set school's norm and values. Khanal (2017) argued that, "Students from dominant backgrounds who have cultural dispositions that are incongruent with those of ethnic minority students were reluctant to accept and embrace the minority culture, resulting in alienation of minority students from the culturally dominant groups"(p.7). As one of the major stakeholders of school family, the adolescents have to follow the school's norms.

Essence of the Chapter

The cultural perspective provides a frame to understand the school violence. Due to high prevalence of the visible and less visible violence the schooling in Terai is challenging for the adolescent students. The schooling creates different labels like *Bhuskuls* or *Badhiya* and groups them as per these labels. The forms of school violence are gradually changing but the violence has remained rooted into the cultural norms that are manifested as the incidence or *lafada* (visible) and the normal (less visible) part of schooling. It also creates a situation that tolerates violence against less valued students, the *Bhuskuls*. However, in the same schooling system, with their courage or *Himmat*, some students are able to respond to the othering and violence. However, such actions are not systematic and effective enough to challenge the systemic and cultural roots of school violence.

In Chapter IX, I have concluded this study with a brief presentation of the major summary, findings and discussions, conclusions, implications and reflections.

CHAPTER IX

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have summarized the major findings in line with the three guiding questions of the study, presented the conclusions and some implications of this study and ended this chapter with some noteworthy reflections.

Summary

What is meant to be an adolescent student in the public school life in a fragile cultural location in the Terai? I began this thesis disclosing some of my experiences of school violence. Though the schooling is presently presented as a global project (Parajuli, 2015), stakeholders largely presented their school as family like institution that is bounded with visible/invisible norms. The rich diversity of its members in Nepal's multicultural and fragile context makes school a complex space with students from vast diversity. I engaged in purposively selected five schools located in the fragile setting and approached school violence as a cultural construct. The first chapter was dedicated to problematise the major concepts used in this study.

The conceptual and theoretical positioning of this thesis was to understand the students and their exposure to school violence in multicultural setting. I realized that the use of any single theory was insufficient to explain and interpret the multidisciplinary nature of school violence. I approached school violence from the constructionist perspective. This was further complimented by different theoretical perspectives like the critical idea of othering (Kumashiro, 2000) and cultural violence

(Galtung, 1990). Further, to explain the power-relation between the perpetrators and the victims of school violence, I used local metaphors: *Jo Hocho Usko Mukhma Ghocho* - the weak is vulnerable, and at risks to violence in school.

My multidirectional epistemological orientation guided me to use the constructionist approach. The meaning of school violence is constructed, experienced and interpreted based on one's experience and knowledge(s) in their societal learning. I also used critical approach to understand why some students are more prone to violence than others. The key strategies of my research approaches were: use of conflict sensitive research approach, consider participant and my physical and emotional safety, deal with unpredictability by being flexible, deal with my Pahade identity with honest self-disclosure, self-reflection, and relevant past experiences. These strategies made this ethnographic study sensitive to the multicultural and overt fragile context. Further, these strategies enabled me to explore adolescent students' experiences, explore the effects of school violence on their studies and understand their response to school violence. The flexible and sensitive ethnographic approaches used in this study showed a possibility to develop 'ethnography of school violence' as a specialized ethnographic strategy to carry out school violence in the fragile contexts.

Ethnographic stories of student's experiences of school violence showed that the socio-cultural and political locations of school determine what and how students make sense of school violence. This ethnographic engagement informed me that the school is a hierarchical social institution which sets school norms. The school's norms generally consider everyday practices like punishment as normal part of school. In general, stakeholders' recognize the big violent incidences like attack to school or student's group aggression as school violence but there are limited or no discussions on the underneath reasons of such incidences in school. School has to deal with

Lafada such as the interpersonal fights; sexual harassment; bullying; use of alcohol and other substances. Use of different forms of punishments like corporal punishment, expulsion, verbal abuse, humiliation, separation, naming and shaming among others were common against the students who involved in *Lafada*. Students' exposure to and experiences of *Lafada* and different forms of punishments are also influenced by student's history, the context they live in and their cultural setting. In addition to the direct *Lafada* and punishments, many students expressed that they have been categorised and less valued than the privileged students; thereby othered in school.

The othering process helped school to use punishment and continue discriminatory treatment so that it can maintain normalcy. For reward or punishments, the school often uses the othering process to justify differentiated treatment. The devalued or the othered students could justify their irresponsible behaviour in school, because it reduces the student's feeling of responsibility (Staub, 2003). The students categorized as *Bhuskul* mentioned that their teachers do not expect them to complete their homework, and do not expect to be prepared to give right answer.

Exposure to violence has many consequences on the students' personal and social wellbeing, particularly on their studies. Due to exposure to school violence, the student's sense of insecurity has been increased. Violence caused low performance of students and lower ability and interest in classroom activities. As a result, the poor performers the rule breakers were categorised as *Bhuskul* in school. The *Bhuskuls* are not able to priorities education and many of them dropout from school. The overt violent political contexts like school *Bandh* and use of students and teachers for political purpose affect all students and similar negative implication on education is also observed due to poor infrastructure and weak management of school. All students

are affected by violence but, the effects of different forms of school violence are unequally distributed among the *Bhuskuls* and the previliged students.

Unlike the culturally privileged groups, the *Bhuskuls* get lower social support, time and resources to mitigate the risks and negative effects of overt violence. The practices of naming and culture of silence operate together to effect violent norms (Saltmarsh, 2012). In school, the *Bhuskul* students like Nisa is less-valued than the students who are good at their study, smart, boy-like, fast learner, and the follower of the school's rules and norms. The school's structure, curriculum, pedagogy and practices perpetuate violence against the *Bhuskuls*, which is justified or at least not-rejected (Galtung, 1990) by the cultural norms. Hence, it is considered normal when *Bhuskul* students like Nisa is involved in *Lafada*, she is punished in school, or she is failed in exam or dropout from the school. This is cultural violence as it justifies the use of violence against the students with specific identities.

One of the important aspects of my study was to see how the stakeholders at the school respond towards the school violence. The adolescents are the first responders while teachers and school administration are also equally engaged to solve the explicit incidences or *Lafada.* Students' *Himmat* is found a useful instrument to response school violence. In addition to *Himmat*, students having a firm support from their parents, peers and teachers helped them to respond to the more complex issues of violence set in school's norms and culture. For the support with student's *Himmat* to respond to school violence, the existing policies against school violence are useful and informative tools. Students referred to the policies like no corporal punishment, child rights to education to oppose some specific forms of violence like corporal punishment and school closure. These policies are also used by teachers and school administration to reinforce school's formal norms and policies including

differentiated treatment against the *Bhuskuls*. The case of use of Nepali language as official teaching learning and assessment language, informal acceptance of neglect the weak students, as discussed in chapter five, are some examples of the policies that reinforce school violence. It was also true that students and teachers were not fully aware of many of the provisions that would help prevent or minimize school violence resulting in poor implementation of those tools. Cultural incompatibility, low policy awareness among the stakeholders, and the absence of school-specific integrated operational plan are the major reasons for the poor implementation of such policies in schools. Similarly, the narrow understanding of school violence and tendency of enforcing normalcy in schools without revisiting schools' problematic norms were other challenges to response school violence effectively. The personalised response actions are ineffective to deal with the cultural forms of school violence.

Schools' role in constructing new identities of students based on their cultural and academic backgrounds, and through the othering process, devalue them in school is an important contribution I could make through this study. In general, students were oriented to the normative image of culture, the positive notion of festivals, rituals, traditions, value systems among others. I discussed how the cultural aspects like religion, language, caste, ethnicity, political ideologies can be used to justify and normalize violence in school. In particular, how school norms devalue some identities and justify the differentiated behaviour is well illustrated in this study. Such devalued identities are constructed based on students' access to historical and present power and their ability to respond to and cope with violence in school. In the next section, I present major findings and discussions; conclusions, implications and reflections of this study.

Major Findings and Discussion

I organized this section based on the research purpose and three guiding questions outlined in the Chapter One. In the beginning, I discussed the first guiding research question, how the adolescent students were experiencing the multifaceted school violence in public schools.

All the students who go to public schools are already labeled as the 'Students going to Government School.' In Nepal, public schools are generally considered for economically poor families who are not able to pay fees in private and English medium schools. From school-1, I started witnessing and hearing the voices of students who were categorized, labeled, named, and othered in school. Students were suffering from the violent practices of school. As enshrined in the Buddhism, there is *dukkha* or suffering in school life. The students going to public schools are devalued by the students who are studying in private schools where the students get facility of bus service, study in the English language. Such schools are perceived as better quality of education providers and have more valueed than the public schools.

In general, the adolescent students were exposed to different kinds of *Lafada* and punishments like corporal punishment, interpersonal fights, and drug-substance abuse. They study in the school with poor physical facilities, and with large classrooms, 57 to 121 students in a class. Similarly, they experience frequent school closure, and expose to violent political protests. Such experiences are also gendered as adolescent girls are more exposed to sexual and gender based violence including sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation in school. This finding also reconfirm that sexual violence is more pervasive among adolescent students (Young et al., 2008) than other age groups students. The schools, for many adolescent students, are unpredictable, insecure and discriminatory space. Though, the exposure to direct and

structural forms of violence was obvious for adolescents, the risks of violence were more to some students than the others. The students whose lifeworld is other than the norm (Kumashiro, 2000, p.26) were considred as *Bhuskuls.*

School's norms are influenced by students', teachers' and parents' cultural aspects like religion, gender, caste and ethnicity, language and class. In all five schools, headmasters, teachers and key members of the SMCs were from the privileged groups. School courses and routine do not reinforce norms and values of othered students (Borrero et al., 2012) because their cultural norms, values and histories are invisible or less-visible in the teaching learning process. Through the hidden curriculum (Apple, 1995) and through the formal curricular activities, the schools have been enforcing standard ruling middle class ideology in school.

The culture of *Dalits,* Muslim girls, disabled, *Madheshi,* and Tharu were found to be less compatible with the schools' standard norms and values. The cultural capital of these communities' has been less visible and valued in schools. However, it is important to understand that the identities of the privileged and the othered group are not static; rather they are relative to the context, capacity and culture. For example, the identity of the Hindu, Nepali speaking, and Pahade man is generally considered as privileged, but Om in School-3 expressed his fear of being Pahade boy as he can be attacked by Madheshi boys.

The same identity could be the cause of being privileged or othered in schools. Sen (2006) argued that cultural identity can foster cooperation and conflict, depending upon how such identity is treated. All students studying in public school can be categorized as other in one context but in other contexts, when the quality of government school is perceived as better than private school, the same student can be perceived as the privileged. Being a high-caste, Hindu, Pahade man, I experienced

being privileged as well as othered in my schooling. I felt privileged when my head teacher mentioned that 'Protect Dhungana's Nose or pride' before the final exam of Grade 10, because he wanted to encourage me to pass the final exam. His family name was same as my family name. This means, he wanted me to maintain his pride and prestige by doing good in the exams.

On the other hand, I was also bullied by the locals due to my being a 'new student or outsider' identity and was also beaten by teachers when I was unable to answer their questions. A Maithali speaking student can be othered in a Nepali speaking class, but the same student is privileged when he or she writes answer about 'Maithali culture' in their exam. In all cases, the students with privileged identities like *Badhiya* or *Uttam* experiences less violence than the *Bhuskuls*.

In other word, the risks of violence are more to the *Hocho*– the students who are culturally disadvantaged, who have less access to power and who are the othered. The local folklore, *Jo Hocho, Usko Mukhma Ghocho*, is useful to explain the subordinated condition of *Bhuskul* students. This finding echoed with Simson (2014) and Khanal (2017), who found that the minority students are more excluded and punished than the other students in school. The students who live in high risk cultural context and low ability to respond to violence are at risk of being categorized as *other* and also high chance of experiencing more violence than the students who have access to power. One of the local metaphors– *Jiski Laathi Uski Bhaish*- the one who holds the stick/power owns the buffalo means, the one with power not only perpetrate violence but also has power to define violence. The consequence of violence varies based on student's access to power, social condition, and ability to cope with and response to violence. This leads me to discuss the second guiding question of my study on how does school violence affect adolescent students' studies.

From this ethnographic process, I found four major effects of school violence: school as unsafe space, constrained academic freedom, and lack of enabling learning environment and the high risk of missing future life opportunities. Student's learning is affected by the school's environment and climate. Barnes et al. (2012) found that the better school culture and climate leads to the low risks to school violence. The five school's environment was not completely similar but there were many similarities on students' exposure to personal, political and cultural forms of violence. The sense of insecurity was more in some schools than the others. In some school, girls felt higher risk of sexual harassment whereas in the other the fear of communal and political violence was a primary concern. Overall, many of the students shared that they did not feel that their school climate was conducive for learning.

The sense of insecurity was one of the major effects of school violence which had direct negative effect on education. The memory of the past violent incidences (Kumashiro, 2000), political violence and increasing communal tension made the adolescents feel insecure in school. Simson (2014) argued that racialised violence in schools cannot be dealt with unless the school environment is made safe, conducive and inclusive. In addition, the school is increasingly insecure space for many of the adolescent girls as they have been experiencing sexual violence, harassment, and abuse. They consider such violence as 'risk of contamination of their purity' in school. As a result of school violence, academic freedom has been constrained in schools and students have lost many school days. In the five schools, the teachers were avoiding discussion on the contested issues like communal conflict. Recognizing the problem of self-censorships as a major threat to academic freedom, Noll (1994) argued for a need of open dialogue to advocate students' intellectual freedom, support to break teachers' intellectual freedom, and responsibility of school as an institution.

In some cases, teachers self-censor in education can impose violence in school (Czyżewski, 2003). As the result of self-censor, the students are unable to engage in critical dialogue on the contested issues and incidences happening in and around their school. Hence, they have to rely on the informal sources of information which is often biased and one-sided that reinforces the stereotypes, biasness and discrimination.

Violence is not only harmful for victims but it is equally harmful for the perpetrators. The Dhammapada explained that the perpetrators will get punishment of his/her deeds, even after his/her life. If one speaks harshly with others, the others will also respond same way (Dhammapada, verse 133). The Dhammapada also indicated that the violent act creates violence and such act will harm for both the perpetrators as well as the victims. When the students and teachers are involved in and experience violence, they also suffer from the guilt-feeling. School does not provide enabling learning environment for many of the othered adolescents. Schools are monitored against the set targets of how many pass and fail, and putting in special measures (Harber & Sakade, 2009) and those special measures are more compatible with dominant group's culture. Thus, due to the othering process, the school does not provide an equal opportunity for all students. Due to frequent school closure, fear in school and other forms of violence in school the othered are unable to concentrate on their studies due to the low enabling environment in school.

Othering emerged as one of the key triggering issues of school violence but it may not lead to direct interpersonal and intergroup violence in school. Schools creates many opportunities for both othered and the privileged groups (Kumashiro, 2000) however, the existing school's cultural context is more favorable to the students coming from the privileged groups than the othered. Categorization and othering are not perceived as threat to certain group's existence; the othering does not lead to

group or communal violence (Staub, 2003). In School-4, a Madheshi teacher mentioned, "Violence is pervasive in the Terai, Madheshi are fighting against the ruling elites not against the Pahade community" (Field Note, 26 January 2015). The Madheshi teacher's opinion shows that the Madheshi students and teachers are unhappy with the ruling elites not with the Pahade students.

The victims of school violence forfeit many life opportunities. The adolescent students were unable to concentrate on their education rather they wanted to avoid punishment, sexual harassment, and other forms of violence in school. For Nisha, *Izzat* (purity & honour) is more important than education because if she loses her *Izzat* she will not be able to show her face in the society and get a groom for marriage. In a survey, Wilmington, Anderson, Schneider, Tomlinson, and Brown (2016) showed strong associations of exposure to violence to the academic outcome as the victimized students are less engaged in school and they remain more silent (p.14).

Low academic achievement and dropout from school are two major negative effects of school violence. The school dropout adolescents lose many new life opportunities. Likewise, those who remain in school, but with their poor academic performance, also lose their interest to continue their schooling. Therefore, they leave their classes; get involved in violence; use substances like alcohol and drug use; involve in bullying rather than being engaged in academic activities. The negative effects on education due to the othering and school violence on adolescent students' also have negative effects in the larger society. When the adolescents are neglected, discriminated and humiliated; they are also more likely to be marginalized in schools and families. The othered students like *Bhuskuls* have been missing more life opportunities than the privileged students who could afford the risk of school violence. The *Bhuskul* students are expected to seat in the last row of the class remain

absent and silent in the classroom and at the end, ready to be failed in exams. Such differentiated norms or expectation is opposite for the privileged students. Student's like Om was expected to learn better, gain better academic competencies, pass the exam, and go for higher education.

Students, teachers and parents alike are actively responding to school violence. Their actions are helpful to protect themselves from different risks of violence, though their responses were not systematic, planned and organized. To understand the approaches and actions against school violence, I formulated the third guiding study question: how is school violence responded to in schools**.** The school violence has been primarily responded by the students and teachers in individualistic way. Similarly, school and policies also respond to school violence. However, such response actions are ineffective because they are not understood, owned and seriously implemented by the stakeholders in the school.

The third and fourth noble paths of Buddhism, *Nirodha,* -there is an end of suffering- gives hope that suffering from violence can be minimised. For this, one has to follow the right *Magga*, the right path. Buddhism provided useful ways to overcome the effect of violence and victimhood. In the Dhammapada (20:190-92, 273), the practices of *Sila* (virtue of good conduct), *Samadhi* (meditation and metal wisdom) and *Prajna* (Discernment, insight, and wisdom) are three major transcendental wisdoms that can be used to minimise suffering.

Adolescent students and teachers are the first co-responders to the direct violence, *Lafada* and punishments. The stakeholders including students have been taking small, but important actions against violence. The practice to rotate students from first to the last bench in a weekly basis, making small groups for teaching, solving small disputes at the interpersonal level, use of peer support; use of local

language in teaching and classroom interaction were some examples of such small actions. School's responses to visible forms of school violence are less systematic and unstructured and often the policy is taken as a loose reference.

Often violence is also responded violently. Peer support, students' courage and confidence to take action against violence and often such responses are reactive and violent. Teachers and school administration are helpful to prevent small disputes in schools and reduce the risk of inter-personal and intergroup violence. Student uses violent means of responding to violence as they do not want to lose their community's pride. Thus, family and friends of students go to the school to react when student complain about violence as they want to prevent or maintain their cultural pride (Borrero et al., 2012). Such reaction becomes more violent in the reported cases of sexual violence, rape or harassment against girls.

School violence is also responded through policies that prevent teachers and stakeholders to use violence in school. School violence related policies are dispersed which leads to ineffective violence response mechanisms in schools. The recent policy and programs increasingly acknowledged the risk of violence in school. Whether these policies are sensitive towards the multicultural context is important question. It is important as often the violent norms are undermined and presented as essential school culture, thus it might be better to deal school violence as human rights issue than the cultural one (Eshareturi, Lyle & Morgan, 2014). There are no any comprehensive policies that deal with school violence. The existing policies that deal with different forms of violence are dispersed in different policies such as the constitution, acts, regulations, guidelines, frameworks and programs.

The general policy frameworks like Child Rights Convention, Sustainable Development Goals, Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Constitution and National

Curriculum Framework can be important reference document to prevent school violence. These policies provide overall principles and guidance to formulate specific policies and programs and to address the multifaceted issue of school violence. The cultural incompatible policies and plans are not effectively implemented in schools (Annandale, Heath, Dean, Kemple,& Takino, 2011). In the Terai, how far the policies and programs are culturally sensitive and compatible has not been seriously discussed. Low cultural compatibility might be one of the reasons for the poor implementation of policies into practice. However, culture sensitive policies can be problematic when it contradicts with fundamental rights of the child. When school culture is violent, the culture sensitive policies could further reinforce and perpetuate the violent norms and practices of a school.

In school, the perpetrators implicitly select victims based on their social position and identities like gender, caste, ethnicity, race, religion, language, academic performance, new-comer to the school among others. In school, such social position is branded into three broad categories: good, medium and poor. The poor students are categorized in school by different names like outsiders, *Bhuskul* (poor student), *Najanne* (less knowledgeable), *Adham* (stubborn), and *Jauwa* (freaky and undisciplined) among others. In this study, I used '*Bhuskul'* to represent the culturally constructed 'other student who is categorized as academically poor performers. The numbers of *Bhuskul* students were significant in the five schools where I carried out my ethnographic fieldwork. Creation of *Bhuskuls*, the poor performers, is like 'bottom layers' who exposed to the hidden curriculum in a form of social expectations, that prepares *Bhuskuls* to fit into and accept the lower strata of social roles (Apple, 1995). If some of the *Bhuskuls* could make some positive achievements, the culture considers

them as ‘an exceptional case or the outliers’ so that they could rationalize their norms and continue the othering process.

Students, teachers and schools are silent towards the cultural forms of violence. How the students who are othered, categorized as *Bhuskul* in the school setting are largely unrecognized or undermined issue of education. Teacher and school use disciplinary measures to prevent violence in school but such measures are unwelcoming for students (Eisenbraun, 2007). The school violence prevention policies are focused on preventing visible forms of violence but the school norms, culture and rules that legitimize the othering and differentiated behaviour between the privileged and the othered is not recognised as a challenge. To prevent or deal with school violence schools, rarely invite external support from district level education authority, police or political parties. When the individual, group and state do not understand and recognize the cultural roots of school violence, than they remain silent. This finding is similar to Stab (2000) who mentioned, “This allows perpetrators to see their destructive actions as acceptable and even right (p.292). Hence, the non-recognition of cultural violence is a pertinent issue as it can justify and reinforces school violence.

In particular, educating students without recognising the student’s diverse values, beliefs rooted to their different cultural and spiritual worlds might have been creating many conclusions while student and teacher experiencing and responding to school violence. In multicultural school setting, the students are exposed to the number of paradoxes: between the formal lessons in school and the lesson they learn from the school culture as well as hidden curriculum (Apple, 1971); school culture and their cultural and spiritual lifeworld; culture of self and culture of the others. School do not deal with these paradoxes in school the result, the students are left in

the state of contradictions and paradoxes. These paradoxes influence the students' and teachers' responding ways and approaches to school violence.

Besides responding to the three research questions, this study has also helped me to understand some of the other questions like why, in my student life, the local students bullied me. This study revealed that, to impose normalcy, schools create symbol of fear' in school. Such symbols are also associated with power and authority such as the headteacher, principle or discipline in charge.

Categorization of students is the beginning of othering process that defines which of the student has more power than the others. My identity as a new student, outsider, was the category normally get bullied, teased or harassed in the school. Later, in my teaching carrer, I was surprised when the school rewarded me as the 'best performer teacher'. This study helped to understand that such reward was used to enforce 'normalcy' in school. By adding the spiritual aspect of violence/peace into the violence triangle of direct, structural and cultural violence- the Hindu and Buddhist ideas of violence and peace could make Galtung's idea of cultural violence more relevant to the school setting that is influenced by the rooted cultural and spiritual lifeworlds. Further, the Buddhist idea of noble path can be useful theoretical guidance to respond school violence.

Conclusions

In multicultural and fragile contexts, it is difficult to attain quality and equity in education without considering the pervasiveness of school violence. Both the visible and invisible forms of violence are practiced and normalized in schooling that made schools as insecure zone for the students. The violent political activities such as frequent strike, the use of children in political rallies, school closure and the poor and fragile socio-cultural environment in school increase the students' exposure to school

violence. The insecure school environment has more negative affects to the othered than the students from the culturally privileged groups.

The school sets certain expectations to maintain normalcy in school and use of violent means to maintain normalcy in school. Such violent norm is manifested in a range of facets such as corporal punishment, expulsion, sexual and gender based violence, physical fights and bullying in school. Students are also involved in self-directed violence like suicide, drugs and substance abuse in school. Hence, the Chanakya's way of teaching, 'use of punishment until the student reach the age of sixteen (Chapter 3:18), which was practiced in 4 hundred B.C, is still applied in the Nepali schools. Similarly, this study also confirmed that, as embedded in one of the popular Nepali folklores, [*Jo Hocho Usko Mukhma Ghocho*] the weak is punished is also equally practiced in the schools. The students who do not adhere with the schools' norms, weak in studies and culturally deprived are more 'othered' and exposed to school violence. The naming, stigmatization, and othering are the bases for the perpetrators to other and justify the use of violence against the othered or the *Bhuskuls*. Hence, the schooling contributes for creating 'unequal citizens' in society unless the violence embedded in school system or 'school's rule-of-the-game' continues legitimizing the use of violent means in school particularly against the othered students.

The schools situated in amidst the covert and overt forms of violence are unable to provide safe learning environment and exercise academic freedom. Students are unable to concentrate in academic activities when they are exposed to violence and feel unsafe in school. Due to school violence and sense of insecurity the students and teachers feel that the academic freedom in school is decreased, which, restricted students to engage in open, constructive and critical academic debates in school.

Further, the victimised students are more likely to be trapped into the cycle of violence because they are more exposed the multiple forms of school violence.

The school violence response actions are somehow useful to deal with individual cases of school violence and to reduce the victims' possible physical and psychological harm. The lessons included in school curricula, teachers who received training on child friendly education are taken as useful reference to 'not use punishment' in school. Despite having some positive efforts, the existing school violence response policy and practices are failed to respond to the culturally constructed school violence. The violence prevention actions are generally reactive, unorganized, and incompatible with the local cultural context. Therefore, the existing policies and response actions are mostly ineffective to challenge the school's norms and cultural roots that rationalize school violence. Rather, the teachers who maintain strict discipline in school are rewarded for maintaining the school's norms, and such norms are generally guided by the superior culture.

The existing ethnographic research approach is insufficient to study school violence in a violent context. A new methodological approach, 'ethnography of school violence' can be used as a research approach to study overt oppression and violence in schools situated in a fragile context. The ethnographer, while applying the ethnography of school violence, has to be ready to listen the stories of victimisation; be isolated and insulted in the field; be physically and mentally wounded; use different tactics and strategies to survive; maintain the prolonged stay in the state of insecurity with participants; follow 'do no harm' approach.

For the better understanding of school violence in multicultural settings, it is useful to blend the locally rooted values and knowledge like spirituality with the western theories such as Galtung's theory of the violence triangle. Galtung's violence

triangle is useful to understand the structural and cultural roots of violence but it has not covered the spiritual worldview which influences the student's ways of knowing and ways of living. Therefore, the existing western theories like Galtung's theory of 'Cultural Violence Triangle' needs to be modified with localised spiritual worldview depicted in the Vedic and Buddhist culture. This modifaction is important for making the cultural violence triangle relevant and useful to the society that is very much influenced from Vedic and Buddhic cultural traditions.

Implications of the Study

Culturally constructed school violence is one of the major challenges to quality and equity in education. This study widens the narrow understanding of school violence by exploring direct, structural and cultural forms of violence as experiencing by the adolescent students in fragile context. In my understanding, this thesis will have varied implications for different stakeholders.

This study contributes with a case to the ongoing debate of redesigning school violence that is produced within the unequal power relations in Nepal's multicultural fragile situation. This study helps stakeholders to rethink and start questioning the 'normalcy' of the normal schools. In this course, I have a plan to publish additional academic papers for the wider audience, prepare a policy brief targeting to the policy makers and develop a teacher training module.

This study is more relevant for the people who are interested to understand the root causes of violence, violence cemented in culture and party politics. This study helps stakeholders to understand the complexity of school violence embedded in normal school. Thus, they might realise for the need to assess and revisit school's norms that normalize violence in school, particularly violence against the othered.

This study is also useful for the curriculum developers, textbook writers and teachers to be sensitive to the othered students like girls, persons with disabilities, religious and ethnic minorities, and poorly performing students. Importantly, this study challenge the violence embedded in 'normal school'. It is important to consider school violence while making education policy, school curriculum, textbooks and other curricular tools. This study gives political parties a useful resource to review the negative effects of their political protests and other political activities such as *Bandh*, use of teachers and students in political protests and attack on school property.

This study revealed that the increased communal feeling in the Terai has been negatively affecting the school environment. Moreover, this study will help the relevant researchers to explore the possibility of revisiting ethnography to make it more appropriate to study schools located in multicultural and fragile settings. Furthermore, by broadening the idea of complex issue of school violence, this study has introduced a new methodology, 'ethnography of school violence.' Other researchers can use and enrich this method and make it more relevant to study school violence in fragile setting. Similarly, compliment with a new component of spiritual violence, this study will also help the researchers to enrich the Galtung's theoretical understanding of cultural violence.

Reflections

The use of cultural perspective to understand school violence allowed me to examine school violence from the adolescent students' viewpoints. The idea of othering has offered a useful theme to analyze how some of the students such as *Bhuskul*, *Jauwa* and *Aadham* are positioned in the lower stratum of school family and are othered. It helped me to explore the othering process that justifies the unequal distribution of violence among the students with different cultural backgrounds.

The violence and suffering experienced in school can also be considered as discourse of life that brings unique and useful life experiences and lessons. However, some students may trap into the continued cycle of violence and others may live with grief, trauma and guilt. My past experiences of being perpetrator and victim of school violence were useful motivation to engage and understand this issue. From the Hindu perspective, I was a perpetrator of school violence, a sinful action. Consciously or unconsciously, I was suffering from the consequences of such sinful actions. The Vedic principle of, 'non-violence is our ultimate religion' [*Aahimsha Paramo Dharma*], inspired me to perform *Karma* for non-violence as my work may contribute to prevent violence in school. This study is one of my *Karma* to reduce the impact of my sinful acts, and to increase my happiness. In addition to Hinduism, over the course of this thesis, I was increasingly influenced by the Buddhist idea of the noble truth, the *dukkha* or suffering of violence is everywhere. To overcome *dukkha*, the Buddhism provides simple guidance, understand the Four Noble Truth: there is an end of suffering and follow the eight fold path. I am hopeful that this study will contribute to reduce school violence and the suffering of school violence in school. I was aware of an ethnographer's limitations and possible accusation I have to face in this study process. This study has created demand to put more and systematic efforts to prevent school violence. I am accountable to make this study relevant to the participants and other stakeholders. On this, Said (1989) argued that ethnographers are often unable to make their work relevant to their participants. I realised that such question of how a researcher gives back to the society is the most imperative ethical challenge. Such ethical issue is more imperative for the individual academic researchers as they only could create limited opportunities to give something back to their participants. While writing my ethnographic note, some of the participants who shared their pain of being

sexually harassed by teachers in school might be experiencing sexual assaults. However, this study will contribute to increase understanding of school violence and provide useful tool to rethink the existing approaches to respond school violence going beyond the direct and visible forms.

This study process also empowered me as I could shade light on some of the less questioned violence rooted in 'school culture' and their roots like religion, language, caste and the political groups. This study process empowered me as I could shade light on some of the less questioned violence covered in 'school culture' and expose the roots of school violence.

It is also important to note that, if I had conducted the fieldwork before or after the violent political protests in the Terai, the results of this study might have emerged as less violent, and more 'normal' than it appeared now. The overt political violent and fragile field context has increased the degree of school violence. Nevertheless, the adolescent's experiences of direct violence and structural violence might be different to different setting, but the school's norms that were derived from religion, political ideology, spirituality among others were more-or-less similar to the students studying in other than the five study schools in Nepal.

In Nepal, cyber bullying, use of arms, drugs and substance abuse, violence against teachers, and political intereference are some potential research gaps emerged in the field of school violence. Similarly, I realised for additional research to have in-depth understanding of how communal tensions emerged and manifested in the school situated in the overtly violent setting.

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APPENDIX I: DEFINITION OF KEY LOCAL TERMS

I defined some local terms that were frequently used in my research field and in the analysis and meaning making process in this thesis. I used these terms in their original Romanized form in italics to avoid chances of losing their original meanings.

Adham: A category of the student who is inferior, stubborn, a slow learner and disobedient in school. There are three ways something or somebody is perceived in the Hindu tradition: *Badhiya* (Superior), *Madhyam* (medium, or average) and *Adham* (inferior).

Badhiya: It literalymeaning good, positive, well positioned, cultured, and civilized. Many teachers categorize good students as *Badhiya student.*

Bandh: General strike. It is the situation where schools, transportation and markets are disrupted, schools are closed, and *Bandh* organizers can vandalize cars and attack school to enforce general strike.

Bhuskul: It is a category of the student who cannot memorize his or her lessons, is a slow learner, and is not expected to perform well academically. The *Bhuskul* students are opposite to the smart and good students.

Himmat: The psychological power to act with courage or to take bold decisions and do necessary actions in life situations.

Himsa: Violence, discrimination, domination, punishment, or suppressions imposed by one to the other.

Jo Hocho Usko Mukhma Ghocho: A Nepali proverb used to show some ironic realities of social world. The general meaning of this proverb is: ‘The weak is vulnerable, at risks and subject to experience violence.’

Izzat: Individual or group's prestige or honour that is taken seriously to maintain their pride. If any individual member breaks a family or group's rule that negatively affects their prestige, and therefore, the member breaking the group rule is punished.

Jauwa: A category of students in Nepali school's located in Terai districts. Jauwa means the young students (mainly the boys), who often get involved in physical fights, use drugs and alcohol, are not regular toschool, and do not follow the school rules.

Lafada: Refers to direct forms of violence, like interpersonal fights and disputes. In school, it means breaking school's rules, giving trouble to friends and teachers, and creating problems in school. Any overt form of violence carried out by students and disrupts school's daily routine is considered *Lafada*.

Madheshi: People mainly living in Nepal's Terai region. Madheshi represents a group of people with specific race and language. Madheshi is a group identity of the majority of Hindu caste group and some Muslims residing in the southern plain land of Nepal, who primarily speaks Maithiali, Awadhi and Bhojpuri languages as their mother tongue.

Paap: Sinful act, action that is prohibited by religion, evil actions that hurt or harm others.

Pahade: The word Pahade is derived from the word Pahad, which literally means a high hill or a mountain. Therefore, the people living in the hilly-region of Nepal or, or the family who migrated from the hill in the past, are recognized as Pahade.

Terai: Nepal's southern region that occupies 17 percent of the total land of Nepal. Over 50 percent of the total population of Nepal is living in the Terai only. This term mainly represents geography. Madheshi, Tharu, Muslim and Pahade are the major four cultural communities living in the Terai.

APPENDIX II: BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE FIELD DISTRICTS

District	Total population	Predominant population (%)	Predominant mother tongue (%)	Religion (%)	Predominant political party based on CA-II Election*
Kapilvastu	571,936	Muslim 18, Tharu 12	Awadhi 50 Urdu 18 Nepali 17	Hindu 81 Islam 18	CPNUML 1, NC-1, Free 1, TMLP -1, MJF Nepal-1
Sunsari	763,487	Tharu 12 Muslim 11.5	Nepali 29 Maithali 28 Tharu 12	Hindu 73 Islam 12	CPNUML -3, NC-1, MJF Dem-1, MJF Nepal-1
Nepal	26,494,504	Chhetri 16.6 Brahmin hill 12.2 (Tharu 6.6, Muslim 4.4)	Nepali 44.6 Maithali 11.7 Bhojpuri 6 Tharu 5.8 Urdu 2.6	Hindu 81.3 Islam 4.3	NC- 105 CPNUML- 91 CPN Maoist-26 MJF Democratic-4 TMLP -4

Note: (UML- Communist Party of United Marxist Leninist; NC- Nepali Congress; TMLP- Terai Madhesh Loktantrik Party; MJF Dem- Madheshi Janadhikar Forum, Democratic; MJF Nepal- Madheshi Janadhikar Forum, Nepal). Election Result is presented based on the number of candidates won in First Past the Post (FPTP).