

A WELL PERFORMING PUBLIC SCHOOL OF CHITWAN:  
A CASE STUDY

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## AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Padam Poudel* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Education (Educational Leadership)* presented on 25 November 2022.

Title: *A Well Performing Public School of Chitwan: A Case Study*

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Despite increasing investment in school education, other benefits and support, the quality of education and academic success in many public schools in Nepal are still in a dire situation. Students in Nepal's numerous public schools perform abhorrently academically. Few public schools, however, have managed to outperform and maintain strong performance over an extended period of time despite having comparable student bodies, faculty, and physical resources. This study explores how and why one public school in Chitwan has been performing well over the course of time.

For this research, a well-performing school from Chitwan was chosen. In-depth interviews, and focus group discussions were conducted with the School Management Committee Chairperson, headteacher, teacher, local actor, parent, and student. The outcomes of the study contribute to the inquiry into the school effectiveness. It is qualitative research employing interpretive paradigm.

The findings of this research reveal that headteacher's instructional leadership, parents and local community support, active students' engagement, continuous assessment system, and teachers' roles and responsibilities and safe school climate enhance the school's ability for getting consistently better academic performance. The

research outcome contributes to enriching poor results of public school in terms of students' overall performance in national examinations. Moreover, this study will complement the existing literature for it is new and unique in the context of Nepal. This study revealed how effective leadership demonstrated by the head teacher contributes to the success of the school and its students.

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## DECLARATION

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

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## DEDICATION

This work is profoundly dedicated to my father Mr. Kosh Nath Poudel, my mother Jhuma Poudel, in honor of their guidance and encouragement that motivated me to get this research work to completion. His moral guidance always empowered me in the journey of MPhil.

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Padam Poudel, Degree Candidate

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CAS	Continuous Assessment System
CERID	Center for Education Research Innovation and Development
DEO	District Education Officer
DoE	Department of Education
EDSC	Educational and Developmental Service Center
ERO	Education Review Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year
GoN	Government of Nepal
I/NGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MoE	Ministry of Education
NASA	National Assessment of Student Achievement
NGO	National Non-Government Organization
OCE	Office of the Controller of Examinations
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
RC	Resource Center
SEE	Secondary Education Examination
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Program

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study begins with my school life reflection. I reflected on my experiences in a public school as a student and teacher for a decade. Headteachers, school SMCs, PTAs, teachers, parents, and local communities were frequently unwilling to learn from well performing schools. One reason for this neglect could be a lack of accountability in the public school setting. This chapter highlights the scene setting of this study with the background, problem statement, purpose, research questions, rationale, and delimitations of the study to explore the knowledge in the area of my interest. I further include chapter essence.

#### **Setting the Scene**

I was born, brought up, and completed my Higher Secondary from Chitwan district. I got an opportunity to study at three public and private schools nearer my areas till my Grade ten's SLC/SEE. My father was very conscious and worried about the education and the knowledge I received from my school. There were nearly eight or nine schools within five to six kilometers of the locality.

Between 2000 to 2004 AD, my father tried to admit me to one particular public school in the locality that he judged and evaluated for well performance. Ahamad et al. (2018) stated well performing school is a school that has an ethos, a character with a distinctive image, an overall educational perspective, and can take part on the global platform. My father favored the well performing public school as he believed the students received more care from the teachers, the school taught contemporary curricula, and the teachers were highly qualified. According to a study on well performing schools, students achieve high educational achievement only

when students receive a highly skilled teacher, demanding curricula, academic care, and multicultural education (Chenoweth 2007, 2009; Hampton 2016). My father didn't succeed in admitting me to the school of his choice. Trujillo (2013) stated that the distinctive features of successful schools are interrelated with student achievement. Again, it was between 2003 to 2007 AD when my father attempted to enroll my siblings in the same school, but neither of them succeeded, and his dream never came true. He frequently changed their schools because he was unsatisfied with other schools' performance, teachers, and administrators' perceptions of students. Teachers' and school administrators' perceptions were crucial for students' learning and achievement (Bell 2001; Bloom & Owens 2013; Kearney et al. 2012).

My father always used to say that quality and effective teachers continuously promote high care and set high expectancy for all students. Many research studies also revealed that pupils perform the topmost when educators set greater expectations for them in the schoolroom (Liou et al., 2016; Woolley et al., 2010). I was just a child and could not comprehend the goodness of the schools. But when I reached the secondary level, then I realized my father's choice was great because I could see the differences between my school and the well performing school in terms of headteachers' leadership, teachers' teaching quality, and school environment, which were average in my school. At that time, I understood that the head teacher's leadership is the most crucial factor affecting the school's and students' performance. Strong school leadership is the main cause of a school's success (Sutcliffe, 2013). When I was in grade ten, I noticed my school, along with other public schools, taught the same curricula that particular public school teacher taught their students. Many other public schools imitate almost the same teaching materials that successful schools embrace for their embrace. I still remember exchanging and collecting notes for all subjects,

exam questions, and books from my friends studying in the well performing school. Even most parents and guardians did the same for their children while urging them to take tuition classes from the teachers teaching in that particular school. It means that teachers' quality also enhances school and students' performance and achievement. By that time, I again understood that the contribution of teachers also sets a stepping stone for a well performing school.

With the influx of many changes within two decades, regardless of the physical, personnel resource, technical, political, and social-economic challenges, one particular school in Chitwan has been able to capture the attention of not only its locality, district, and regions but the whole nation. It was only from the year 1995-1996 A.D that the school suddenly metamorphosed, addressed the requirement of students, parents, and society, and became the most popular among the public schools.

Furthermore, (Henck, et al., 2013) describes good education as appropriate to students' needs either in the present or in the future and is suitable for them at any age or experience. Moreover, good education has also enhanced their abilities and learning participation. It has also helped enhance children's diversity to support learning and safeguard them from exploration, abuse, violence, and conflict. The particular school of Chitwan has provided equal and sustainable opportunities to every student and guidelines for their future growth and development. Even though countable schools are improving their performance nowadays, many parents and their children in the local district, other districts, and other provinces desire to be a part of the mentioned public school because of its better teaching-learning and students' holistic development with the implementation of child-centered pedagogy. Chitwan's school, parents, and local communities have witnessed a high influx of students every year since 2000 A.D. Therefore, all school stakeholders like parents, headteachers,

teachers, parents, students, School Management Committee (SMC), local actors, and communities feel honored to be a part of the school because of its well performance in teaching-learning and students' academic achievement. The school is sought after for its academic excellence with holistic development of the students, outstanding teaching and learning activities, child-friendly pedagogy, and a school environment that dazzles all the parents, community, and students. This idea is also supported by Thapa et al. (2013), in their research work, who also said a positive school climate is crucial for behavior enhancement, academic achievement, and holistic development of the student.

I have always been curious about how one school can consistently maintain performance over time. Hence, I am on a quest to find the answer myself. I am also in the teaching profession and have prioritized the necessity of an effective and good school for the overall development and well-being of the students, society, and the nation. Throughout my school life, I have always been passionate about engaging myself with school stakeholders, school-related magazines, materials, and books to reveal what makes a public school successful in well performance and why and how it maintains the feat. Such an expression of myself forced me to select a well-performing public school.

### **Background of the Study**

Education in every country is termed as a stepping stone for development. Education arranges the base for literacy, skill acquisition, and technological advancement. Moreover, education also reinforces a person to gain spiritual, mental, societal, professional, and physical strength and makes them understandable, sensible, and intelligent human beings. Education can be achieved only from the process of teaching and learning. Any person can get their education from a different medium:

school, media, the internet, parents, society, event, and nature. The different education media are also further categorized into formal, informal, and non-formal. So, I particularly focused on formal education provided by public schools. The government financed, executed, and maintained such schools (Khanal et al., 2020). DoE (2014) states that public schools play an essential role in the Nepali educational sectors and, fulfill a nation's huge educational needs and responsibilities.

Still, in Nepal, most of the schools' quality is measured based on the results of School Leaving Certificate (SLC) and Secondary Education Examination (SEE). According to MOEST (2019) data, Nepal has 6787 (20%) private schools and 27704 (80%) public schools. Similarly, conferring to the government's economic survey for the fiscal year 2021-22 the number of public schools stands at 26,454 (MoF, 2022). The survey revealed that most of the public schools in recent years were merged with each other to deliver good and quality education. Although the number of public schools is decreasing in number compared to the fiscal year 2018 with the fiscal year 2021-22, but still public schools play an immense role in the education sector of Nepal. The above-mentioned information indicates that public school is the backbone of the country's education. Similarly, the achievement percentage of SLC results in private school positions is 90%, whereas public schools hardly hold 30% and 50% (Rai, 2014). The SLC examination was recently replaced by the Secondary Education Exam (SEE), but private school success rate remains constant at 90% while public school success rate is around 40% (Wagle, 2017).

One public school in Chitwan has been accepted as a well performing public school in the district as well as in the Bagmati Province for many years. For convenience, let's call it School Gyandev. This school's performance is also well acclaimed at the National level. According to the head teacher of School Gyandev, his

school won the Federal and Province level SLC and SEE excellence awards in the years 2068 to 2075 (2012 to 2018 AD). He further said that from 2058 BS (2002 AD) to 2077 BS (2020 AD), his school held the only first position in SLC/SEE when compared to other public schools in the district, and he claimed most of the district toppers were only from his school. (Personal Communication with the head teacher of School Gyandev, July 27, 2020).

The criteria for well performing schools include producing results despite having a large student body, gaining notoriety in the community, maintaining the same enrollment levels over time, and being successful in allocating resources based on benchmarks specified in the Education Regulations, 2002, with an amendment.

Building on Edmonds (1979) and others, Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) identified nine universal elements for well performing schools: strong leadership, a focus on teaching and learning, a supportive school climate, high expectations, monitoring progress, parental involvement, effective teaching, professional development for teachers, and student involvement (Reynolds et al. 2014).

Tschannen and Gareis (2015) state that school community involvement, faculty trust in the principal, principal leadership behaviors like collegial leadership and instructional leadership, school climate, teacher professionalism, high academic standards and expectations, and student achievement are crucial components of well-performing schools. Ahamad et al. (2018) stated that well-performing school is a school that has an ethos, a character with a distinctive image, an overall educational perspective, and can take part on the global platform. According to Kirk and Jones (2004), students are expected to succeed in well performing schools, and the institutions value each student as an asset with a special gift to share with society. The

principles of school effectiveness and improvement must be applied to the evaluation of the schools that consistently produce outstanding results.

In Nepal, parents appear to be aware of the differences between the various schools currently in existence, so when deciding on a school for their children education, they consider the school's historical performance on the SLC/SEE and other exams. The school's graduates are also assessed in terms of whether it consistently produces quality outcomes or not. The more effective schools are regarded as the best options. Other factors in their decision-making may include receiving national recognition and being accepted in the community and school environment (Sharma, 2019). According to Stone et al. (2007), the culture of high expectations fostered by the school's principal, teachers, staff, and students is the cornerstone of well- performing schools.

During my MPhil study at Kathmandu School of Education, I interacted and enquired with different public schools' head teachers, teachers, and stakeholders. During our interaction, I openly discussed the current situation of the public schools in Nepal and profoundly presented ways to improve their performance. During the interaction, I found most of the participants highly focused on the point that a school can only perform well if every student gets a success.

Similarly, when I interacted and interviewed with the government officer, SMCs , and head teachers in Chitwan also suggested public schools' performance is directly interconnected with good leadership. Good leadership is needed in a public school in order to improve. School leadership aids in the improvement of educational quality in public schools.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Most of public schools of Nepal had effective human resources and physical assets, such as sufficient land, building, and other properties. Similarly, teachers were also experienced, qualified, and highly trained by various government and donor agencies, as well as well paid in accordance with government salary standards, and they received frequent government and non-government support and financial assistance (Singh, 2017). Despite this benefit and support, the quality education and academic success in many public schools are still in a dire situation (Shrestha, 2014). Students in public schools do not perform any better than those in private schools. (ERO, 2019; Thapa, 2015).

However, few Nepali public schools have been performing well and delivering consistent, better, and higher academic achievement for the students over time and are getting successfully reformed while gaining popularity (Singh, 2017). Handful public schools continuously perform good and more effectively on average than other public schools in Nepal (Sharma, 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how only a few public schools successfully reformed despite sharing the same infrastructure, teachers, students, government, and other agencies' support.

Additionally, according to MoEST (2019), student achievement in Nepal's public schools appears to be extremely low, with many of them receiving GPAs below 2.0 out of a possible 4. Many researchers demonstrated that the public schools of Nepal are performing poor because of headteachers' lack of power and authority, familiar teachers' accountability, teachers' involvement in political activities, and direct and indirect political parties' meddling in the hiring, upgrading, and rewarding of employees, weak parental and community trust and support toward school (Gautam et al. 2015; Mathema, 2007; Mathema & Bista, 2006; Thapa 2013).

The Department of Education (DoE, 2016) published a Flash Report at the beginning and completion of the educational periods, which revealed that most public schools in Nepal receive full or partial funding and support from the Nepali government and other non-governmental organizations. Approximately 80% (27704) of these schools are public (MoEST, 2019). Therefore, the Government of Nepal regularly allots countrywide budget to the education sector each year. The government nearly allocated 163.76 billion (10.68% of the total budget) to education sectors for free school education to every Nepali student for the fiscal year 2019/20 (MoF, 2019). The government currently spends approximately 11% of its total budget on education (MoF, 2020), but the outcomes of public schools are still lower. Only grades one through twelve receive approximately 80% of the government's educational budget (MoE, 2016). Regardless of massive assistance from grants, administration supports and other facilities provided by the government, many public schools are in a pathetic state (Shrestha, 2014).

Shrestha (2014) states that weak-performing public schools encounter many problems like vulnerability in the level of education, inadequate physical facilities, loss of students, losing qualified interested stakeholders, and delivering undesirable SLC/SEE results. Although the Ministry of Education has changed the assessment system of the SLC/SEE results into a grading system, still the pass percentage is below (OCE, 2017). For extended periods, public schools students' pass percentage in the SLC exams stands under 50% (OCE, 2014). In the last five years, approximately only 30% of public school students passed SLC (MoE, 2015). Throughout the 2018 SEE test, only 4% of public school students received a GPA of 3.20 out of 4, while 40.84 percent of private school students received a GPA of 3.20

out of 4. (Dixit, 2019). These figures reflected some characteristics of the weak performance of public schools.

With the different period, many strategies, policy, and plans have been developed and changed to build effective performance of public schools, but the quality of the schools is quite undesirable ( Parajuli & Das, 2013). According to MOE (2010), many areas should be focused on improving school performance, such as improving learning achievement, increasing internal efficiency, and ensuring the quality of education concentrating on enhancing the capacity of teachers on school.

Despite huge government funding, infrastructure, and qualified and trained employees with good salaries, the overall performance of public schools in Nepal is still deplorable (Shrestha, 2014). Therefore, well performing public school has been a heated topic for desired education in Nepal. My concern is finding effective, productive, and transformative practices that lead public schools toward well performance. Moreover, the effective contribution of different stakeholders can become a pivotal factor in making a well performing public school. Ortega et al. (2012) state that an effective school assures that all of its students attain good results regardless of initial performance expectations or social, economic, and cultural background. Therefore, Koirala (2015) states that it is yet to be determined which system works in our country, as all efforts to bring changes produced negative results.

When I read and heard the news about School Gyandev in Chitwan then, I asked myself why only some public schools consistently perform good despite having a similar population of students, fixed assets, resources, teachers, infrastructure, government, and non-government support. I usually questioned: Is it because of the head teacher's leadership? Is it because of SMC? Is it because of teachers' roles and activities in school? Is it because of the local community and parents' contribution?

What sort of leadership practice is essential for the well performance of the public school? The answer to these questions has not yet been explored. Therefore, this study explores and analyzes the situation of the issues regarding what works for the public school's excellent performance.

Inside the setting of Chitwan, very few studies on well performing public schools have been conducted. For a country like Nepal, it is crucial to understand and be aware of the various areas that contribute to well performing public schools.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to explore the practices of a well performing public school of Chitwan.

### **Research Questions**

Based on the purpose, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the areas responsible for well performance of a public school?
2. How has School Gyandev in Chitwan been performing well?
3. Why has School Gyandev in Chitwan been performing well?

### **Rationale of the Study**

Improving school education is vital to the success of a developing country like Nepal. Despite significant funding for education and the implementation of several development strategies, student achievement as well as overall performance in most of the public schools of Nepal is far from satisfactory. This suggests that public schools' understandings and practices could be improved. But only a few public schools provide consistent, better, and higher academic achievement than others (Singh, 2017). Few public schools are always popular amongst parents, students, the community as well as government even with similarities in location, students' socioeconomic status, teachers' background, infrastructure, community and

government support (Singh & Allison, 2016). In the area of the well performing public school in Nepal, there are only a few field research studies. Moreover, my interest and passion since my childhood also motivated me to explore the practices of a well performing school.

First and foremost, I must explore what makes a school well performing, successful and effective among other public schools and what has empowered the school to maintain consistent performance over the period of time. Secondly, these issues open avenues for some other public schools in the country to improve. Thirdly, this study helps in public schools' policy support. Moreover, I would be able to add some new fields to leadership. Finally, this is a current issue in the context of Nepal and helpful for responding to the query about why public schools are not doing better. In addition to these, the policymaker can also formulate the policy in different settings in the future based on a thick understanding of well- performing schools for the quality of education and its relevancy.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The study was delimited to one government-funded public school in Chitwan. This study only concentrated on the SMC chairperson, head teacher, teacher, student, parent and local actor of School Gyandev. The study focused on head teachers' instructional leadership, continuous assessment of students, school climate, involvement of parents, student activities, participation of local communities, and teachers' roles and activities.

### **Chapter Essence**

With the increase in educational budget, government's priority and increase of knowledge and participation of local community and guardians in public schools have created an interest in well performing public schools. By accepting this view, this

chapter has set the research agenda. The government of Nepal has invested a huge sum of money and developed different educational acts, regulations, policy to enhance public schools' performance. The empirical review of the related issue could not provide a sufficient and reasonable response regarding this concern in the Chitwan context. I believe this study will make a substantial contribution to improving public schools in Nepal.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The core purpose of this chapter is to rationalize the contextual understanding of a well- performing public school through reviewing a range of literature, research findings, and policy documents related to the research issue. The reflection of the relevant literature is referred to validate and allow exploring well performance of the public school. The themes in this chapter are captured based on the concepts of the literature. Similarly, this chapter also deals with leadership theories to explain the research process more applicable to generate new knowledge on well- performing public schools.

#### **Concept of Public School**

Within the education system of Nepal, there are mainly three types of schools: public schools, private schools, and religious schools. Public schools are funded, executed, and maintained by the government, whereas private schools are owned by individual investors and are not controlled by the government (Khanal et al., 2020). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education of Nepal divided the public school into two types: a) funded public schools that regularly receive state money for its staffs' remunerations as well as all day-to-day administrative expenses; b) unfunded public schools that do not obtain government funds and yet receive assistance from community level, donation agencies, NGOs, INGOs and other sources of school assets and resources (Thapa, 2013). Government schools in Nepal are also called public schools, and schools receive different aid from the government for teachers' wages and other physical requirements of the school (Gautam et al., 2015). Therefore, public schools primarily depend on the government budget for their smooth

functioning. I particularly focused on the formal education provided by the public school, which follows the policy, rules, regulations, and plan developed by the nation to ensure the betterment of the student and nation.

### **Concept of Well Performing and Effective School**

Ahamad et al. (2018) stated that a well performing school has an ethos, a character with a distinctive image in overall educational performance, and an ability to take part in the global platform. According to (OECD, 2012a), the school's performance can be measured by focusing on four areas like (a) level of access to education; (b) the output of learning; (c) school's learning environment, and (d) human and financial resources invested in education. As mentioned earlier, the first three areas are associated with analyzing how the school is establishing a connection in education for every child of its terrain and arranging a learning environment for better quality education. The final one believes in having proper school operation and management with existing teaching staff, educational facilities, and materials for instruction and learning.

Effective public schools nurture strong links among families, community members, and the school because families and community members play a crucial role in supporting the school to reach its long-term goals and solve problems ( Bryk et al., 2010). Such ties improve students' motivation and participation. Creating meaningful learning and well-rounded development for everyone is the uppermost priority of an effective school (Oakes et al., 2012). Instead of training students to rehearse details, effective schools encourage students to deeper learning, think critically, and collaborate to find out a solution (Martinez & McGrath, 2014). Ineffective school learning is assisted by well-trained, experienced, and worthwhile teachers who help to share the culture of collaboration and learning (Papay & Kraft,

2015). Therefore, teachers of such schools have sufficient time to work together, cooperate on pedagogy, and create tactics to overcome the difficulties students face (Conley & Cooper, 2013).

In an effective school, teachers learn and improve themselves through coaching and other professional development (Marzano et al., 2011). Moreover, these practices enhance the teacher's effectiveness and confidence level, teach their students more accurately and precisely, and grow a culture where teachers take responsibility for every children's learning. Instead of using different test scores to identify "good" and "bad" teachers, the effective school used assessment tools for the improvement of teaching and learning practice. (Kirp, 2015). Funding and resources are enough to support the need of the school. For example, schools need a library, laboratories, sports and play equipment, and well-maintained outdoor space. There should be enough time for teachers and children to learn profoundly.

Hence, an effective school ensures such facilities and students also get additional support for what they need to learn. In the end, such provision addresses students' academic, social and health-related requirements (Dobbie & Fryer, 2013).

I believe that concentrating on student achievement in the exam is not fair enough to judge a school's performance. Factors like teacher quality, teaching, learning method, school climate, students' behavior and critical thinking enhancement, equal access to education, and schools' contribution toward society also play an important role in evaluating schools' performance. As far as I am concerned, an effective school motivates its students for profound learning, creating meaningful learning, thinking through complex problems, and developing synergy for coordination and collaboration to find a holistic solution. Furthermore, an effective school also plays a crucial role in fostering a strong bond between families,

communities, and its stakeholders for the betterment of students, school, society, and the nation.

### **Leadership**

Strong school leadership is the main cause for a school to be successful (Sutcliffe, 2013). Strong and effective leadership in school helps transform value into action, vision into realities, hindrances into innovation, separateness into solidarity, and risk into rewards (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, cited in Smith & Riley, 2012). School leadership is not only limited to the principal alone but to a network relationship. School principals who are dedicated to establishing and maintaining leadership with teachers build school ability, which contributes to academic achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2010). Therefore, the school principal plays a prominent role in developing, promoting, and safeguarding their school culture. The opportunity to increase students' academic attainment depends on schools' culture and principals' leadership (Wilhem, 2016). Day et al. (2016) reported that a school's ability to increase students' academic achievement and remain effective over time is contingent on the principals' and assistant principals' ability to comprehend and recognize the school's needs and to apply connected, organizationally collective school values through numerous arrangements and gatherings of time- and context-sensitive strategies that are "layered" and progressively embedded in the education curriculum. There is an important connection and a very positive association between leadership practice and student achievement in school (Waters, & Marzano, 2006; Melton et al., 2013). Now the leadership style has moved from a classical authoritarian, democratic, and laissez-faire to a new model like; distributed, instructional, transactional, transformational, and many others (Khanal & Park, 2016). The impulsion for principals' to be accountable for student outcomes has led to a

renewed interest in the role of leadership in instruction improvement (Aldridge & Fraser, 2017).

The leadership characteristics of the school principal play an important role in determining the overall school's performance. As far as I am concerned, effective school leaders motivate their students for profound learning, creating meaningful learning, thinking through complex problems, and developing synergic efforts for coordination and collaboration to find out a holistic solution. Furthermore, a successful school leader also plays a key role in fostering a strong bond between teachers, parents, communities, and stakeholders for the betterment of students, school, society, and the nation.

### **SLC/SEE System in Nepal**

The Nepali School Education Examination (SEE), formerly known as the School Leaving Certificate, is comparable to the 10th grade (MOE, 2015). Students now take the School Education Examination (SEE) in place of the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exam at the end of the tenth grade (SEE) (MoEST, 2019). SLC/SEE is regarded as the most significant test in Nepal. At the conclusion of students' ten-year in education, students in Nepal between the ages of 15 and 16 take the SEE test, which is administered by the SEE examination Board, a constituent body under the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2015). The SLC/SEE examination is still given a great deal of importance. The SLC/SEE exam for passing grade 10 is regarded as the most difficult and significant one because it serves as an "Iron Gate" for the earlier SLC exam, which was used to enter the higher education system. The results of the SLC/SEE examination have a significant impact on the decision-making of government entities, stakeholders at the school level, lawmakers, and other authorities. There are now four years of secondary education (9th to 12th grade),

which is primarily available to students between the ages of 13 and 16, as opposed to the previous two years (9th and 10th grade) (MoEST, 2019). The Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB) oversees the administration of the exams for grades 11 and 12 (MoEST, 2019).

Parents, news organizations, management staff, school stakeholders, policymakers, lawmakers, and the entire country have all paid close attention to the SEE result. As a result, everyone in Nepal has placed a high value on schools' performance in the SEE. The school is classified as a well performing school based on its consistent and high SEE achievement.

### **Headteachers' Instructional Leadership as a Way for School Effectiveness**

Over the past few decades, instructional leadership has gained ample popularity with an increase in the hopes from schools and the efforts to establish a more responsible school structure (Gawlik, 2018; Hallinger et al., 2018; Neumerski et al., 2018). There is an agreement among researchers that to improve the school in the 21st century, the school leader should demonstrate strong skills and expertise in instructional leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Harris et al., 2017). Therefore, the success and effectiveness of the school depend on private leadership. The concept of instructional leadership was first introduced and implemented in schools in the United States in the early 1970s and 1980s (Hallinger, 2005).

Instructional leadership consists of several factors such as personal characteristics, school personnel, and school climate (Zepeda, 2013). Therefore, strong instructional leadership maintains brilliance and excellence in education (Zepeda, 2013). Zepeda (2013) further stated that the main goal of instructional leadership is to enhance school performance, promote a friendly school climate, develop coordination among schools' staff and improve students' academic

achievement. Similarly, Kolu (2016) also stated that implementing instructional leadership in school establishes stakeholders' attention and involvement by improving students' learning outcomes. Similarly, Du Plessis (2013) describes that instructional leaders and head teachers play a prominent role in enhancing every individual teacher's quality, student achievement and competency in school operations. Kolu (2016) stated that collaboration among the principal, teachers, students, and all school stakeholders is needed to perform instructional leadership in school. Therefore, in instructional leadership, the headteacher involved all teachers in the development and execution of the school improvement plan (Brown, 2016).

Lee (2015) also stated that in instructional leadership, combined collaboration and coordination are practices where the headteacher works as a leader of leaders and teachers, other staff members, and parents work together to fulfill the shared goal of the school. Ghimire (2011) states that instructional leadership coordinates and collaborates with all school stakeholders and increases stakeholders' commitment to work for a common goal to enhance the learner's benefit. This reflects that there is a collaborative approach in school under the instructional leadership of the headteacher.

Instructional leadership concentrates more on effective teaching and the learning process in school (Sharma, 2012; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). By supporting the above claims, a headteacher who has instructional leadership capabilities can give accurate direction for teachers and students to enrich their teaching and learning activities. Instructional leadership highly concentrated on teaching and learning activities by keeping the center school vision, mission, goals, and school climate (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Mestry et al., 2013). Supporting this, Peters (2010) also stated that instructional leadership is the base structure of a school leader's duty which has an interconnection with the mission and goal of a school for enhancing the teaching and

learning process. Head teachers' roles and responsibilities in school are straightly allied with enriching teachers' quality, monitoring the school curriculum and program, supervising and assessing teachers' activities in school, quality staffing, professional development, and heightening collaboration, coordination, cooperation, and interaction work culture.

Researchers (Du Plessis, 2013; Good, 2008; Jenken, 2009) stated that headteachers who possess instructional leadership always engage themselves in developing effective goals for quality teaching and learning by managing curriculum, instruction, and planning measures which teachers can follow to evaluate their teaching and learning process. Similarly, Fullan (2011) describes that as an instructional leader, the headteacher in a school establishes high and effective coordination and cooperation with teachers to enrich the school's objectives, teachers' teamwork, teachers' commitment, as well as teachers' and learners' learning activities.

According to Phillips (as cited in Maw & Tun, 2011), teachers in learning schools encountered and frequently discussed to resolve their teaching-learning difficulties together. They recall their actions on the job and also take obligation for what students learn. Teachers perform all their work together as a team and with complementary expertise rather than in hierarchy or separation. Therefore, instructional leadership of the headteacher is crucial to developing a positive and effective school climate, encouraging students' and teachers' relationships, and managing and allocating available school resources to deepen the effective teaching and learning process between teachers and learners. In today's dynamic and uncertain educational, technological, and political environment, it is difficult for a school leader to cope with changing scenarios. Schools need a headteacher who embraces the role

of instructional leader to reorganize the learning activities and enrich the students' productivity (Marishane, 2011).

DeMatthews (2014) states that headteachers can carry out different actions, methods, and decisions for the growth and improvement of the teaching and learning process in school. These actions contain the headteacher's approaches and decisions connected to teaching and learning process.

According to the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership (2012), effective instructional leadership is focused on learning (student and adult) and measured by improved instruction. Effective leaders foster a school climate in which teaching is viewed as a public and reflective practice. The framework's four dimensions are vision, mission, and culture development; instructional improvement; resource allocation; and people and process management.

A research study conducted by Singh (2016) in public schools in Kathmandu explores how headteachers' understanding and practices influenced students' learning. For this study, five continuously well performing public schools from a longer period of time and five low performing public schools were selected. The research findings demonstrate that despite operating under the same school setting in terms of infrastructure, teachers, students, government, socio-economic conditions and other agencies' support, some public schools were left behind the majorities of public schools. The study revealed that most of the headteachers of the public schools frequently dealt with political intervention, poor administrative support, and meager financial and other resources. Despite this, headteacher from well performing public school developed proper and systematic plan and action to achieve their goal on improving students' educational performance and reflected their commitment and hard work to these goals with strong dedicated teamwork and collaboration and a high

level of motivation among teachers and students. Accounts of their accomplishment were seen in the support of professional development, continuously getting different supports and help from school's stakeholders, and launching different initiatives to enhance their school in different ways. On the other hand, headteacher from low performing schools fail to take any initiatives for schools and preferred to live as a resident or ideal on the lack of support from teachers, SMCs, government agencies and the local community at large.

From the in-depth review of various works of literature on instructional leadership, I came to know that the headteacher's instructional leadership is accountable for developing and maintaining the school's environment for better teaching and learning. Instructional leadership can develop effective inspiration on students' learning outcomes as compared to other leadership. Furthermore, headteacher can also effectively guide and motivate teachers in search of new ideas, methods, and ways for better and novel teaching and learning practices. Headteachers who embrace instructional leadership also monitor and assist teachers in their teaching and learning process by enhancing their teaching practices and activities and leading school toward well performance.

### **School's Climate as a Means of School Effectiveness**

Numerous research studies disclosed that a safe school climate influences students' academic, social and behavioral results. A positive school climate connects with several academic, social, and behavioral outcomes along with students' academic achievement (Wang et al., 2014). Therefore, a positive school climate delivers a favorable avenue for preventing students' academic, social and behavioral difficulties. School climate is a complex multidimensional concept including the atmosphere, culture, values, resources, and social links of a school (Thapa et al., 2013, Wang &

Degol, 2016) and has been defined by the shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that outline the interplay between students, teachers, administrators and establish the frameworks of bearable behavior and norms for the school (Cohen et al., 2009; Fan et al., 2011, Koth et al., 2008). Successful student behavior has been connected to an effective, safe, preventive, and positive school climate (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Horner et al., 2010).

A positive school climate adds behavioral enhancement, academic achievement, and holistic development of a student (Thapa et al., 2013). Similarly, violence, bullying, poor academic and extracurricular activities, and mediocre and biased disciplinary activities are some features of a negative school climate. While studying the various school climate literature, the school climate support five crucial constructs (Thapa et al., 2013; NSCC, 2014). The first crucial construct of school climate is school safety which has three dimensions. The first dimension includes rules and norms. Similarly, the second dimension is a sense of physical security, and the third dimension is related to social-emotion security (NSCC, 2014). The second crucial construct includes teaching and learning. Teaching and learning also include two-dimension such as support for learning and social and civic learning (Thapa et al., 2013; NSCC, 2014, Cohen et al., 2009). The third crucial constructs include respect for diversity, social support from adults, and social support from peers (NSCC, 2014). The fourth pivotal constructs include a participatory and resourceful environment (Thapa et al., 2013; NSCC, 2014). The last construct is leadership and professional relationship (NSCC, 2014).

From the in-depth review of various works of literature on school climate, I came to know that a safe and positive school climate is accountable for developing and maintaining the school's environment for better teaching and learning. Safe and

positive schools can develop effective inspiration for students' learning outcomes. I believe that a better school climate enriches the positive feelings and attitudes of students, teachers, staff, parents, and community members toward the school. Moreover, in a positive and safe school climate, all stakeholders encounter a warm and friendly atmosphere of open communication, shared decision-making, respect, trust, motivation for well performance of the school, and high academic achievement of the students.

### **Continuous Assessment System as a Catalyst for School Effectiveness**

Assessing the students' overall activities in the classroom has been an important concern for all school teachers for many years. A continuous assessment system (CAS) means continuous, inspective, problem-solving, classroom-based activities that use different assessment methods to measure students' learning during teaching and learning. A continuous assessment system is one of the important and alternative tools to evaluate students' learning process in the school context. Iqbal and Anjum (2017) state that CAS can improve students' learning. It is a formative method used to evaluate students through classroom interaction, group work, project work, activities, and document all students' performance.

Arega et al. (2014) state that continuous assessment is a powerful tool for improving the achievement of learning outcomes to ensure quality education and educational brilliance in schools. Therefore, a continuous assessment system is a systematic method where students' daily activities and behavior are observed, evaluated, and supervised by the teacher during teaching and learning. It is an essential instrument of any teaching and learning process, which ensures quality education (Rai, 2019). The most important aspect of teaching is to enhance students' knowledge and skills. Students' knowledge and skill are judged based on their

learning activities and classroom engagement. Continuous assessment helps enhance students' learning activities and engagement in the classroom (Holmes, 2015). To make learning outcome effective, a student needs regular assessment with meaningful feedback.

Therefore, continuous assessment is also referred to as frequent assessment (Rezaei, 2015). The Ministry of Education (MoE, 2014) promotes continuous assessment for mainly two reasons one is to enhance the teaching and learning process in the school context, and the second is to gather students' overall school-based performances marks to be added to students' final examination marks for their certification and selection. Clarke (2012) stated that an assessment system is "a group of policies, structures, practices and tools for generating and using the information on student learning" (p.1). Similarly, SSRP (2009-2015) also promoted continuous assessment to ensure a minimum level of learning at each grade. Therefore, the continuous assessment also assists teachers in providing a clear picture and objective of assessment to the students. When teachers explain the objective of assessment to students, students become more cautious regarding the importance of their learning, how they spend time, and how they come to see themselves as students (Mikre, 2010). To enhance the learning activities and outcomes of the student, the assessment process should be precisely communicated to the students. Various tools such as open-ended questions, checklists, feedback, portfolio, peer assessment, grading, observation, rubrics, project work, etc., are commonly used in continuous assessment, which help teachers to measure students' level of knowledge and skills and also give full insight to the teachers where their students stand in term of knowledge and skill-building. Dargusch (2012) stated that feedback is one of the important tools of continuous assessment and gives high and strong emphasis on the roles of teacher and

student to detect strengths and weaknesses during the study. Feedback is a crucial tool used by both teachers and students to measure students' performance as well as to enrich the overall development of the students. Therefore, teachers should provide feedback to the student timely, appropriately, and clearly so that students can communicate and coordinate with each other correctly to accomplish their needs as well as to improve their learning process.

The different schools used different methods for student assessment as some schools only used one-shot high stake examinations, which include school examination at the end of the year for only the selection and certification process, whereas some schools continuously use classroom assessment, classroom interaction, peer work, project, and practical base assignment to assess and supervise students' achievement. Clarke (2012) stated that assessment methods like one-shot assessment continuously and most of the time create shock value. Therefore, this type of assessment should be replaced by continuous support and supervision of students' activities and attainment. Rai (2019) conducted a study in three selected schools in the Kathmandu district and the study revealed that most of the teachers were positive and used continuous assessment daily for classroom instruction through continuous assessment of students and teachers that enhances their effective teaching and learning process.

My view is that assessment is an important tool and technique for judging the inside and outside of the classroom performance of the students. Only assessing students' overall quality is the measure. Furthermore, assessment is obligatory for learning, and it contributes to equal opportunity to learn and establish students' overall understanding, which adds milestones for the well performance of the school.

### **Involvement of Parents in Creating School Effectiveness**

In simple meaning, involvement of parents means the participation of parents in the school's activities along with attending PTA and SMC meetings, attending the school's different monthly and yearly programs and activities, purchasing required learning materials and resources for their pupils and contributing some activities freely at the school. Trinick (2015) described that parents' participation plays a pivotal role in enhancing pupils' learning and undesirable pupils' academic achievement is only a result of poor parental involvement in schooling. Morrison et al. (2015) stated that the involvement of parents in school holds information exchange, participation in decision-making, and volunteering at the school along with coordination, collaboration, and interaction with a teacher in the teaching and learning activities. Therefore, parents' involvement is understood as guardians' participation in the school's teaching-learning and other school-related activities.

Parents help the school in different ways, such as participation in the parent-teacher meeting, interacting with teachers frequently, enhancing students' learning at home, involvement in different social works, programs, and activities, working for school without being paid, assisting and keeping support in schools' planning, development and management. Similarly, parent involvement in school means meaningful participation and contribution by family members to their pupils' activities for good discipline and academic achievement (Karki, 2013). Therefore, parents' active support, help, and guidance enhance students' academic achievement. Similarly, SSDP (2016) also highlighted that parents' involvement in school is inevitable to ensure and monitor schools' service delivery, check and balance absenteeism, and improve teachers' responsibility and motivation level. Supporting this, Marphatia et al. (2010) also stated that parents' involvement in school is essential

to improve cooperation and collaboration with all schools' stakeholders to enhance students' learning outcomes. Therefore, students who are actively monitored, supervised, and guided by their parents can perform better in every classroom, in every grade, in every school activity, and every school exam.

Students can develop and improve their learning habits and increase their academic progress only if there is a high- level of family members' engagement through effective guidance (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). In Nepal, high-parent participation schools witness good academic performance (Khanal, 2013). Similarly, ERO (2018) also supported that parents' involvement helps to increase and maintain the students' educational performance.

In this regard, DoE (2010) suggested that schools should gather parents in school and also communicate to them about the entire programs and activities of the school, which motivated parents to accumulate information about their children's school activities, outcomes, and in case of any student encounters with any personal problem, contacts their parents immediately and resolves the problem with joint efforts. Furthermore, high parents' involvement is crucial in developing, preparing, and executing any school reform plans. Therefore, the development of the school is also linked to the active involvement of parents in school.

Muhammad (2013) conducted research in Pakistan Lahore on 150 grade eight students in both public and private secondary schools. He found that parents' involvement in students' learning helps improve their children's educational achievement. The study proved that parents' involvement in students' learning improves pupils' educational performance.

Chowa et al. (2013) conducted a study in Ghana and they revealed that children's academic achievement is highly connected with parental involvement in their learning.

Marphatia (2010) conducted a collaborative research study on improving learning outcomes in primary schools in Burundi, Malawi and Senegal. The study found that parents' active participation plays a crucial and effective role in improving students' learning outcomes. The study further found that the meaningful role of parents in schools' activities also contributes to enhancing and delivering quality education and increasing their active and meaningful involvement in schools.

After reviewing literature, I believe that parents' participation is crucial for monitoring pupils' activities inside and outside home and also a stepping stone for enhancing school activities and performance. The involvement of parents in a school can promote the school's performance. They can direct, guide, coach, and support schools' teaching and learning process and help to develop a good relationship between school and home.

### **Students' Engagement Enhances School Effectiveness**

Learning engagement is defined as students' physical and psychological involvement in their educational activities (Junco et al., 2010). Students' engagement in learning is further classified into behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Parsons & Tylor, 2011). Behavioral engagement refers to students' involvement in educational, social, and extracurricular activities. Similarly, emotional engagement advocates for positive attitudes and activities toward school, teachers, learning, and peers. Lastly, cognitive engagement refers to students' self-development of their personality in learning activities through their determinant, strategic, and self-monitoring (Parsons & Tylor, 2011). Students' active engagement in educational activities generates

positive outcomes in learning (Sinatra et al., 2015). These students prepare notes, do homework, pay attention in the classroom during teaching and learning, raise questions, participate in group activities, and help each student. These students are being determined despite failure, following proper direction, and positively establishing and communicating with teachers and peers (Hattie & Anderman, 2013). Therefore, the study revealed that students' behavioral engagement enhances their high academic achievement of the student (Hattie & Anderman, 2013). Furthermore, high students' behavioral engagement in learning improves students' educational activities and outcomes and establishes a strong bond with teachers and peers in school.

### **Community Participation Helps in School Effectiveness**

Many researchers suggested that good coordination and cooperation between school and community can help to enhance the instruction and learning procedure and increase instructors' motivation and commitment to their jobs. Therefore, community participation in school is crucial in enhancing effective, responsible, and sustainable education development at the local level. In developing countries like Nepal, the government plays an active and important role in increasing local community involvement and ownership in schools through the formation of the SMC and PTA with the participation of parents and active and renowned local actors from the society (World Bank, 2014). The Government of Nepal (GoN) developed the Local Government Operation Act in 2017. The Act was developed and published to assign a high level of power and authority to local government as directed by the Constitution of Nepal 2015 (GoN, 2017). Such a government system opens an avenue for local-level involvement in the education system by assigning high roles, authorities, and ownership to the school management.

A research report published by UNESCO conducted in the USA, Latin America, and Asian countries on the topic of the community's role in transparency and accountability revealed that communities perform a crucial role in the ownership of the school and guarantee accountable practices, transparency, and compliance with policies (UNESCO, 2014).

Empirical evidence from South American countries emphasized that students' learning achievements are influenced by community participation (Bruns et al. as cited in Nishimura, 2017). Community participation is a pivotal tool and technique to build faith among schools and people (Nishimura, 2017). Similarly, Taniguchi and Hirakawa (2016) conducted a research study in rural Malawi and found that the positive relationship between community participation via school management enhances students' learning achievements. Active participation and guardianship of the local community in school management raise the school's education quality (Shah, 2016). The local community's active involvement can improve the education quality of schools because they have abundant knowledge about required resources available in society and can help by providing needed resources effectively based on school needs. Similarly, Nishimura (2017) stated that local communities' involvement in school is one of the important tools for developing trust among local communities and schools. The involvement of different stakeholders such as parents, students, teachers, community actors, governing body, and the headteacher in school improves the educational outcomes of students (Mokoena, 2012). Therefore, school needs support from all stakeholders.

After reviewing literature, I believe that local community involvement is crucial in school for effective management and improvement and leads to well performing schools. The local communities are responsible for day-to-day school

management at the local level to ensure better school performance, quality of education, and effective teaching and learning processes.

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

The theoretical perspective is a crucial section of any research. It gives a conceptual picture that helps in understanding something that cannot be seen or experienced directly. It was, thus, felt important to contemplate some theories at hand to understand and explain the phenomena in question and enrich the discussion and findings of this research. Therefore, I believe that a theoretical lens on well-performing public schools is crucial to understanding my research study. For it, the following theories are considered fitting best.

#### **School Effectiveness Theory**

The term school effectiveness was first used in the early 1950, and it is frequently linked with the school's exertion to lead a change to improve student achievement. But, the educational stakeholders first became aware, and interested in school effectiveness only after Coleman Reported was published in the year 1966. The Coleman report disclosed that schools made no impact or difference on students' educational performance (Coleman et al., 1966). Coleman reported stated that students' achievement and development were influenced and predominated only by social-economic background, such as home, social class, and economic status, rather than the school they did attend (Coleman et al., 1966; Jencks et al., 1972). Coleman et al. (1966) linked school effectiveness with external factors only. To counter the results and findings of social scientists' studies, Coleman researchers in the western world conducted different studies on effective schooling theory. Researchers like Weber (1971); Edmonds (1979); Rutter et al. (1979); Smith and Tomlinson (1989);

and Mortimore et al. (1989) conducted studies to prove that schools make a difference in students' performance and development.

Edmonds (1979) identified five school effectiveness factors: a) high expectations for student achievement, b) continuous assessment of student progress, c) educational leadership strength, d) a safe and organized environment, and e) an emphasis on basic skills. While Mortimore et al. (1988) listed a number of other traits that make a school effective, including leadership with a goal, leader involvement, teacher involvement, consistency among teachers, a planned day, intellectually challenging instruction, a work-focused environment, a session-length-limited focus, parental involvement, maximized communication, record-keeping, a positive climate, and so on.

Similarly, other researchers associated school effectiveness closely related to internal factors (Aggarwal-Gupta & Vohra, 2010; Bredeson, 1985; Hallinger, 2015; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Ostroff & Schmitt, 1993; Reynolds & Teddlie, 2000). These factors were given as instructional leadership, school culture, and school climate.

Ali (2017), Brookover et al. (1979), Edmonds (1979), and Rutter et al. (1979) stated that effective school is associated with a process aside from input and output. Similarly, other researchers believed in the school process as a means of increasing school effectiveness. According to researchers Scheerens and Creemers (1989), the effectiveness of a school is related to inputs and outputs. Scholars have expressed a variety of opinions about the effectiveness of the school. However, some of them stated that effective schools are frequently related to internal, external, input, process, and output factors.

First and foremost, the theory of school effectiveness is essential to show how individual, teaching, and learning method influence school effectiveness. Second,

communication in decision-making influences school effectiveness. Lastly, each school has unique characteristics in terms of climate, procedures, and structural features. Therefore, all of these considerations will contribute to the effectiveness of school (Cohn & Rossmil, 2001).

Similarly, school effectiveness theory focuses more on classroom behavior, students' involvement, and the value of learning (Rutter, 1983; Abdullah et al., 2016). According to Hopkins and West (1994), school effectiveness is a place where students can develop their cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and social skill in an optimal learning environment. Scheerens (2004) defines school effectiveness as aspects of teaching, learning, motivation, and community involvement. Scheerens (2013) stated that school effectiveness is associated with the level of goal attainment of a school. School effectiveness theory is the combination of conditions/dimensions contributing to enhancing the effectiveness of the school (Scheerens, 2004, 2013).

Many scholars agree that an effective school occurs if there is an effective relationship between principal, teachers, students, set of courses, instruction processes, environment and school cultures, school-parents relationship, community-social relationship, social- environment relationship (Bakirci et al., 2012). There are several theories and models about school effectiveness. In my field study, I used the following theory and model.

### **Theory of School Effectiveness 1970-1990**

Edmonds (1979) developed the five- factor model of school effectiveness, which include a) high expectations for student achievement, b) continuous assessment of student progress, c) leadership education strength, d) safe and organized climate, and e) giving emphasis on basic skills. Similarly, some other school effectiveness characteristics were described by Mortimore et al. (1988) listed a number of other

traits that make a school effective, including leadership with a goal, leader involvement, teacher involvement, consistency among teachers, a planned day, intellectually challenging instruction, a work-focused environment, a session-length-limited focus, parental involvement, maximized communication, record-keeping, a positive climate, and so on.

Marzano (2005)'s model of school effectiveness places emphasis on eight factors, including instructional leadership, a clear mission, a good environment, high expectations for success, monitoring student progress, learning opportunities, completing tasks on time, and having good parent-school relations.

Based on the preceding discussion, checking the school's effectiveness always remained deficit in the Nepali context. Therefore, this study seeks to confirm the standards to assess the school effectiveness theory in well performing public schools in Chitwan.

### **Habermas's Knowledge Constitutive Interests**

Habermas identified three inseparable cognitive interests that are extremely important: the technical, the practical, and the emancipatory. According to Habermas, the strategy to empirical-analytic science includes a technical cognitive interest; the strategy to historical-hermeneutic sciences includes a practical cognitive interest; and the strategy to critically oriented science includes an emancipatory cognitive interest (Habermas, 1972). The theory's central tenet is that all human knowledge is linked to certain fundamental interests.

Technical interest, as defined by Habermas, refers to the broad orientations or approaches that guide how people acquire and apply knowledge to pursue their interests in all aspects of life, including their job (work knowledge) (Habermas, 1972). The desire of humans to acquire knowledge that will aid in their technical

control over natural and social objects is referred to as technical interest (Habermas, 1972). Natural sciences, such as physics and engineering, and systematic social sciences, such as economics or operational research, are examples of this type of knowledge. They are all interested in prediction and casual explanation. Work plays an important role in technical interest, and it is guided by purposeful action.

The second knowledge interest Habermas defines is practical interest as human social interaction or communicative action. The interpretive knowledge that is mediated and derived from the interpreter's initial situation is referred to as practical interest (or hermeneutic knowledge) (Habermas, 1972). The practical knowledge interest is associated with aiding historical understanding, as well as self and other understanding. This is manifested in the discursive practice of ordinary language. Understanding comes from cultural socialization, which produces accepted social norms and role expectations (Habermas, 1972). History, cultural anthropology, hermeneutic sociology, and other disciplines are included in practical interest. These sciences are concerned with elucidating meaning. They focus their efforts on interpreting the meaning of texts and actions. Practical knowledge attempts to engage people in dialogue and help them understand one another. Practical interest relies heavily on communicative action (Habermas, 1971). Practical interest is more subjective and includes experience and context. My practical interest helped me to see a well performing school as knowledge, to practice constructively, and to use creative tasks designed to support student achievement and a successful school.

The last knowledge interest that Habermas suggested is critical or emancipatory interest which seeks to transform the current situation through self-reflection (Habermas, 1972). It is self-awareness or self-reflection. It is also concerned with truth-seeking and claims justifying. The interest in emancipatory

knowledge is related to the conception of critical-democratic student participation, which realizes existing inequities and believes in the possibility of correcting them. Emancipatory interest relies heavily on discursive action and occurs on a subjective reality (Habermas, 1972). It aids in research as well as world observation, experience, and realization as well as self and other transformation. Critical analysis, equity, power, relationships, social justice, and a focus on human liberation are all examples of emancipatory interests.

My method of observing the world, realizing, creating meaning, and transforming ideas into something that best fits the context and the surrounding utilities are made through critical reflection. This has helped me to redefine my assumptions, beliefs, and practices to reflect my current philosophy of education and the trends that have persisted in the fields of well- performing schools and critical thinking exploration. It has also helped me to understand well- performing schools as applying and reasoning.

I think that by using this theory in my research, I will be able to examine the areas of interest that stakeholders have in relation to exchanging knowledge with well performing schools. It can be useful to investigate how well performing schools take into account other people's interests in learning about and comprehending their needs.

### **Review of Educational Plans and Policies**

The government of Nepal (GON) also declared in the Constitution of Nepal (GON, 2015, Article 31) that every civilian of Nepal has an equal right to join the school for their basic education. The Educational Regulation Act 2017 was amended (MOEST, 2017, 9th amendment). The document stated the different roles, responsibilities, and power of SMC and head teachers in Appendix- I. The policy review came with some important gaps in educational policies for the school and head

teachers. For instance, the act has remained quiet on the headteacher's leadership skills and ability to enhance the relationship, coordination, and cooperation with different school stakeholders like SMC, local community, teachers, parents, students, and so on. The educational regulation act only assigned power to SMC. Therefore, SMC has the right to appoint the headteacher. Therefore, the educational regulation act sets the headteacher as an administrative manager who does not have enough power rather than recommending all school matters to SMC.

Education's crucial aims are justice, equality, efficiency, management, governance, and flexibility (MOE, 2016). School Sector Development Plan ([SSDP], 2016-2023) emphasized teachers' management based on their performance, fostering inclusive education policy, developing effective human capital and private abilities, distribution of power, authority, management, and established system or culture of an improved Education Information Management System (EIMS) which direct, analyze and evaluate the real condition of educational activities and performance with effective leadership. Moreover, SSDP (2016-2023) also endorsed educational activities that are useful administratively and integrate leadership opinion to increase the quality of education in public schools. However, the SSRP and SSDP highlighted considerable supportive policies, plans, and approaches to uplift public school education performance. Nonetheless, all the mentioned policies, plans, and approaches could not perform as per their aim because of various hurdles and negligence in implementation. Due to this, there seems to be a clear gap between the objective of plans and their effective implementation.

MOEST (2019) published a high-level national education commission report and revealed that effective coordination and cooperation between all school stakeholders, such as headteachers, SMC members, and teachers could help develop

an effective and favorable educational environment in public schools. The report further highlighted that due to the lack of effective and capable leadership (headteacher), the overall education quality and management of most of the public schools of Nepal are tumbling. The headteacher is the crucial leader of the school and with the help of headteacher's effective leadership, he/she can enhance the school (MOEST, 2019). Nonetheless, the Government of Nepal still lacks skilled, experienced, proficient, and supportive headteachers for the betterment of the public school education process.

Similarly, the Government of Nepal formulated the Local Government Operation Act in 2017. The act was published to give power and responsibility to a local government as suggested by Nepal's 2015 Constitution (GON, 2017). Such private and strategic changes in the local government system have also knocked the educational system at the local level by delegating the greater roles to local people and other stakeholders for the well performance of the school. The seventh amendment of the Education Act in 2001 and eight amendments in 2016 made some policy changes to rationalize the role of the local community in overall school management at the local level.

In the same areas after 2015, the federal model of the education system in the country has been proposed to have school management through local level government. For these, the SSDP (2016-2023) has been supporting the community authorization under the new federal model in education reform (MOE, 2016). These authorizations have helped to play an important role in the consistency and effectiveness of schools' performance.

Similarly, the Local Government Operation Act, which is in effect, provides for the management of school education through local governments (MoLJPA, 2017).

There are still gaps and ambiguities in policy implementation at the local level. However, policies based on the federal context, as well as related practices, have strengthened the local capacity to manage schools effectively at the local level. These policies are likely to define the quality of any particular school in terms of consistent well performance. The newly established local governance structures must be empowered in the cross-cutting issues discussed here, such as school safety, equity, inclusion, and skill-based learning and teaching, in order to increase intellectual and social capital for school effectiveness and improvement. Furthermore, the Local Government Operation Act (MoLJPA, 2017) provides for issues such as free and compulsory education policy, schools as a zone of peace, equity strategy to address excluded children and safe schools, and new educational policies related to the federal context, but their modality is still under discussion.

The School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP, 2009-2016) clearly stated that decentralization in education through delegating significant roles to local government, including the SMC for planning, management, and monitoring. SSRP program 2009-2016 and Final Report (2016) highlighted that for quality education in school responsibility and capacity of PTAs and SMCs need to be strengthened.

Furthermore, the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP, 2016-2023) has started continuing to follow the achievement and learning of SSRP (2009-2016). The SSDP has primarily emphasized privatizing the role of local government as well as the SMCs for developing need-based educational planning, implementing it, and monitoring from the local level. These involvements in public school reform further inform the role of SMC and PTA and divide the public school in terms of community-managed schools. The Education Act, 1971 (Eighth Amendment), delivers guidelines for SMC and the headteacher for proper management of all school affairs. But, it has

not been followed up properly. As a result, many public schools still have poor academic performance. Similarly, good teacher management is a precondition for improvement in classroom performance and the internal efficiency of Nepal's overall school education system (NCED, 2011).

Furthermore, the SSDP (2016-2023) has also been supporting the changed context of state restructuring, the federal education system model through the empowerment of communities under the new federal model in education reform (MoE, 2016). These involvements have backed the constant improvement and effectiveness of school outcomes. Based on the several provisions as proposed by acts, policies, and plan, it has been realized that there is frequent change according to time. The local government has fully authorized to rule over the school but there seem to be unclear roles, responsibilities, power, and authorities among different stakeholders for the well performance of the school. There is also a lack of policies for making school better for the student in all aspects. Similarly, the safety measures of schools have not been highlighted in the educational policies, including social violence, disaster, and nutritional health.

However, these legal standards are silent on the implicit and explicit forms of well performing public schools. Though the policy has a beautiful provision for the betterment of the school, it has not yet been implemented. Why is the implementation part very weak? Why is policy silent on this issue? In this regard, I have some arguments as to why these issues have not been given national priorities. My concern or policy gap was fulfilled by exploring why and how implementation has been a failure in this issue. In totality, I noticed a gap there in theory, policy, and previous studies.

## **Review of Previous Studies**

A few Nepali public schools have been performing well and getting successfully reformed. These schools continuously perform better and more effectively on average than other public schools in Nepal. It is crucial to understand how only a few public schools successfully reformed despite operating under the same school setting in terms of infrastructure, teachers, students, and government and other agencies' support. I reviewed literature relating to well performing and achieving schools and all those existing facts that make schools better, effective, and successful. I reflected here on some details captured by that literature for the purpose of guiding my research.

Empirical study has constantly identified strong school-level leadership as an important contributing factor in school success (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Day and Sammons, 2013; Khanal and Park, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2008). Khanal et al. (2020) conducted a study in three-high performing public schools in Nepal and revealed that the principal was proactive toward school reform. Leaders of high-performing schools highly concentrated on a high level of interest, collaboration with stakeholders, prohibition of political activities inside the school, easy accessibility for parents in school, transparent recruitment of highly-professional teachers, and established precise goal-setting for teachers that lead schools toward success and high-performance.

Sharma (2019) conducted a study in four of Nepal's top-performing public schools. According to the study's findings, the school's ability to more effectively utilize its resources and produce consistently higher-quality results was improved by the strategies used to promote social, intellectual, and organizational capital. The effectiveness of public education concepts was determined by the three integrated

management principles of resource optimization, participatory management, and quality improvement.

Khanal (2018) conducted a quantitative study among 547 teachers and 12 headteachers of six nationally awarded high-achieving schools and six low-achieving schools in Nepal. The prime goal of the study is to determine the similarities and differences in school principal behavior between high and low-achieving schools. The study revealed that in high-achieving school head teachers' behavior is more positively toward teachers compared to low-achieving schools. High-achieving schools' head teachers exert influence on teachers. The study also disclosed that headteachers in high-achieving schools regularly perform multidimensional leadership behavior to improve students' performance by supporting and enhancing conditions for teaching and learning through direct impacts on teachers, their work, and the school environment.

A study was conducted by Alford and Gautam (2014) in two highly successful public schools in Nepal. The study revealed that in two highly successful public schools headteacher's commitment can influence ensuring students' educational success, as well as personal welfare and prosperity (observable through a sustained focus on promoting learning, engaging the community as partners, and demonstrating transparent shared decision-making), was instrumental in the school gaining national recognition for the student's high academic performance.

Similarly, Kanana (2015) conducted a study in a public school in Nepal and revealed that the headteachers' administrative abilities highly impact the school's educational achievement. The research study furthermore disclosed that effective headteachers lead the public school by enhancing students' educational performance through their character and support for public school.

Thapaliya (2011) conducted a study focusing only on leadership practices in primary and secondary schools in Nepal. Similarly, Pokhrel (2020) conducted a study employing a mixed-methods design which was also silent in highlighting the relevant factors that make a school effective.

Boaduo et al. (2009) conducted their study in Botswana, which is located in Southern Africa. They explored that most of the local community educational actors supposed that their roles are only engaging in school observation. Similarly, local educational actors believed that they could contribute to the school through their profound engagement in responsible tasks authorized by the school administration. However, the researcher found that they faltered in active engagement in school activities due to their poorer education condition. All illiterate and semi-literate local actors believed that they have vulnerable education and socioeconomic condition, and due to that they could not contribute to school. Therefore, the local actors' poor education background may hamper the school's overall performance and also hinder the school's success and betterment. The research further explored the mutual responses of the school leader and teacher toward the local community for motivating their involvement in schools' daily activities. The daily visits and engagement in school by the local community contribute to enhancing their children's performance along with such practice also makes the teacher and head teacher more responsible for their duty to school well performance.

As I stated above, the exploration of literature provided me with some knowledge on understanding the well performing school . Through literature, I understood that effective leadership engagement practice in school could only be confirmed through cooperation between school leaders. Although some sorts of knowledge, skill and education background promote many community members'

active involvement in school betterment, the willingness and motivational level was boosted through active leadership practice of teachers and headteacher.

### **Identification of Research Gap**

Reviewing different kinds of literature, they disclose that there has to be a profound assessment of the role of different stakeholders' contributions regarding the well performance of a public school. Without a deeper knowledge and leadership practice skills, it is impossible to make a clear road map, plan, and policy and move forward for the well performance of the public schools. The study recognizes the process of demonstrating well performance constantly in public schools. As I mentioned above, the exploration of literature gives me some knowledge on the understanding of headteacher's qualities and roles, their engagement, and the challenges. Through the literature, I understand that the school can only be effective when there is coordination between headteacher, SMC, PTA, teachers, community people, students, and parents. Some leadership practice should be needed for the headteacher to improve the public school. So, my study explored the well performance of a public school.

Moreover, I have also recognized various gaps in many components that contribute to the well performing public school and its relationship with the present public school setting in the Nepali context. First and foremost, there is minimum research on this topic. Although it is an emerging issue in the Nepali context, what triggered schools for well performing has not yet been explored. The second gap is many researchers have conducted only through the quantitative but not qualitative method. The third gap is whether the application of school effectiveness theory is still there for well performance of a public school or needs to be modified. In addition to these, there is a lack of assessment in the literature of the leadership roles, qualities,

and practices of the headteacher for driving the betterment of the public school. Considering this gap, the present situation of many ineffective public schools encouraged me to study well performing public schools in Chitwan.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Based on a review of the literature and previous theories and empirical studies, a theoretical framework has been proposed for the current study. The theoretical framework is comprised of school effectiveness theory linked with the school's attempt to lead a shift to enhance students' performance and improvement under which well performing schools function.

In this section, I present a theoretical framework for my research, which serves as the overall approach to the research. My research question is concerned with exploring the areas that contribute to a well performing public school in Chitwan. The research journey began with a desire to learn more about what areas contribute to improved public school performance. The issue and purpose of the research were driven by the three questions. Simultaneously, I adopt two theories: 'theory of school effectiveness and Habermas' human interest theory to help me build the concept of a well performing public school in Chitwan. Another aspect of analysis and reform is examined through the lenses of evaluation and philosophical beliefs. Subjective reality and multiple truths reflect the ontology of the study.

The theoretical framework of the study is based on school effectiveness theory, and Habermas' human interest theory, and it focuses on leading the school through leadership approaches, as well as the formation of a well performing school. Both theories contributed to exploring and analyzing the areas that contribute to good school performance. It was supposed that theories thrived on achieving school goals,

prioritizing areas for school performance, and establishing a climate for effective school practice.

### **Chapter Essence**

This chapter provides a theoretical and empirical background of the study. In the beginning, different factors that make public schools well performing such as school climate, students' assessment, student-centered learning and teaching, students' academic performance, head teacher's role and leadership in school, local community involvement, PTA and SMC involvement have been discussed. Policy regarding practices of a head teacher, SMC, local community, teachers' duties, responsibilities, and leadership are discussed. School effectiveness theory has been reviewed to direct the entire research study.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To discover the well performing public school, I focused on qualitative study. This chapter is designed to explain the research methods used to meet the stated objectives of the study. In this chapter, I discussed philosophical stance, research paradigm, research method, locating the study context, research participants, approaches to the information collection, quality concerns, data interpretation, and conclusion of the chapter. This study covers qualitative methodology to a greater extent and uses the descriptive part based on both technical and logical aspects.

#### **Philosophical Foundation: Multiple Realities**

My prime concern is to explore a well performing public school in Chitwan. Therefore, I selected the qualitative research method and determined my research paradigm, method, and quality standards. One of the unique features of qualitative research is that the approach permits the researcher to recognize issues from the perspective of research participants and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to behavior, events, or objects (Hennink et al., 2020). As far as my knowledge is concerned, the qualitative research method reflects social reality as a human creation, human experience, human belief, perception, and understanding. My research method required exploring the perception, understanding, and experiences of the SMC chairperson, headteacher, teachers, parents, students, and local actors, who are engaged in making the school a well performing one. Interpretive research paradigm is mainly related to generating a context-based understanding of people's thoughts, beliefs, and values and allied with social actions (Taylor et al., 2012). This idea further advised me that the implication of interpretivism in my research work

secured me to examine the understanding and experience of my study respondents and interpret the real essence of well performing public schools. Moreover, I knew that the interpretive paradigm pursues understanding a specific context-based socially constructed reality, allowing the researcher to use multiple approaches to composing data from the natural setting (Willis, 2007). Therefore, I placed myself close to going with the interpretivism research paradigm to apply multiple approaches to data collection from my research participants from their natural school setting.

### **Ontology**

The ontology particularly deals with the question of what is knowable or the nature of reality. It is concerned with subjective reality. It is the science of the study of being. How people identify the nature of reality is different for all people (Wahyuni, 2012). Therefore, my perception and interpretation might support or oppose my participants' experience, ideas, knowledge, and explanation. During the process, my role was to explain and interpret the social reality of each participant's role, contribution, and experience through their explanation. In this domain, reality is normally researched through qualitative methods. In addition, I strongly believe the notion of reality and discard the existence of a single truth but I believe that truth is something created or constructed differently by different individuals in a different context. My ontological position is based on relativism.

I presume that there is no objective reality that exists that can be measured, as it remains in a subjective state, as the same groups of people can have different perspectives on a single issue and different groups of people can have similar thoughts.

## **Epistemology**

Epistemology generally deals with the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the known. It is the process of making the knowledge claim. This important concern within metaphysics is termed epistemology, which concerns ‘how we know what we know. Epistemology is the process through which the researcher makes the knowledge claim. Based on the epistemology assumption, I as a researcher gathered subjective evidence based on individual. Willis (2007) mentions that epistemology of people is subjective and there is no place for objective reality. Therefore, this is important to study to know knowledge about well performing in school. I constructed new knowledge through participations’ views, knowledge, and experience. An issue was perceived, understood, and defined from different worldviews. I used different strategies, theories, and methods in my research work. Concerning this, a case study method was used to retrieve the subjective realities of a well performing school.

## **Axiology**

Axiology is also called value theory and includes the discipline of ethics, pragmatics, and aesthetics. Value provides the standard for the evaluation of epistemology and ontology claims. In this reference, I also respected my participants' opinions and incorporated values of my perspective.

### **Qualitative Single Case Study: My Approach to Inquiry**

Stake (1995) categories case studies into three types. They are intrinsic (focuses on exploring its own special unique features), single instrument (focuses on specific topic of interest) and collective or multiple case studies (focuses on issue of concern). I have chosen a single case study in my study as it deals with matters in fact and provides a crystal clear picture to understand. I found that case study can help me

to dig out multiple realities of the respondents (Flick, 2018). The research theme I have picked is an issue related to our educational context that can be explored through several cases within the school setting (Creswell, 2012). Studying well performing public schools is an ambiguous subject and abstract matter to measure because of its contextual attributes. It is studied and measured with a few discussions, meetings, sharing of ideas, and conversations. A case study includes in-depth information and a strong study of a case. Its methodology is closely aligned with my study issue to get more actual and deep information that would assist my reader in knowing the reality.

My study started with ‘how’ and ‘why’, which expected to be answered by analyzing several cases (Yin, 2009). These features are the crucial principle that motivated me to go through qualitative case study methodology as my plan of inquiry. The detailed description and analysis of a single case study can provide a better understanding of how and why things happen. Therefore, my research questions are about the exploration of a well performing public school in Chitwan.

### **Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation**

Marshall and Rossman (2010) stated that data analysis incorporates procedures and processes used to bring order and meaning to the information collected in the study. In this part, I collected as well as systematically piled up primary data. After compiling the primary information, I interpreted the data to create a symbol of realism. I corrected and managed all the interpreted information to convey the correct form of thematic meaning. Later having corrected and managed all information, I classified the collected information according to the standards as well as principles of the interpretative paradigm. According to the nature of the inquiry, I separated information into diverse themes with the purpose of analyzing as well as interpreting it. I reread, refined, and systematized the data as per the research themes.

I cross-verified, double-checked and transliterated all the collected information deeply. My focus was to create the research study procedure further clearly to read and write. I gathered as well as coded it according to the nature of the data.

### **Purposive Selection of Location: The School**

The present study explored a well performing public school in Chitwan. I purposively selected one well performing public school in Chitwan district for this study. According to Flick (2018), the cases in qualitative research are needed to select for owning their relevance to the research issues, not because they represent the population. So by the study above notion, I considered the purposeful selection of cases for in-depth information based on judgment.

I selected one public school in Chitwan district as my resource center because Chitwan is a geographical, political, socio-economical, and educational representation of Nepal and Chitwan is a sub-metropolitan city. I have purposively selected the school and research participants (Cohen, et al., 2007).

The school has been in existence for fifty-seven years. I have repeatedly heard its name since the mid-90s as it was and is considered one of the district's most effective and well performing schools. Similarly, I have been observing from my childhood that the school is the best and most effective in every aspect of education. In today's scenario, the school is a hot cake for students, parents, and the community. Such expressions from parents, students, and the community drove me to the selected school.

### **Rationale for Selecting Case School**

I selected one public school from Chitwan district. I selected Chitwan district's public school purposively. There was some justified reason for selection. Geographically, Chitwan district is located in central Terai (plain area) of Nepal near

the belt of the Saptagandaki river and is situated in the southwestern part of Bagmati province. Chitwan district is renowned for its National park, wildlife reservation, lakes, rivers, flora and fauna, and unique culture of different ethnicities like Tharu, Praja, Kumal, Chepang, and others.

I selected the Chitwan district because of three main causes. Firstly, Chitwan is located in the Terai region of Nepal. Terai district of Nepal is considered a miserable education place with a lack of basic facilities like classroom management and qualified teachers with insufficient teaching and learning material which have been affecting quality education. Lastly, it is the focal district of the Terai region and Bagmati province, which is renowned for its education, hospitality, and health service. I believe that selecting the Chitwan district was an opportunity for me to compare and contrast the research outcomes and information for meaning-making and generalization.

### **Research Participants and their Demography**

Regarding the research participants, I selected them from the selected school based on their knowledge and experience with the research issue and theme (Stake, 2005). I have taken six participants as core research participants; however, other participants have also been used as supplementary of my study. For my research theme related to well performing public schools, I consulted members of the SMC chairperson, teacher, head teacher, parent, student including local actor. During the collecting of information, I established good bonding with my all participants. The process of establishing a good connection is a crucial component of quality research that contains trust and admiration for the informants and the information participants share (Yin, 2009). Therefore, the establishment of a secured and pleasing environment

is pivotal for sharing personal experiences, which in the end, develops a level of trust and understanding.

Chitwan is one of Nepal's important commercial and service centers and the best destination for education, service, transportation, market, entertainment, tourism, agriculture and wildlife reservation, and national park. Its territory is connected with Makwanpur, Nawalparasi, Gorkha, Dhading, and Tanahau along with India in the South. Its geographical land is extended from flat agricultural land from the south to Chure-hill in the north. Chure-hill is the lowest range of the Himalayan Mountain placed between Terai and the Mountain area in Nepal (Pokharel, 2013). The participants are all the stakeholders of the case school representing teachers, students, parents and the SMC members.

The first participant is Mr. Tejendra (pseudonym), who is an ex-lower secondary teacher, assistant head teacher, head teacher, and SMC chairperson of School Gyandev having a total of fifty years of work experience in the same school. The second participant is Mr. Pushpa (name changed) from Gorkha district having forty years of teaching experience in different schools in Gorkha, Nawalparasi, and Chitwan districts. Case school management appointed Pushpa in the post of secondary level English teacher in the year 2002 A.D. and has been serving the school as the headteacher since 2010 AD. The third participant is Mr. Krishna Sapkota (name changed, secondary math teacher and exam in-charge), a resident of Chitwan district, and has 25 years of teaching experience in the same school. The fourth participant is Mr. Deepak Subedi (name changed, grade twelve student), a resident from Madi, Chitwan district who has been studying in the case school since grade seven. The fifth participant is Mr. Harihar Poudel (name changed) local parent from Chitwan district.

His two children studied in the case school in grades twelve and ten. The sixth participant is Nilesh Prasad (name changed) local actor from Chanuli, Chitwan district, who has actively participated in the case school for six years as an SMC member. Nilesh is renowned in Chitwan as a successful entrepreneur, philanthropist, social worker, educational advocate, banker, and politician. His both son and daughter completed SEE from case school.

Moreover, as an additional supplementary qualitative information, I held 3 more semi-structured interviews with my former head-teacher (Mr. Ram Raj) who was well acquainted with the case school, present deputy head-teacher (Mr. Devi) of the case school; and, one former SMC member of the same school (Mr. Shishir). They all are the local residents of Chitwan.

### **Approach for Information Generation**

Under the methods and tools for information generation, I collected the primary data by using methods, such as observation, interview, focused group discussion and document review in case study research. All these four techniques were applied while collecting and generating information from my research participants as well as from the school.

### **Interview**

I developed a guiding note for interviewing my research participants. In the interview, I used an unstructured approach and asked my participants several open-ended questions based on my research question and issues. I used face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions with more personal and contemporary questions based on the school setting to avoid personal biases and personal opinions and used probes to clarify questions. I asked questions and provided an open floor for my participants to express their opinions, views and experiences. I was clear about the

purpose of the study and accordingly interviewed the participants to generate information about School Gyandev, which supported me in accumulating the required information into my subject matter. Then I carefully recorded and transcribed the gathered information. All interviews were conducted in Nepali, so all my participants felt easy and confident in expressing themselves clearly. For the interview, I used semi-structured open-ended questions followed by probes, cues and prompt depending on the context and perceived need to explore a topic in detailed depth (Glesne, 2016).

### **Focus Group Discussions**

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) is a method used to take out information from a group of people together from which different perceptions and views can be drawn on the same issue so that real information will be identified. According to Cohen et al. (2011), FGD is a form of interaction that supports drawing out important information that would not otherwise be possible via a single interview. Cohen et al. (2011) also stated that FGD is also considered useful for triangulating findings from other forms of interviewing. Marther et al. (1998) stated that the FGDs are required when gathering views, and experience from people who reveal and share common characteristics. The research theme, checklist, and focus group discussion were based on the research purpose. Therefore, I conducted three FGDs, namely with six teachers, five students (from grades eight to eleven), six parents inside the school premises. The FGD in the school setting was effective regarding participation and discussion on the research issue. It took longer than an hour to complete each FGD and created longer transcripts than the interview. FGDs were also audio-taped for translation and transcription.

## **Observation**

I used observation as another approach for generating information from the selected case school and key participants. Observation enriches the researcher's aptitude to deeply analyze the phenomenon under study (McQueen, 2002, as cited in Willis, 2007). I used unstructured observation on my research site, selected schools and research participants to visualize the contextual idea. I visited the case school as often as I could manage time from my work and spent a high amount of time, sometimes even the whole day, or the whole week. The research participants were approachable, and helpful and provided me with an opportunity to observe closely participants' activities, in case school. I observed the participants in the real school context and managed to gain entry to an understanding of the case school and get close to my research participants to collect in-depth information about school and participants' daily activities at their school. Moreover, I observed the practices and experience of formation, operation, knowledge transfer, people participation, monitoring and handling, and exit processes. I observed the social events, school activities, stakeholders' activities, and their interaction with members and tried to understand how their interaction and activities enhanced the school. I observed my participants' activities, behaviors, case school events and programs during research to include focused attention on capturing and annotating as much information as I could on the physical surroundings, participants and what they were trying to achieve, the situation or context, time frames and display of emotion (Glense, 2011). Through observation, I was able to establish a link between reality and my theoretical assumptions.

### **Document Review**

I collected some relevant documents from school sources related to my research theme. I collected documents and artefacts such as minutes of school meetings, teacher meetings, reflective notes of head teachers and teachers, teachers' lesson plans, school SIP, and other documents relating to national educational plan, policy and programs from school after I submitted letter of permission from Educational Administration Division. I deeply reviewed to triangulate the information, which served as a critical part of the information collection process of my study. With the help of the above documents, I captured the real image of the school. Collecting, storing and categorizing the documents and artifacts contributed to understanding the actual knowledge of school practices for well performance that was retrieved during data analysis and interpretation. Artifacts such as lesson plans, photographs of the school building and its surrounding, classroom, and the newsletter of school were collected.

### **Approaches for Meaning Making**

The methods of collecting information in the earlier section delivered me sufficient data from the chosen school and study participation. The collection of data was thematically categorized based on field study questions. I was conscious that the data collection and explanation must be carried out synchronously in the case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Hence, I started the inspection after gathering information. Various qualitative information scrutiny methods, such as content analysis, constant comparison, and pattern matching are used. Welch et al. (2011) have developed a typology of theorizing modes in case study methods. Based on the two dimensions (contextualization and casual explanations), they differ in their typology between

inductive theory building (Eisenhardt), interpretive sense-making (Stake), natural experiment (Yin), and contextualized explanation (Ragin/Bhasker).

Explanation building is a different kind of inspection that aims to examine a case study information by constructing a piece of detailed information about a case. Similarly, concerning the data analysis process in case study research, Stake's view contradicts Yin, who has suggested three strategic ways to analyze data in case study research, i.e. correspondence and patterns, categorical aggregation, and direct interpretation (Stake, 1995 as cited in Yazan, 2015). Therefore, I included the suggested strategies of both scholars during the analysis. In the examination procedure, the academics' influence also makes common sense to know the outcomes (Stake, 2005). Therefore, my experiences of interaction and observation during an interview with my respondents also assist me in reflecting on the context to understand the features of the case relevant to the study issue.

### **Transcribing and Taking Notes**

I organized and structured all the information in patterns, themes and categories in the information. I reviewed all my notes immediately after each interview. I transcribed the interview in the same order in which they were conducted as soon as I returned from fieldwork by removing idiosyncratic elements like pauses and stutters.

### **Writing up a Case Study**

I transcribed notes coherently and cohesively. I followed thick write-ups for each case structured according to the descriptive framework to allow subsequent case analysis. To allow the reader to judge the transferability of the interpretation, thick description is useful and also helpful for increased dependability.

### **Interpreting and Enfolding Findings in the Literature**

I clustered all findings without the use of any relevant theoretical literature to develop a deeper understanding of the information generated. At this level, the findings are discussed in the context of extant literature, a process that calls enfolding literature, and the outcome of this level of comparison is the interpretation of the finding. Comparing the findings from previous stages to what has been reported in the extant literature, several issues reported in the literature were confirmed to apply to the selected public school.

### **Concluding and Writing the Case Study Report**

I followed the case study from the lowest level of analysis as stories in my study. I compared cases in as much detail as possible in the second level of interpretation. I compared findings with the literature in the third level of interpretation. I protected anonymity amongst others, assigning letters or numbers to cases, changing names and omitting, identifying details to the fullest extent possible without sacrificing a rich description. I presented the implication of the findings for school leaders and all related stakeholders such as SMC, PTA, parents, local communities, teachers, and government support agencies than the recommendation.

### **Quality Standards**

Qualitative research often complains about the absence of reliability and validity of its findings. During data collection, categorizing, and interpretation, I did not identify and involve any former and recent teachers, students, parents, local actors and headteachers who were in my personal and professional relationship and network. I triangulated the collected data by conducting participant interviews. The collected information, such as notes, transcription, and visual and non-visual recordings, was relatively unstructured. Therefore, I maintained careful records of all interview

transcription, recording, documents and artifacts collected for review. The main purpose of quality standards in a qualitative study is to judge the quality of a disciplined inquiry and present the criteria for trustworthiness and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Therefore, to keep quality standards in my research, I followed trustworthiness, verisimilitude, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity as crucial tools defined below. I carefully reviewed documents and artifacts, such as notes and minutes of meetings, bulletins, and observed participants in their workplace and setting.

### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness describes the relation between required data and gathered data. It also describes whether or not the study measures what was projected to measure, and how honest the study outcome was. Furthermore, in my study, I was concerned about issues of trustworthiness in qualitative paradigms like credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For credibility, I frequently observed my field and consulted participants, conducted peer reviews, and implemented my self-reflexivity for information analysis. Similarly, for maintaining transferability, I concentrated on thick description, theoretical interpretation and holistic analysis to pick out natural findings. Due to this, synergistic knowledge can be transferred. Moreover, for dependability, I triangulated my information collection approaches and information analysis approaches; due to this, I maintained the quality of the combined processes of information collection, scrutiny and theorization. Lastly, I considered conformability measures on how well the inquiry's findings were supported by the information collection approach and understanding as well as recommendations supported by the information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 as cited in Loh, 2013).

### **Verisimilitude**

It stands for giving the reality of the research context. Here, I gathered data from the mentioned area I, as a researcher, also amalgamed my personal experience that makes the readers feel, more or less in a similar state (Luitel, 2009). Hence, I made a crystal clear claim that the information raised by my participants would address readers' feeling that the experience described might encourage them in different settings.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethics is the most important issue of research. Ethical consideration plays a crucial role in conducting any type of research. While conducting the research, it is important to establish self-restraint about what to do and not to do. Creswell (2007) states "the research should protect the participant' individual identities in qualitative research. So, it guarantees them that any of their data will not be revealed "(p.72). My style of presentation did not harm or discriminate against anyone irrespective of gender, caste, creed and class in the research purpose. Similarly, I was also aware of respecting participants to minimize the disturbance of the physical and social setting of the research site (Creswell, 2009). After my fieldwork, I was involved in the analysis process. I was more cautious about maintaining the confidentiality of research sites and research participants. I kept all the information and collected documents very and have not disclosed the real identity of the participants and research site. Last but not least, KUSOED ethical guidelines were also strictly followed.

### **Informed Consent**

I carefully prioritized the consensus of all my research participants throughout my research work and data gathering procedure. As a researcher, I am precise and

conscious of moral subjects. Therefore, I gave importance to considering ethical issues to protect the rights and dignity of the participants involved in my research. In my case, I also selected a teacher as my participant. During the study process, I took permission before the study with the participants and notified them about my objective of study for my partial fulfillment of the MPhil degree and making productive knowledge in another hand. I also informed them to take part in my research and withdraw from it anytime they would like to do so. All participants were prior informed about the benefits, purpose and procedure of the research project.

### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Confidentiality in the study deals with the practice of not revealing the proof of identity of research participants. Spradley (1979) states that “participants should be able to remain anonymous and should be afforded pseudonyms” (p.18). Therefore, in this study, I did not break the confidentiality of the participants by assuring them whatever they said was kept secret and also guaranteeing them that information would be used only for the study. In this way, I took permission to publish their name in my research.

### **Chapter Essence**

The chapter deals with the research design and methodology used to collect and examine the collected information. The use of an interpretive paradigm as the research design helped me to explore the understanding and experiences of my research participants and interpret the real essence of the school and the process of information collection through observation, interview, focus group and document review. The method and technique of data examination used in the research were precisely explained. The final section dealt with quality standards and ethical considerations embraced in the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### UNDERSTANDING WELL PERFORMING SCHOOL

This chapter mainly responds to the school's information and my first field experience in case school. I have captured four sections here and incorporated the school's ten years of SLC/SEE results. Furthermore, I have used different pseudonyms for the actual name of the school, participants and respondents. This chapter deals with the first question of my research topic. In my base line study, I interviewed my case school's SMC chairperson, headteacher, teacher, student, parent, and local actor to explore the areas responsible for a good school.

#### **School Information**

The School was established in 1966 A.D as a night high school in other school's premises to give education and appeared the SLC within four years, particularly to those migrated students who worked full time and also to serving students from the local poor family background.

The school was established with the help of local teachers, local government officers and local community people to particularly deliver education to those children who worked full time during the day and needed SLC qualification certificates for their future growth. In the beginning days, the school started teaching in two different school's rented buildings due to a lack of land and building. But in the year 1970, the school succeeded in occupying some government land and started teaching only the secondary level on its own seven-cement block rooms building, which was constructed after collecting the funds from the local community.

From 1974 A. D., it started teaching primary level in the day and secondary level at night due to insufficient classrooms and school infrastructure. From 1966

A.D. to 1982 A.D., the pass rate of School Leaving Exam was very poor in 1980 A.D., the school witnessed nil results in SLC. The school could not have fulfilled its objective of passing more students in the SLC. Therefore, the school decided to close all its night secondary classes permanently.

In 1983, the school again constructed eight-block rooms building from some grants received from the Ministry of Education and funds collected by the local community. In the same year, the school closed all its night secondary classes and started day classes from grades 1 to 10. In 1983, the school started construction of other infrastructure like drinking water, toilets for students and staff, teachers' rooms, primary level classrooms, playgrounds, sports, and other essential infrastructure with the financial and other coordination between the school, local community and municipalities. Only after nineteen years from its establishment in 1985, the school has been able to register all occupied land in its name. From 1983 A.D to 1993 A.D, the overall school performance in SLC was not nil but mediocre.

From 1963 to 1993, the school was considered as a below average and poor result producing public school in the district because within that period the school faced different problems like low pass results at the district level and national level SLC, weak student performance in every class, low student enrollment, weak performance in district and national level extra curriculum activities, poor head teacher's leadership, poor school infrastructure, few teachers with high absenteeism along with the deep-rooted conflict between teachers, students, headteacher and school management committee.

Furthermore, due to vulnerability in the school environment, poor infrastructure facilities and weak school administration, the school faced high employee and student turnover, nil in SLC results, weak teaching and learning

practices and the worst image of the school in society. From the year 1993-94 A.D., when the new headteacher Tajendra took school's control, the total number of students was nearly 430, but at the end of his tenure in 2006-07 A.D, the total number of students reached up to 1550. Within fourteen years of tenure, Tejendra transformed the school image from a weak school to one of the well performing schools in the district and built a better image among students, parents and the community.

Although other public schools also shared a similar context in terms of students, teachers, infrastructure and government support, from 2002 A. D. to 2020 A.D., school had grown significantly. Of 111 students, only 74.77% of students passed the School Leaving Exam in 2002. From 2005 to 2020, the school had grown from over 146 to 308 with a student pass rate of more than 95% on the School Leaving Certificate Exam (as reflected flag received by school for its results and performance shown in appendix II).

The school won the Federal and Province level SLC and SEE excellence award in 2068 to 2075 BS (2012 to 2018 AD). Similarly, from 2058 BS (2002 AD) to 2077 BS (2020 AD), schools held the only first position in SLC/SEE compared to other public schools in the district and most of the district toppers are only from the case school (as reflected flag received by school for its results and performance shown in appendix II). At the end of Tajendra's headteacher tenure in school, the percentage of students passing the School Leaving Exam rose from 17% to 99.08%. Tejendra fourteen years of leadership in school, the school witnessed a high academic performance, better school climate, better infrastructure, quality, experience, and dedicated teachers, high students' enrollment, and continuously improved school's infrastructures, buildings, furniture, classrooms, halls, libraries, drinking water, toilet

and pay fields, the relationship between school and parents, the relationship between school and communities.

During the next fourteen years of Pushpa's leadership as a headteacher, the total number of students grew from 1550 to nearly 2200. Moreover, the percentage of students passing the district and national School Leaving Exam never dropped below 92 % passing rate. It is important to note that Pushpa had worked as an English secondary teacher, + 2 coordinators as a teacher in the case school for six years before being appointed as the headteacher. He assumed that headteacher's role is essential for the success of the school and students' academic performance.

The school had around 2200 students up to grade 12 and 105 plus teachers from early child care to secondary in the academic year 2020. The student of the school has been appearing in SLC/SEE since 1966. The result of the SLC/SEE examination has been found to have exponential growth toward securing a nearly 100% pass rate every year. The SLC/SEE result of the school for the years 2011 to 2020 are presented in the following table.

**Table 1**

*SLC Results of the School from 2011-2016*

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	School's %	Remarks
2011	64	82	146	96.55	8 <sup>th</sup> in Madhyamchal
2012	60	44	104	93.27	5 <sup>th</sup> in National
2013	48	64	112	92.50	6 <sup>th</sup> in National
2014	65	92	157	84.00	21 <sup>th</sup> in National
2015	138	134	272	90.32	1 <sup>st</sup> in Madhyamchal
2016	130	122	252	A+ =50 A = 80	1 <sup>st</sup> in Province 3 and 2 <sup>nd</sup> in National

(Source: School Record, 2020)

**Table 2***SEE Results of the School from 2017-2020*

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	School's %	Remarks
2017	155	140	281	A+ = 71 A = 96	4 <sup>th</sup> in National and 2 <sup>nd</sup> in Province 3
2018	160	121	281	A+ = 83 A = 97	1 <sup>st</sup> in Bagmati Province
2019			343	A+ = 136 A = 90	1 <sup>st</sup> in District
2020			308	A+ = 145 A = 94	1 <sup>st</sup> in District

(Source: School Record, 2020)

### **Physical and Human Resources**

The school has newly constructed big three school buildings with four stores and one building is under construction. The school had around 2200 plus students up to grade 12 and altogether 105 staff members including teachers, administration and other school staff members managed by school resources and support by the government from primary to secondary level in the academic year 2020 (SIP 2020). The school maintains the ratio of visiting and full time faculty members. The school invites well known educated people to the subject committee, faculty board, and in SMCs. The school was recognized as good performer by the government and was awarded national flag, shield and cash prize in different years. The school has a pleasant environment, well-kept classrooms and very well dressed students and

teachers. There was adequate water and sanitation provision, as pure and clean drinking water was managed through taps and trash cans were located appropriately. The school has big space on the premises with big greenery garden, the school appeared to have good management of the spaces for various purposes such as a library, classrooms, a science laboratory, a staff room, playground, assembly, toilet facilities for staff members, boys and girl's students, sufficient and alternative electricity supply, with expand bandwidth of internet. Moreover, a computer lab, math lab, ICT lab, sufficient equipment for laboratory, exhibition hall, different meeting room for parents and local communities, different staff meeting room, separate room for other extracurricular activities, separate rooms for the headteacher, assistant head teacher, school in charges, subject head, teachers, administrative purpose, security personnel room, first-aid treatment room, and a well-organized Early Childhood Development class, the children with various disabilities including deafness, blindness, physical disability, intellectual disability and multiple disabilities have also been enrolled school since 1997-98 .Hostel facilities for all types of students were also available since 2000. The school has provided scholarship to all talented and outstanding well as students from different ethnic backgrounds and from poor economic classes of the society. The gateways and peripheral security, with safety school compound were found to be properly configured with good facility of motor cycle and bicycle parking. The code of conduct was posted on the walls, and separate rooms were well-managed for staff, the headteacher, and administration.

### **My First Field Experience in Case School**

When I was planning to conduct my research in one public school in Chitwan, I phoned my former college teacher, Mr. Ramraj Sharma (pseudo name), and communicated with him about my prime objective of visiting Chitwan. Once he

understood my main motive behind visiting Chitwan he assured me of his full support for my research work and invited me to his home the next day. The next day, I visited his residence and conveyed to him all about my purpose behind fieldwork, only then was he fully convinced and guaranteed me his full support.

After our conversation, I decided to inform all matters with my research supervisor. I started to keep in touch with my research supervisor by telephone. Once he was convinced with my research work, I shared all my plans and activities through telephonic discussion and sent him my research questionnaires through email. When my research supervisor showed me the green flag for my fieldwork, only then I prepared for my field visit. It was a hot, humid, and rainy day in July 2020, I picked up my bag with a diary, pen, and camera and moved to meet my former teacher.

When I reached his home, he immediately phoned one of his colleagues, Mr. Shishir (pseudo name), and informed him about my purpose. Mr. Shishir told him to come to his residence within half an hour. He was a resident of Chitwan and also a shareholder of one of the reputed private schools and colleges of Chitwan and his home is also located near the school. He operated his school for 22 years and Higher Secondary College for more than ten years.

When my former teacher and I reached Mr. Shishir's residence, I found a crowd of local people in his front yard. I noticed he was also one of the renowned and respected social workers in his locality. I assumed that my former teacher brought me to the right person's home. Although he was so busy with his work, he gave us time without thinking more. I found his gestures and behavior toward us cooperative and respectful. I witnessed his smiley face when he came to us and asked me, "How are you"?

Suddenly, my former teacher started the conversation. He gave me a full introduction of himself and my prime motive to contact him. After some time, I also started talking by greeting him with Namaste and shared my plan for the visit and I again asked him whether he knew any person from the case school. He replied, "Yes, I know many teachers along with the headteacher and SMC chairperson." Then, he again asked me, "Why are you going to conduct your research on that particular school? Why not other schools?"

I replied that there were two prime reasons for selecting this public school. Firstly, this particular school represents a better public school not only in Chitwan and Bagmati province but also all over Nepal. Similarly, this school earns name and fame for its school environment, physical facility, number of students, result in district level and SLC/SEE, teacher's quality, teaching and learning facilities. I replied that I could have collected profound information related to my research from this type of public school. Secondly, it was situated in the central part of the Terai region of Nepal and has been developing as an education hub and such a location was favorable for me to carry out my fieldwork. After my plan and intention, he searched for a number on his mobile and told me to note down the name and mobile number in my diary. He gave me the vice-principal's name and number of the case school. After the incident, my former teacher told me "A new path has opened for you, my boy. Now it's your turn to make the best out of it with your abilities." I expressed my gratitude and agreed with his statement.

After completing my short meeting with Mr. Shishir, I asked him if I could visit the school that very day. He gave me a positive response and I asked my teacher if he would like to accompany me. He declined the offer as he had some other commitments, so I started the journey alone.

It was 11.00 am. I was following the name and mobile number provided by Mr. Shishir. I started my bike and moved to the school. The school was just 1000 meters far from Mr. Shishir's home, which might have taken nearly four minutes to reach the road which was in good condition.

On the way, I was a bit nervous because I was visiting for the first time and did not have any ideas or tactics as how to approach any senior members of the school. During that time, lots of my past experiences popped up in my mind. I recalled my first experience of how I had approached some senior people when I had encountered them. At that moment, I remembered many job interviews in different colleges in Kathmandu, but I could not figure out which approach I should follow when I first met the vice-principal.

This reminds me of one incident. I think it was 2015 when I was selected for a lecture in one of the reputed public colleges of Kathmandu. The college confirmed my selection by telephone and the college management suggested meeting the director and faculty head for my further interview. I did not know anyone in the college. I only knew I had to go and meet the Director and faculty head of that college. Before that, I did not have any experience in teaching at colleges. When I entered the college, I was shocked because I always presumed that the public colleges' condition in Nepal is quite distressing with a lack of good management, infrastructure, and other facilities which should be needed for teaching and learning. I took my graduate and post-graduate degrees from private colleges. Therefore, I did not have any experience in public college. When I reached the college, I was surprised by the college's infrastructure, the ample playground, garden, systematic parking, a different library and lab building, and all students were in the college's uniform. At that moment, I realized how I was wrong. I had set the wrong semblance about the public colleges of

Nepal. When I entered that college, the security personnel asked me why I was visiting. I told him I had come for my interview with the Director and faculty head of the college. When I entered the interview room, the two gentlemen were sitting on the chair waiting for me. When I first encountered them, I mentioned that the college was awesome and it was my pleasure to give an interview during the lecture. Both gentlemen smiled at my remarks.

During my motorbike ride, while heading toward the case study school, I had prepared myself and anticipated how the events would unfold. I began by complimenting the college and expressing my pleasure in meeting them. I reached school, parked my motorbike and started looking for security personnel or someone who is working in the school. Suddenly, I came across the secondary English teacher. I told him everything about my purpose for visiting school. He replied that the vice-principal was busy with guardians. He pointed his index finger and showed the vice-principal's office and told me that I should wait there. I approached the room and found that the teacher's information was correct as I noticed the same nameplate at the door and inside his office with his name and designation. There was no one in the office. I entered the office and sat on the chair, and waited for his arrival.

After eight to ten minutes, I noticed one man of medium height approaching with a mobile phone in his hand and talking to some other guys. I immediately recognized him as Mr. Devi Sharma, (name changed) the vice-principal because I had just seen his photos on the school's calendar on his office wall. Immediately, I stood up and said "Namaste, sir.". He smiled and asked me to sit. Then our initial conversation started focusing on each other's introduction. Then, he said that he had already got the information from the teacher that someone was waiting for him in his office and the teacher had also conveyed the main purpose of my visit. When he said

that the conversation began naturally and my pre-programmed prompt was not necessary.

I then asked for his permission. Once he granted, I entered into my agenda. First of all, I told him about my prime objective of the research. Secondly, I explained my research theme and the reason for selecting that particular school for my fieldwork. Then, I requested him, "Do you have time right now? If you do, could I interview you?". To which he replied, "No, no. Today I don't have time. I have lots of work to complete, and I also have a short meeting with other teachers. Also, today is Friday. I have classes from Sunday to Tuesday next week. So, please come next Wednesday exactly at 11.00 am." He further added that since I had chosen the school for my research, it was now his duty to support me from every aspect.

He further enquired me about my work. After a bit of explanation, I learned that the school's headteacher had been absent for a few days. Although I could not meet him on that day, I collected some insightful information from the vice-principal about the school's history and how and why the school has been performing well over time. Moreover, I was also able to collect my other research participants' details. After a while, the vice-principal left the office for his meeting, and I returned home.

Next week, on Wednesday, 20th July 2020, I reached the school and walked toward the vice-principal's office. I found him waiting for me in his office. I started our conversation with a greeting. In the meantime, he indicated to me to start my research interview. I started my research interview based on my research theme. That day I spent nearly four hours with the vice-principal talking about the well performing public school in Chitwan. Before concluding our conversation, I told him that I needed to interview other participants, like the headteacher of the school, the SMC

chairperson, teachers, and students. Then, he helped me by providing mobile numbers and the name of the SMC chairperson, headteacher, and teachers.

My first meeting with the vice-principal was effective and insightful because I found him as a cooperative and informative person for my research work and has responded to all my queries in a friendly manner. Similarly, he also guided me to meet my other research participants. Furthermore, I gathered crucial information about my research fieldwork that I preferred from my key research participant. The same day with the help of the vice-principal, I got a chance to meet with the SMC head, Mr. Thapa. I informed Mr. Thapa about my prime purpose in meeting him and requested him to get his time for my research work. He suggested I meet him the next day in his school office exactly at 11.00 am.

The next Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2020, I again visited the school and walked toward the SMC chairperson's office, which was near the vice-principal's office. Mr. Tejendra Khanal (name changed) was the former headteacher at the case school. He worked as the headteacher for nearly fifteen years in the same case school. I spent nearly three hours talking to him about my research. After finishing our insightful and effective conversation, I thanked him and came home.

The next day, on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020, I paid another visit to the case school and met the vice-principal and requested him to set an interview meeting with the headmaster and teacher. The same day I interviewed Mr. Krishna Sapkota (name changed), a secondary math teacher and exam in charge of the school. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2020, I conducted a small meeting with the school's headteacher Mr. Pushpa (name changed). The meeting with him was fruitful because we did not limit our conversation to my research and explored other topics as well. We talked about the current scenario of our country's policy and practices for public schools, teachers'

selection, recruitment, training, and development. We talked about the politics and society of our country. My meeting with the headteacher of the case school was very enlightening.

In Chitwan, three individuals helped me in my research work. They are my former teachers Mr. Ramraj, Mr. Shishir, and the vice-principal of the same school because they helped me to reach my research participants. I frequented the school for more than sixty days, from 17th July 2020 to 30 April 2022.

### **Areas Responsible**

During my research study and base line study, I got the opportunity to interact with different schools' head teachers and also got an opportunity to visit different public schools in Chitwan. During my visit, I understood that different headteachers had their different ways of managing and possessed different leadership styles. During my visit, I noticed most of the headteachers only associated with administrative tasks, and spend almost all day in the office. But in my case school, I found headteacher always moved around to check each and every thing in school, which directly and indirectly related to teaching and learning. I found case school's SMC chairperson, headteacher, and teachers moving around, supervising and profoundly discussing with each other the areas school needs to improve, setting a high academic expectation, which creates a positive impact on student learning.

During my informal and formal interaction with SMC chairperson, head teacher, teachers, parents, local actor, students of other schools as well as from my base line study, I came to understand that the prime areas responsible for well performing of public school as mentioned below:

### **Physical Infrastructure of the School**

From my base line study, I found that for well performance of the public school, the public school must upgrade their existing infrastructure and facilities that ensure all classrooms and laboratories are safe for teaching and learning, strength of ICT for training, education, and research. Furthermore, the school must supply ideal and sufficient furniture for students and teachers, sufficient computers and equipment for laboratory, sufficient and quality of school canteen, drinking water, sanitary materials, and toilet. Moreover, school should have a playground with sports materials and ensure the safe school compound. From my base line study, I came up with the insight that physical infrastructure of the school contributes to pupil's academic achievement, which is also informed by school effectiveness theory and instructional leadership theory

### **Update Human Capital**

From my base line study, I found that for well performance of the public school, the public school must have to capacitate human capital through training, development, and maintenance packages. Similarly, the school should maintain the ratio of visiting and fulltime faculty members and invite scholarly people of the nation in the Subject Committee, Faculty Board, and the Research Committee. From my base line study, I came to understand that updating human capital is also a key area to enhance school efficiency, which may result in the enhancement of the school achievement and turn school into well performing school, which is also informed by school effectiveness theory and instructional leadership theory.

### **Ensure Community Involvement**

From my baseline study, I found that for well performance of the public school, the school should invite various communities of practices like Ministry of

Education, regional and local government, Municipalities, NGOs, INGOs, training organization, involve parents and Alumni Association for the support and development of the school. From my base line study, I came to know that it has been evident that the active community involvement has contributed to an effective and successful school, which is also informed by school effectiveness theory and instructional leadership theory.

### **Improve Leadership and Management**

From my base line study, I found that for well performance of a public school, it must have a headteacher having leadership and management abilities such as conducting parents' meeting, carrying out regular financial and social audit, encouraging regular teachers' and staffs' meeting, preparing periodic school improvement plan, focusing on good governance and transparency, engaging stakeholders of the school for the school's overall development. From my base line study, I came up with the insight that headteachers' leadership and management skill may contribute an important role in shaping the school toward betterment.

### **Improve Classroom Teaching**

From my base line study, I found that for well performance of the public school, the public school must upgrade instructional planning, adopt recent approaches, methods and techniques of teaching and learning, develop instructional materials, focus on interactive class, integrate ICT in teaching and learning, manage classroom effectively, involve students in various project and activities and lastly initiate proper feedback system. From my base line study, I came to understand that improving classroom teaching contributes to the improvement of pupil's academic achievement and doing well in academic performance, which is also informed by school effectiveness theory and instructional leadership theory.

### **Update and Upgrade Students' Assessment**

From my base line study, I found that for well performance of the public school, the public school must implement continuous assessment, form a committee of students' assessment, create a bank of subjective questions and publish every school result on time and make result analysis. From my base line study, I came to know that child-friendly approach in teaching-learning activities should line with continuous assessment system. The school evaluates the success of students by administrating continuous assessment, which is also informed by school effectiveness theory and instructional leadership theory

### **Expand Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities**

From my base line study, I found that for well performance of the public school, the public school must plan and organize curricular and co-curricular activities, invite inter- school for the curricular and co-curricular activities, and formulate various clubs of students, teachers, and non-teaching staff members.

From my base line study, I came to understand that the above mentioned areas are highly responsible for well performance of public school. During the course of FGD, one teacher added that the leadership of headteacher and management highly contributes to the enhancement of instruction and learning, which contributes to well performance of the public school (FGD, Teachers). Both the students and parents agreed during the FGDs to implement continuous assessment, facilities of the school, involvement of community, teachers' professional development, and improvement in class teaching helps well performance of the school (FGD, parents), which is also informed by school effectiveness theory and instructional leadership theory. But this baseline study failed to give me a clear picture of how and why the school is

performing well. Therefore, to dig out the deeper layer of meaning, I again developed two research questions and conducted my study.

### **Chapter Essence**

This chapter has included the school's information and field experience in case school. The chapter includes four sections and incorporates the school's ten years of SLC/SEE results. Furthermore, I have used different pseudonyms in for my participants and respondents. This chapter also deals with the baseline study based on the first research question.

Each of the following chapter (Chapter V-VI) presents the second and third research questions of a case school.

## CHAPTER V

### DIRECTION AND DIMENSION FOR WELL PERFORMING SCHOOL

This section deals with my second question. I discuss the development and movement of school toward well performance from the perspectives of various stakeholders. The information has been organized into themes in accordance with Habermas' human interest theory and the school effectiveness theory for school improvement. The theory has been discussed in terms of the components of improving student and school outcomes and school effectiveness. To learn more about how the case school has been performing well, I interviewed the SMC chairperson, the headteacher, the teachers, the students, the parents, and a local actor. So, in this chapter, the findings are based on interview, observation, document review, and focus group discussions with the participants.

#### **Head Teacher's Instructional Leadership as a Guiding Principle of Well Performing School**

*“Ahele nagare kahele garne” (If not now... then when)*

*“Timi le nagare kasle garne” (If not you... who else)*

*“Raa.. timi le kina na garne” (And.. why don't you do)*

*(Head teacher's philosophy)*

The headteacher's leadership plays a pivotal role in school development. There are different roles and duties for the headteacher such as developing school infrastructure, monitoring, motivated teachers, and managing required resources for promoting quality teaching and learning process. Therefore, the headteacher is a crucial actor in the school who maintains the academic standard of the school and

guarantees that student develops knowledge and skills required subject-wise and grade-wise (Shelton, 2011).

### **Managing School Resources**

In this regard, I interviewed Tejendra, SMC chairperson of the case school on the theme of headteacher leadership practice for delivering quality education. Upon my query, he said:

*During my appointment, I found there was a lack of adequate resources in school, such as classrooms, a shortage of benches, desks, textbooks, teachers, and financial resources. In many classrooms, there were more than eighty to ninety students and nearly six to seven students were sitting at a single desk. Similarly, a single teacher should have to teach about two to three different subjects in each grade. Due to few designated teachers, there were high student and teacher dropouts, absenteeism, and poor result in school exams and SLC/SEE examinations too. (Interview, 24 July 2020).*

Based on the interview with an SMC chairperson of a case school, I came to know that headteachers' leadership is an important factor in managing available school resources. It shows that the lack and passion for instructional leadership in headteachers failed to provide quality and better education to students and also failed to encounter the trust and expectancy of the school management, teachers, students, and guardians. Headteachers with effective instructional leadership characteristics manage all necessary resources in school to create a quality educational environment that promotes teachers and students to develop effective teaching and learning.

During FGD with teachers, one old teacher expressed his experience on school resources, *“in earlier days of school due to lack of raising and managing adequate resource by the headteacher, the school could not have hired private additional*

*subject teachers, paid additional remuneration to teachers, generate internal revenue for school through utilizing school property, utilizing donation from the community and other non-government organization and school fail to achieve good result. Due to that, there was always conflict and blame games between teachers, headteachers, and the school management committee for high students and teacher dropouts, lower pass rate, and poor school resources like finance, classrooms, bench, desk, teaching materials, teachers” (FGD, teachers).*

According to the headteacher's and teachers' collective experience, the school's earlier attempts at resource management were unsuccessful due to inadequate leadership skills. In the end, this has a detrimental effect on how effective the school is.

The SMC chairperson claimed:

*To eradicate such vulnerable conditions of the school, I started to collect tuition fees from parents, hired additional expert subject teachers, other staff and paid additional benefits through internal revenue, used all idle rooms in school as an additional classroom, with adequate bench, desk, chair. Similarly, I managed adequate textbooks for all grades, recruited private source teachers, provided teaching materials, established the first school library, and started to give teaching training every month. All I have done is by managing available school resources. (Interview, 24 July 2020).*

From the expression of the SMC chairperson, I came to this point of understanding that the headteacher's leadership plays a crucial role in delivering quality education by managing available school resources. Identifying, raising, and managing required financial, human and other essential resources was one of the headteacher's crucial responsibilities. The instructional leadership of the headteacher

plays a crucial role in developing school education by maximizing available resources (MOE, 2007). Quality education is reflected only if there are qualified teachers, a proper textbook, an adequate bench, a desk, an effective child-oriented physical classroom, available teaching resources, and a place for effective monitoring and supervision of each student by the teacher during teaching and learning activities.

During FGD with teachers, one teacher shared that government funding was inadequate to meet the school's necessities. To meet school's fundamental necessities like hiring additional teachers, paying other benefits for teachers, fulfilling daily school operational costs, headteachers started to collect tuition fees, even though the Government of Nepal has made free public school education for all (*FGD, teachers*).

However, the idea of free public education is in conflict with the practice of collecting money from parents to manage and meet school needs. However, it was discovered that the headteacher's leadership skills were effective in overseeing the necessary resources for efficient teaching and learning at the school. According to a study by Amatya et al. (2004), headteachers are expected to manage the school resources even though the funding is frequently insufficient to meet the needs of the school. The headteachers appear to oversee and meet the needs of the school. This headteacher's strategy encourages instructional leadership for teaching and learning for improved school performance and school effectiveness.

I observed the school collecting monthly tuition fees, renting its property for commercial usage, allowing different organizations like government, privates, NGOs, and INGOs, to utilize its land, building, generating income for the school, and conducting different fundraising programs with the coordination of communities. It has contributed to the growth of the school and led the school toward well performance. However, there were found barren land, lack of proper renovation of old

buildings, unused shutter rooms, and old textbooks, furniture and fixture. The school could be further well performing if these resources were well managed and utilized for the school purpose.

Taking into account the school effectiveness theory, which claims that the instructional leader seems more driven and committed to securing and overseeing the crucial school resources for efficient teaching and learning and boosting student achievement. School leaders' ability to provide instructional leadership significantly affects students' outcomes and school improvement.

In this regard, I interacted with a local actor of the case school Mr. Nilesh Prasad and inquired about headteacher's contribution to managing school resources. He said:

*With a clear plan that was effective and justified for academic excellence under the leadership of a former headteacher, the school started appointing many subject-wise qualified, experienced teachers with the coordination of parents and community support. Similarly, the headteacher develops the first school syllabus for all grades, prepares an academic calendar, motivates teachers by addressing their issues, manages school resources, and implements child-centered teaching-learning approaches through available school resources. (Interview, 10 September 2020).*

From the above information and reflection of local actors, it was getting evident that to deliver academic excellence with effective child-centered teaching-learning, promoting an environment to encourage teachers, providing resources to teachers and students that fulfill the required needs of the learner which is desirable for quality education headteachers' leadership play a pivotal role. Headteachers from well performing public schools believe in high community support for managing and

creating necessary school resources. They always work to develop a good relationship with their community and other stakeholders for raising and managing school resources. Fullan (2011) describes that as an instructional leader, the headteacher in the school establishes high and effective coordination and cooperation with teachers to enrich the school's objectives, resources, teachers' teamwork, as well as teachers' and learners' learning activities. It has contributed to the growth of the school and led the school toward well performance. Teachers were also found to be content with headteachers' direction (FGD, Teachers). According to a teacher, the headteacher is more responsible for procuring and overseeing the resources. Teachers also concurred that headteachers met their needs for improving the school and facilitating efficient teaching and learning (FGD, Teachers).

According to teachers and a local actor, the headteacher's leadership in the school has been essential for promoting school effectiveness by improving the management of school resources. According to the school effectiveness theory, instructional leaders take a proactive approach to resource management to improve student outcomes and the overall quality of the school (Marzano, 2005).

Considering this, I asked a local parent, Mr. Harihar, about headteacher's leadership in managing school resources in case school. Upon my inquiry, he said the headteacher delivered quality education by managing available resources effectively. He expressed his views as:

*As a parent, I found school headteacher taking many effective steps and managing resources like government funding, donor funding, school financial, human, infrastructure, parents, and community, perfectly with the coordination of all school's stakeholders with proper planning and developing entire schools' child-oriented and learning-oriented. (Interview April 2022)*

It shows that the headteacher's ability to take effective steps in managing school resource help in delivering effective education and achieving academic excellence. If there is a provision for coordination and collaboration with all stakeholders in the school with proper planning by headteachers, it also supports student-oriented facilities such as sitting, teaching, classroom, resources, and teachers. Lee (2015) also stated that instructional leadership combines collaboration and coordination practices where the headteacher works as a leader of leaders and teachers, other staff members, parents, community and work together to fulfill the shared goal of the school.

The PTA chairperson claimed that the leadership of the headteacher was responsible for the school's continued success. The main player in our school's effective resource management is our headteacher, who works tirelessly to foster productive teamwork and collaboration (Interview, PTA chair). During FGD with parents, they also agreed on the headteacher's leadership in managing available resources perfectly, ability to coordinate with all stakeholders, taking major steps by utilizing available different funds and resources, and developing the entire school's classroom - a child-oriented, infrastructures- child-oriented, teachers- qualified students- learning-oriented, school's teaching- career and behavior-oriented student activities- result-oriented, teaching material and so on (FGD, Parents).

The school effectiveness theory explains that having an instructional leader improves student outcomes and creates an efficient teaching and learning environment by managing the efficient use of school resources. Due to instructional leadership of the school leader, the case school has been performing well.

In this regard, I interacted with Mr. Puspa, headteacher of the case school. He expressed it in this way:

*To enhance school and students' academic excellence and win local, regional and national rewards for academic achievement, I did all types of work and efforts to increase, raising and managing school resources which turned the school toward well performance and academic excellence. (Interview, 28 July 2020).*

From the above expression of the headteacher, I understood that the headteacher's appropriate and effective vision and effort lead school toward the attainment of quality education. Headteachers having effective leadership perform different works to deliver quality education by improving the school's educational, physical and environmental facilities along with motivating teachers as well as parents toward school, which help to enhance the cognitive, social, academic, and behavioral development of the students. According to Phillips (as cited in Maw & Tun, 2011) instructional leadership of the headteacher is crucial in managing and allocating available school resources to deepen the effective teaching and learning process between teachers and learners. One teacher during FGD mentioned that despite having more students than other public schools in the area, the school is not overcrowded. According to our and the school needs, the headteacher manages the resources. We always have the support of the school leader in whatever we need for the teaching-learning process, and this helps to maintain high standards of instruction, enhance student performance, and enable us to plan ahead for each year. It is because of this that we were able to succeed (FGD, Teachers).

I observed that the headteacher of the case school demonstrated the highest optimism and determination when I discussed improving the school by managing available resources. Overall, it appears that the school headteacher has placed more

value on increasing, managing, and controlling school resources, which has improved the school's effectiveness.

In this regard, I interacted with Mr. Krishna Sapkota. He shared his view in this way:

*Headteacher always provides adequate resources for all teachers, resourceful materials, helpful teams, and a good opportunity for our careers, growth, and development paid additional benefits and support, which motivated us to be more devoted, dedicated, and responsible for maintaining quality of education in school. (Interview, 30 April 2022).*

From his experience, I understood that headteacher leadership plays an important role in motivating teachers toward school and the teaching-learning process. In public school, motivated human resources and academic achievement are interrelated with each other because quality education not just tests a child's knowledge of a subject context but beyond that it also deals with the overall knowledge and behavior development of the child, which makes him/her a good human capital for community, society and nation development.

I visited many times in school to explore the headteacher's daily activities in school. One day I got a chance to attend one meeting with SMC members, the headteacher, and some teachers of the school. The agenda of the meeting was particularly based on adding facilities to the newly constructed school building. During the meeting, all members profoundly discussed the headteachers' agenda. The SMC members give all responsibility to headteachers and also give the head teacher authority to manage all available resources from school sources. To promote student outcomes for all in today's schools, leaders must practice instructional leadership qualities (Illingworth, 2015).

From my assessment, the way the meeting was conducted reflected the trust that the SMC members had in the head teacher's ability and leadership. After attending the SMC meeting with SMC members, headteacher, and teachers, I observed that all the members believed in the headteacher's leadership and ability in managing available resources of the school effectively to help in building a well performing school.

The school served as an excellent case study for resource management. I observed since third grade. The school has placed a strong emphasis on ICT and ICT in the classroom. However, I noticed that there appeared to be discrimination in the use of resources between permanent teachers and contractual and private sources teachers during my frequent visits to the school. Too many teachers made it extremely difficult for the school administrator to manage resources for all the teachers.

However, the dedication of the school leader felt during interactions with teachers and students demonstrates the role that the head teacher plays in enhancing school effectiveness through the application of instructional leadership.

According to Marzano (2005), school leaders who exhibit instructional leadership have exceptional skills in managing, maximizing, and using school resources. The ability of a headteacher to effectively manage the resources at their disposal for school improvement has been found to depend greatly on instructional leadership.

### **Goal Setting for Infrastructure Development**

Appropriate infrastructure such as school building, playground libraries, labs, ICT arrangements, good condition of pure drinking water, sanitation, and toilets enhance student learning (Cuesta et al., 2015). A study by Gladys and Judith (2015)

stated that the physical infrastructure positively inspires the students' enrollment in the public school.

Upon my inquiry about it, Tajendra, the SMC chairperson of the case school said:

*Most of the infrastructure in this school was built during my tenure. When I entered this school, there were all together sixteen classrooms in 'U' shapes two mud buildings with metal sheet roofs. From the year 1993-94 to 1996-97 with clearly defined four years' goals and coordination with all school stakeholders, I started to replace the mud building with a two-story concrete building with sixteen rooms. Under ten year plan from 1997 to 2006 under my leadership with coordination with all stakeholders, I constructed three new earthquake, and other natural disaster resistance buildings, with twenty new classrooms with new student-centric benches, desks, chairs, board, library, science lab, toilet for staffs, toilet for boys and girls, pure drinking water facility, staff room, playground all were built in my period to benefit students to fulfill the set goal of academic excellence (Interview, 2020).*

From his experience, I came to this point of understanding that setting correct and effective goals for developing infrastructure adds a milestone for better school and academic excellence. A school leader's first and foremost duty is to develop strategic goals for schools and communicate its goals to all school stakeholders. School headteacher improves school infrastructure and adds more facilities for students and teachers, which helps to create a good learning and teaching mindset. Ghimire (2011) states that instructional leadership coordinates and collaborates with all stakeholders of the school and increases stakeholders' commitment to work for a common goal to enhance the learner's benefit.

During informal interaction and discussion with the current headteacher of the case school, he shared “*We always concentrate and are highly passionate in developing child-centric school infrastructure goal which helps students for academic excellence*”. This reflects that there is a collaborative approach in school under the instructional leadership of the headteacher. Only good and secured physical infrastructure and facilities boost the teaching and learning activities between teacher and student to deliver effectively to ensure quality education for the student. Therefore, school leaders always prioritize good infrastructure to create a positive mindset, activities, and behavior for the student.

During my frequent visit, I observed the school leader engaging all stakeholders in a collaborative process to develop a definite goal of school. With the support from the stakeholders, the school is still constructing a huge building with more than twenty rooms to fulfill its goal of having five thousand students within the year 2025 A.D. Both the students and parents also agreed during FGDs. They agreed that the headteacher’s precise goals and vision for student-centric school’s infrastructure development increased the number of students from different parts of the country (FGD, students). Parents agreed that the school's infrastructure is top of the world compared to other school infrastructures in the district. School leader has devoted all his personal life to the development of the infrastructure of the school (FGD, Parents).

It can be deduced from the perspectives of students and parents that the emphasis on establishing school goals with the cooperation of all stakeholders is the key to ensuring school effectiveness and success. The instructional leadership of headteachers is essential for establishing school goals for an effective teaching and

learning process and enhancing students' outcomes, which in turn promotes school effectiveness and school improvement (Mazano, 2005).

Likewise, Mr. Krishna Sapkota, a secondary math teacher, during the interaction, shared:

*Before 1993 AD, the school didn't have basic facilities like sufficient classroom, sufficient bench, desk, staff room, library, textbooks, toilet, pure drinking water facility, safe playground, and safe school building for students. In 1994, the headteachers started developing one-year, three years, five years, and ten years' goals and visions for the school's infrastructure development, increasing the number of students and becoming a well performing school. I think within four to five years, we achieved almost all the goals set by our headteacher. From 2002 A.D. every year headteacher started to frame and communicate goals and vision and all stakeholders performed our duties based on the goals and vision set by the headteacher (Interview, April 2022).*

From his experience, I concluded that goal and vision setting is a crucial task for the development of the school and leading toward well performance and building trust among stakeholders. Headteachers having instructional leadership help to manage and fulfill all the fundamental requirements to enhance the teaching and learning process in the school and turn the school into a pivotal place for students' academic excellence. For effective and meaningful teaching-learning activities, the school should have good classrooms, a library, adequate bench, desk, furniture, toilet, pure drinking water, open space, and a playground for students' movement, games, and assembly. A headteacher plays an important role in improving students' learning and also enhances the school's educational environment as appropriate for the teaching and learning process by bridging internal school improvement and externally

initiated reform process (Pont et al., 2008). Therefore, the school's infrastructure, like building, classrooms, playground, library, assembly ground, toilet, drinking water, labs, and surroundings are considered crucial factors for improving the school and teaching-learning process. During FGD with teachers, one teacher added, “*Due to headteacher’s master plan, or strategic goal, our school became one of the best infrastructure public schools of Nepal. Our school received many certificates from different government bodies for better school infrastructure*”.

I observed every building of the school and I found there was a proper toilet, pure drinking water facilities, sixty-four student-centric classrooms with more windows, five big and secured school buildings, a staff room with fully equipped furniture, books, teaching materials, huge library with affluent study books and materials, huge greenery garden, two computers labs with more than two hundred computers where students and teachers can read, plan, discuss, search, share information, secured playground, huge assembly ground, exhibition halls, two meeting halls, science lab. It has contributed to the growth of the effective school and led the school toward well performance. During informal interaction with the student, he also said that “*decent school infrastructure helps in students’ physical, mental and behavioral development which enhance overall students’ academic result compared to poor school infrastructure*”. Gladys and Judith (2015) stated that the physical infrastructure positively inspires the students’ enrollment in the public school.

However, there are still a few old, vulnerable school buildings that appear to be problematic for learning. Similar to this, I discovered that there was not much room for students to move around freely, that construction materials were dispersed widely, and that old benches, chairs, desks, boards, metal sheets, bricks, mud, and stone were also dispersed widely due to lack of space for outdoor games and a noisy

environment brought on by new construction. If the school leader also takes and considers these issues into his school goal and account, the school might function better (Observation, Researcher).

To get more information, I interacted with the local actor, Mr. Nilesh Prasad about the head teacher's goals and vision for the school. Nilesh claimed that he got a chance to work with two headteachers of the school and he said both are cooperating with all teachers, SMC, and PTA to develop any infrastructure and improve academic achievement, teaching, and learning strategies in school. He said:

*Both headteachers need everything perfect in the school infrastructure. They are always passionate about developing and communicating distinctive school plans, goals, and visions to stakeholders related to pleasant school infrastructure to develop a positive influence on learners' performance. All stakeholders took shared ownership and increased participation in goal formation and implementation of infrastructure to increase the quality of learning at the school level. (Interview, September 2020)*

It shows that headteachers having proper infrastructure plans, goals and visions also help support effective teaching and learning activities in school, enhancing the overall school and student achievement and turning the school into the focal point of academic excellence. A pleasant school infrastructure enriches students' confidence and helps them learn. Therefore, every school should pay attention to its infrastructure for the physical and mental growth of the students. Headteacher prioritized coordination and cooperation with all stakeholders for the development of harmless and child-oriented physical infrastructure.

During FGD with the parents and teachers, both the parents and teachers agreed that they participated in goals, visions formulation, and execution related to

school infrastructure (FGD, Parents). During goals formation and execution, once the headteacher found any gap, he immediately communicated with all stakeholders to fill the gaps (FGD, Teachers). When it comes to enhancing teaching and learning, modernizing the school's facilities, keeping teachers motivated, and satisfying parents, instructional leaders meet the expectations of the school board, teachers, students, and parents (Qutoshi & Khaki, 2014).

However, it is clear that infrastructure has received more attention. However, in regards to the school's physical facilities, one of the parents brought up the difficulty of the school's inability to provide more sanitary and toilet facilities for students with disabilities and female students (FGD, Parents). From this perspective, despite the school's success, the basic needs of the students have not yet been met.

I had the opportunity to attend a parents' meeting during one of my routine school visits. I observed the meeting and discovered that all the participants valued and frequently discussed the school's goals and vision for the next five years with the headteacher. I noticed that the headteacher gave priority to facilities for students, including more scholarships, in the science, math, library, and computer labs.

School leaders should be able to direct the school toward a specific goal. The headteacher can establish trust with all stakeholders through clear and practical school goals. The leadership of instruction has been influenced by this particular leadership style. It has contributed to the growth of school effectiveness and leading school toward academic excellence and well performance.

I inquired with a local guardian Mr. Harihar Poudel about the headteacher's leadership and contribution to making a learner-centric school infrastructure. He expressed his views in this way:

*Most of the new infrastructures and facilities, such as removing chalk and duster with markers and whiteboards, using digital teaching and learning equipment, digital library, pupils' centric classrooms, constructing school's boundary walls and gates, every five years of remodeling schools' walls and surrounding with different arts, picture, life, and education-related slogans, planting trees and flowers inside school premises were developed according to the headteacher's goals and visions with involvement of stakeholders to benefit learners. (Interview, December 2020).*

It shows that head teachers' instructional leadership goals and activities help to construct a better, elegant, and student-centric infrastructure environment in the school. A school is a place where students spend more time after their home.

Therefore, the infrastructure of the school should be learner-oriented. The prime goal behind implementing instructional leadership in school was to develop stakeholders' attention and involvement by improving students' learning outcomes (Kolu, 2016).

Therefore, it is the prime role of the headteacher to enhance students' learning by improving and adding contemporary facilities for the teaching and learning process to gain students' achievement by forming, communicating, and executing the school's goals and vision with the high shared stakeholders' involvement. The teachers explained that due to the attractive and safe infrastructure facilities of the school, it attracted more students every year from different parts of Nepal and parents also developed a positive attitude and feel secure for their pupils once they visit school (FGD, Teachers).

During my school observation, I discovered that there were three four-story "U" shaped buildings with big and appropriate classroom sizes, comfortable bench, desks, and furniture for students, teachers teach on smart boards, and whiteboards and

markers replaced chalk and duster in every grade. Moreover, every classroom's wall was filled with different students' art, design, drawing, quotation, poems, and essays.

However, I discovered that there are not enough facilities in the school for girls and disabled students. Neither are there enough playgrounds or canteens in good enough condition to accommodate a large number of students. Despite the absence of other infrastructure, the school's leadership has been successful in managing the available resources and enhancing school effectiveness over time.

The Marzano model for school effectiveness calls for the creation of a clear, specific mission with a strong emphasis on requirements. The effectiveness of the school is supported by the instructional leadership of the school leader, who is able to recognize the need for school, communicate it with others, and develop a mission that is accepted and understood by all.

### **Students' and Teachers' Monitoring**

The School Sector Reform Strategy in Nepal has supported the joint efforts of the principal, along with its teachers and SMC members improve school performance and preserve the quality of education. Moreover, the strategy paper has also recommended that the principal, and teachers are more accountable for the smooth functioning of monitoring of students' activities in the school; the teacher must be responsible for guaranteeing the students' learning and SMC must be responsible for providing suitable teaching and learning environment in the school (MoE, 2008).

During my discussion with the SMC Chairperson, Mr. Tajendra about teachers' and students' monitoring by the headteacher. He expressed his experience in this way:

*During my starting days, I found there was no provision of class observation of teachers, maintaining school time-table, checking attendance of teachers*

*and students, monitoring teaching-learning activities, observing and assessing the teachers' classroom and school activities, teachers' course and teaching planning, headteacher's instruction to teachers due to groups and teachers' union. Due to such practices, I found there was an impact on teaching-learning activities, academic performance of students, and turning school toward a center for academic excellence. To omit such activities permanently, I established a code of conduct for teachers, delivered instruction and started daily active monitoring and evaluated teachers' activities.*

(Interview, April 2022)

Based on the interaction with the SMC chairperson, I came to this point of understanding that the lack of effective and systematic monitoring of teachers' activities and behavior in school created fragile teaching and learning activities. Headteacher is an important and focal person to monitor, providing suggestions to teachers about their classroom and school activities, performance, and behavior, and safe school from undesirable activities and leading toward a better place for academic excellence. In school, headteachers have instructional leadership involved in developing a high goal for quality teaching-learning by monitoring and supervising curriculum, delivering instruction to a teacher for quality teaching-learning, and planning measures to evaluate the teaching-learning process (Du Plessia, 2013; Good, 2008; Jenkins, 2009). Therefore, the headteachers' role as instructional leaders is essential to improving learners' learning and educational achievement.

A male math teacher expressed his view with emphasis on the headteacher's leadership, *"In earlier days of school, due to lack of effective monitoring and supervision by the headteacher, the overall performance, activities, results of school and students were poor, even there was not any strong school's rules and regulation*

*for teachers and students. Due to this, there was freedom in many teachers' and students' late coming to school and late going inside classes. Many students came to school without school uniforms and after attending three to four classes, students bunked the remaining classes. Furthermore, only minimum groups of students were sitting in their classes after half-time, and few remaining teachers were engaged in controlling two to three classes. Therefore, none of us had a strong desire to follow, implement, and work for the betterment of school and students."* (FGD, Teachers).

The SMC chairperson mentioned "To increase students' learning and achievement, I interacted and communicated with every teacher, student, and member of the school staff. I also kept an eye on everyone's overall performance and gave them all feedback. I once attended daily interaction classes, meditation classes, counseling classes, and motivational classes for students to support their learning." (Interview, SMC Chairperson).

During FGD students also claimed when the headteacher and other senior teachers notice any mistakes that have an impact on the classroom activities and our performance, they regularly monitor us and offer suggestions (FGD, Students). All the parents and teachers agreed during FGD. They agreed that in school teachers should follow the code of conduct made by headteachers (FGD, Teacher). Parents agreed that the school has a high provision of strict rules and regulations (as shown in appendix III) for all old, new, senior, junior, and headteachers (FGD, PTA).

During my regular visit, I observed a strict code of conduct and daily monitoring appear to be effective for students and teachers in ensuring continuous improvement. According to the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership (2012), effective instructional leadership is focused on learning (student and adult) and measured by improved instruction.

This has been demonstrated by the school's promotion of academic excellence for school effectiveness. It improves the learning and performance of students over time.

Likewise, I again enquired Mr. Nilesh Prasad about the case school's headteacher's approach to monitoring. He explained his experiences in this way:

*Headteacher regularly monitors the students by checking their attendance, visiting every class twice a day to test students' knowledge and skill about what the teacher taught, randomly asking a series of questions to students in the presence of teachers, and collecting students' class work, homework, textbook, weekly exam grade sheet, inquired to the class teacher, reviewed weekly record files of student about students' performance, activities, and behavior, (Interview, April 2022).*

From his experience, I came to this point of understanding that the school's headteacher accumulated, evaluated, and reviewed each student's activities, behavior and performance daily. Headteacher having instructional leadership qualities focuses on their activities on monitoring students' activities and progress to develop effective teaching and learning and increase the students' academic achievement. By gathering students' assessment data, effective school headteachers coordinate with all teachers to develop a unified meaning by making critical sense of it and then relating this information to how they teach to make continuous progress (Smith & Smith, 2015).

During FGD with teachers, all teachers agreed that the headteacher involves in active monitoring of students' progress and activities daily, weekly and monthly. Without proper monitoring and evaluation of classroom and school activities of students, it would be difficult to maintain students excel in academic performance and

improve the education quality of public schools (FGD, Teachers). Strong instructional leadership maintains brilliance and excellence in education (Zepeda, 2013).

The student revealed that the headteacher always coordinates with all teachers. Furthermore, the headteacher always actively monitors, counsels, and supervises all teachers' and students' activities, behavior, and performance and publishes all class-wise students' and teachers' performance results in the presence of guardians and handover students 'exam and overall school activities record file to each guardian (FGD Students).

I observed strict monitoring practices by the headteachers to be one of the bases of academic excellence of the students and better school performance. I observed a strict code of conduct (as shown in appendix III) for the students and during FGD with students, they agreed that they followed the codes of conduct made by the school and they also agreed that the strict monitoring policy of the school was a stepping stone for their academic achievement (FGD, Students).

However, during the FGD, one student voiced their opposition to strict monitoring and a strict code of conduct for students. School should offer more innovation and useful knowledge rather than strictly monitoring students' activities. Instead of emphasizing theoretical knowledge, the school should concentrate more on fostering cognitive, critical and life skills (FGD, Students). Moreover, school monitors more intelligent students and is likely to avoid average students of the class.

Taking into account school effectiveness theory, schools consistently examine students' activities as a crucial mechanism that contributes to improving their performance and enhancing school effectiveness.

In the same way, I interviewed a student about school the headteacher's involvement in monitoring students. He expressed his experiences in this way:

*Daily headteacher monitors our classes by standing nearby the window, and door and sometimes standing at the back of the class and inspecting our and teachers' activities by listening to teaching, interacting between teacher and student and student to student, and randomly checking our works, textbooks, teaching materials, class progress and suggested us to study harder. (Interview, 10 August 2020).*

From the above experience of the student, I came to this point of understanding that the headteacher actively monitored students' class activities and progress in the different subjects and motivated learners to study hard. Headteacher's regular visits and monitoring of class activities and students' progress support their learning and outcomes. Regular monitoring of students' progress gives the headteacher a clear picture of how the teacher teaches in the classroom by using different teaching resources, curriculum, and how students understand it (FGD, Teachers). Due to its strict supervision, the school is well known for being parents' and students' first choice (FGD, Parents). Instructional leaders consider and promote an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning (Jita & Mokhele, 2013).

Furthermore, I enquired teacher Mr. Krishna Sapkota about the school headteacher's leadership for monitoring teachers' activities and progress. He shared information in this way:

*Through the headteacher's regular monitoring, we all teachers are aware and focused on our teaching, teaching material, lesson plan, subject and classroom logbook, and the teacher-student relationship. Headteachers give us a target in the meeting. Due to this approach, we all teachers take full guardianship of students and constantly interact with communities and*

*guardians about students' issues and subject content and we address issues with highly professional accountability with morale and novel ideas.*

(Interview, April 2022)

Based on the interaction with the teacher, I understood that the school headteacher's regular monitoring approach motivates the teachers to perform better and address all the issues related to students, subjects content, and guardians. Regular monitoring of teachers' activities and progress forced teachers to actively contribute to the teaching and learning process to ensure academic achievement. Head teachers' monitoring approach toward teachers fosters feeling of attachment, equality, and value towards the school as well as its teachers. Randomly, I took a small meeting with class teachers. Such types of practices help me to monitor teachers' classroom teaching activities (Interview, Headteacher).

A study done in Kenya by Mobegi et al. (2010) found that it is crucial for headteachers to make sure they have sufficient department organization and monitoring as well as for them to start engaging in school supervision to ensure that a wide range of teaching techniques are employed in the classroom in a safe and secure setting.

During FGD with the teacher, they also said that the headteacher is always enthusiastic in teacher interaction and right counseling. Headteacher gives his full time to monitor students and teachers in the school from morning to evening. Therefore, he also encouraged us to spend full time learning, searching, and making teaching resources to improve our and our students' outcomes (FGD, Teachers).

I observe all of the teachers, including the headteacher stationed at the school's entrance, keeping an eye on the students and making assessments of them, particularly in regards to their readiness for school and academics.

Taking into account school effectiveness theory, continuous monitoring of students' activities, behavior and learning process improve students' outcomes and increase school effectiveness. The school performing well consistently examines students' activities.

I asked a local parent, Mr. Harihar Poudel about the headteacher's monitoring of teachers' activities, progress and performance. He expressed his experience in this way:

*The beauty of school is headteacher regularly monitors all teachers' performance. Monitoring teachers' classroom and school activities are not a threat but it opens a means and avenue for improving teachers' teaching ability, completing the syllabus within the pre-determined time frame, developing a lesson plan, and reinforcing pedagogical excellence.*

(Interview, April 2022)

This perception of local parents reflects that the headteacher's regular monitoring reinforces the competitive skills of teachers and helps teachers' pedagogical effectiveness. Headteacher constantly monitors teachers' classroom activities, lesson plans, and teaching ability to enhance students' academic excellence. This helps the headteacher set goals for the school and encourages teachers to complete the teaching syllabus within a given academic year. During the FGD, teachers agreed that headteachers closely monitored teachers' activities, performance, and progress to motivate teachers to work better (FGD, Teachers). The teacher agreed during FGD that due to regular monitoring at the end of the school year, we don't have any topics that remain untaught and unpracticed (FGD, Teachers). I observed that the synergy effort of the headteacher, teachers, and students in the monitoring process turned the school into the center of academic excellence and performed

constantly better over some time. The effective effort of the headteacher in continuously monitoring teachers' and students' progress, activities, and performance contributes to an effective school.

Considering school effectiveness model by Marzano, a strong school leader's commitment to upholding a safe learning environment, focusing on the curriculum and instructional framework, and closely observing and reporting student progress improve school and student outcomes.

### **Teachers' Professional Development and Quality Staffing**

Training and development are essential to developing qualified teachers in school and qualified teachers can teach effectively, although there were a lack of teaching-learning materials and an appropriate classroom. From 2016-2023, SSDP emphasized training and development programs (MOE, 2016). Teachers' professional development and teacher education are highlighted in the most recent Teacher Professional Development Framework (2015). Training for teachers' professional development concentrates on their consciousness and ongoing learning (Bhujel, 2019).

In this regard, I interviewed the headteacher of the case school Mr. Pushpa.

He said:

*Only qualified teachers can teach better and more effectively. For all teachers, I organized a minimum of three to four days of training classes one time in a year from school sources to develop teachers' professional competency. Furthermore, I also allowed both old and new teachers to participate in different training programs organized by the Ministry of Education and non-government private agencies to support the development of teaching practice.*

(Interview, headteacher, 2020)

From head teacher's expression, I came to this point of understanding that qualified and trained teachers create an effective teaching-learning process in school. Headteachers organized different need-based professional training programs in school to improve all grade teachers' knowledge, skills, experience, and teaching competency. Importance of headteachers' instructional leadership is high because it is a leadership function that is closely related to the teachers' teaching process and involves monitoring, coaching, giving feedback, and supporting the improvement of teaching practice (Fullan, 2014). An effective and meaningful training and development program in school help to develop teacher proficiency.

During FGD with teachers, one teacher claimed that school conducted one training and development workshop in a year for all teachers. Effective training and development make the teacher more capable in their subject-related issues which is a milestone for our autonomy, competence and academic excellence (FGD, Teachers).

During my routine school visit, I saw numerous photos in the staff room, headteacher room, and conference room that were related to the professional development training workshop that the school had organized with the assistance of numerous outside and internal experts. Similar to this, I saw teachers mostly using computers and the internet to print out teaching materials and download instructional videos prior to entering their classes. Additionally, I noticed that in the headteacher's office, subject heads and the assistant head teacher mentored new teachers on how to create teaching and learning materials to address current issues like the capacity development of students in the pandemic situation. It also contributed to enhancing teachers' skills and knowledge. I observed every week, the head teacher would organize brief conversations with all of the teachers to find out how they use the

knowledge and abilities they've acquired through training and development.

Headteacher also asks the teachers to share information with other teachers free from all restrictions. According to research, school leaders should focus on leadership-related tasks rather than managerial ones to promote a learning culture in their school (Stein, 2016).

Overall, based on my observations, I would say that the leadership practices are all geared toward Habermas's view of emancipation, which enables learners to break free from all limitations imposed by both the outside world and their own deeply held beliefs about life. A student can better understand being and becoming by adopting such a liberating perspective (Habermas, 1972).

In the course of collecting more information, I again interacted and interviewed the SMC chairperson Mr. Tajendra and asked a question about quality staffing and professional development in school. He stated something like this way:

*We always consider professional development for our teachers in order to provide effective teaching and learning in the classroom. Training and development give the proper knowledge about subject content, pedagogy and also motivate teachers to solve any problem encountered during the teaching and learning process. Similarly, training and development developed dedicated and hardworking teachers. It also motivates teachers for their career security in school.*

(Interview, SMC chairperson, 2020).

Based on the interview with the SMC chairperson, I came to know that meaningful training and development sessions conducted by schools for their teachers established a strong sense of determination and inspiration among teachers toward their teaching and learning process. The knowledge and skills gathered from different

training programs by teachers solve problems effectively during classroom teaching and learning activities. Moreover, it also supports teachers in career development and professionalism. The importance of the headteachers' instructional leadership is emphasized in their oversight of the curriculum and pedagogy as well as their involvement in the professional learning communities (Sullivan, 2018). During FGD with teachers, one teacher expressed that due to meaningful and effective professional training and development, I have not seen any clash and disagreement among teachers and students due to a lack of teaching and learning understanding and lack of cooperation (FGD, Teachers).

I had the opportunity to sit in the staff room during my routine school visit. I saw teachers very eager to share the knowledge and skills they had gained from taking part in a Teach for Nepal-sponsored professional development workshop. I got a chance to explore how the teachers were using teaching materials, how teachers used to share things and knowledge they had learnt from training and development organized by Teach for Nepal. I saw that teachers who participated in various forms of training and development workshops had a wealth of knowledge about child psychology, excellent teaching and learning issues, resources for additional curriculum, and textbooks related to their subject courses and applied in teaching-learning process. This helped students perform well in school.

This method of teaching supports Habermas's practical interests, emphasizing interaction subjectivity, context, and consensual understanding more than anything else (Habermas, 1972). A sincere discussion, precise communication and comprehension are part of the teaching and learning environment.

In the course of generating more information, I interviewed Mr. Krishna and inquired him about teachers' professional development in school. He said:

*The headteacher always said professional development and training helps all teachers to promote their qualification, and established their sense of self-reliance, proficiency, familiar with curriculum and educational material to address all issues and problem effectively in teaching-learning process. I also think through different trainings and capacity development programmes, all teachers can develop weekly and monthly teaching and other activities, plan effectively and enhance teaching and students' performance.*

(Interview, head teacher, 27th July 2020)

From the above experience, I understood that training and development increase competence, improve knowledge, and make a teacher more professional, cooperative, and dedicated to school and teaching-learning activities. Teachers who participated in training and development can update their subject-related content. Similarly, it also enhances teachers' achievement. Through professional development, teachers can increase their level of confidence, commitment, and dedication and become responsive toward their duty. Du Plessis (2013) describes that instructional leaders and headteachers play a prominent role in enhancing every individual teacher's quality, student achievement, and competency in school operations.

During FGD with teachers, one primary-level female teacher expressed her experience in such as way: *I don't have Master's-level education. In my case, all formal workshops, training programs, and different seminars organized by the school and other organizations like Teach for Nepal, and CEHRD open an avenue to enhance my teaching skills, such as what kinds of problems we will face and how to handle problems, how to conduct classes and teach students more effective in the classroom, how to select teaching materials, how to interrelate subject content with practical example and so on and so on. I copied all training environment, method,*

*and material and applied it in my classroom till today. It gives me good output* (FGD, Teachers).

I asked the headteacher to let me observe a class while I was visiting the school. I had the opportunity to observe a female primary teacher class. When I observed her class, I saw that she taught English and gave the students the assignment to write about their family in a copy. She taught that day when and how to use auxiliary verbs in writing, such as *has* and *have*. I have noticed that teachers' appropriate and effective teaching is thought to be the best approach for providing students with an effective education and helping students achieve high academic success. Teachers can only learn such an approach through training and development.

During FGD with students, all students agreed that after training and development, we always witnessed some changes in our teachers' teaching method and behavior. Recently, changing students' sitting settings, storytelling, class discussion, play, brainstorming, and integrated teaching are highly practiced in our classroom without discrimination. (FGD, Students). Teachers in the discussion agreed that different training and development workshops organized by the school or other educational-related agencies bring a tremendous change in teachers' teaching ability and enhance students' achievement in the end (FGD, Teachers).

This leadership approach supports Habermas's theory and places more emphasis on creating an environment where teachers are valued and minimizing other forms of discrimination, both of which are essential to raising the standard of the learning environment (Habermas, 1972).

Likewise, I interviewed Mr. Krishna Sapkota about training. He expressed his experience like this:

*After training, I knew better how to teach students with appropriate teaching procedures by creating a more pleasant environment in the classroom. Literally, in every training, I always learned new things about teaching. I implement all ideas, and methods in the classroom to increase the performance level of students. I still remember during my old days when I taught in other schools. I couldn't have taught students without books which created poor attention and learning in students. When I joined this school and took several trainings, I was familiar with all curricula and education materials, understood the value of pre-planning before any class, and improved my delivery process. In fact, training and development opportunities have enhanced my teaching performance. (Interview, April 2022)*

From the experience and reflection of teachers, it is evident that training and development workshops improved teachers' holistic development, which helped to develop learners' growth and turn the school into academic excellence. The instructional leader offers opportunities for professional growth and resources to teachers that address the changing needs of the student (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013; Jita & Mokhele, 2013).

During FGD, the teachers also appreciated the training and development program conducted by the school through the headteacher's initiation for teachers with a good trainer, materials, environment, and method motivated us to deliver effective teaching and learning activities with effective planning and preparation (FGD, Teachers). During FGD, all teachers expressed that training empowers and builds their level of confidence and helps update their subject-related matters. During training, we deeply discussed all the problems that occurred in class, and through training and development, we can find out every solution to the problem. We all were

pleased with senior teachers' positive attitude, cooperation, and school counseling during training and development. Training and development from experts create good teaching and learning environment, which in the end, enhance students' achievement and performance in all activities and exams (FGD, Teachers).

The view of teachers reflected that there is a practice theory of school effectiveness that fosters the teachers' intellectual development, and provides individualized support environments. There is more emphasis on school improvement by promoting teachers' abilities (Scheerens & Creemers, 1989).

Similarly, I took some information from a parent of the case school about teacher professional development. He mentioned that:

*The School recruits permanent teachers only who pass the teacher service commission exam. For a contractual teacher, the school publishes vacancies in different national and local media like newspapers, FM, and Television. Then shortlisted, selected, and recruited teachers start to get training and development from day one to address the needs of the learner. (Interview, 2020).*

From the above expression and reflection, I came to understand that to improve overall schools and students' outcomes, school- prioritized teachers' professional training should be highly pragmatic because only qualified teachers can teach effectively. School leader encourages teachers to learn more about student performance by collecting data, offering opportunities for professional development that are connected to school objectives, and offering teaching materials that cater to students' changing needs. Training improves academic excellence and teachers' skill and capabilities in imparting knowledge and skills to the learner, develops confidence and competence, and become able to motivate all students, which open an avenue for

teacher and student for academic excellence through innovation. Instructional leaders advise their teachers to attend professional development sessions when and where it is feasible (Hallinger, 2011).

When I visited the school, I saw teachers collaborating to manage the teaching materials, sharing teaching techniques, talking about the lesson plan, keeping a teaching worksheet to keep track of things, and senior teachers sharing their experiences with other teachers about mistakes they had made in the past and what they had learned from teaching in other schools. For teachers, qualified educators created a welcoming and appealing teaching and learning environment. I observe that teachers are incredibly committed to and creative in their work. (Observation, Researcher)

Moreover, I interacted with a local actor Mr. Nilesh Prasad and I enquired about the quality staffing in the case school. He stated that:

*I think for many years, the school never and ever recruited any teachers from reference sources. The school recruited highly qualified teachers who have high knowledge of child psychology after sorting a wide range of candidates.* (Interview, April 2022)

From my interviewer, it was getting evident that recruiting teacher based on experienced and quality enhances the overall performance of the school and students. Capable and proficient teachers with high child psychology bring effective and result-oriented teaching-learning activities. During FGD with teachers, all teachers agreed that highly qualified teachers can easily and effectively address the problem of the student. Qualified teachers cope up with all challenges, easily read the child's psychology, and effectively solve the children's problems (FGD, Teachers). During FGD, parents also acknowledge that the school only recruited the best and most

qualified teachers who are experts in solving and coping each student's problem and can create a child-centric culture and motivate students toward learning (FGD, Parents).

Taking into account the theories of school effectiveness from the 1970s to the 1990s, which contend that opportunities for influencing teachers' learning, providing opportunities for growth and development, fostering the teachers' intellectual development, and providing individualized support environments at school help to develop the teachers' consistency, minimize teachers' retention in the school, and contribute to school improvement (Mortimore et al., 1988).

When teachers believe the subject to be is worthwhile, then only they show their interest, perform better, persevere longer, and enroll in more other courses for their development and growth (Habermas, 1971).

### **Parents and Local Community Support as a Guiding Principle of Well Performing of School**

The support of parents and the local community is crucial in the school for leading the school toward academic excellence. Parents and local communities help plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate different school activities. Research studies show that the management of the school is only effective if there is high support from parents, and local communities.

### **Active Parents' and Local Communities' Involvement**

The best practice to improve trust among school and community is active involvement. Parental involvement and local community involvement enrich transparency, mutual respect, and support for the school in co-designing its vision, process, and results (Nishimura, 2017).

In my inquiry on it, Tejendra the SMC chairperson of the case school mentioned:

*The coordination and cooperation between parents and local communities are at a high level. From my first day to till now, school is running with full parents' and communities' support, trust, contribution, and voluntary work for the school's academic improvement and standard. All parents give tremendous time to school development as well as their children by creating a favorable learning environment at home and school. All school's parents and communities provide required learning resources, financial help, and an environment to enhance students' learning, behavior, and social relationship.*

(Interview 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020)

Based on the interview with a case school SMC chairperson, I learned that the support of parents and local public school made tremendous planning, vision, and turning the school into a better place for academic excellence. Developing parents and community relations increased strong bonding for school infrastructure development, academic improvement, maintaining the academic standard, and creating an effective teaching-learning environment. Active participation and guardianship of the local community in the school management raise the school's education quality (Shah, 2016).

In the course of FGD with teachers, one teacher claimed that the strong point of school is to maintain trust and communication between parents and communities at a zenith (FGD, Teachers). Similarly, parents who are continuously involved in every school activity can provide better help and other learning support for the student and create a favorable learning atmosphere in their home, which help to improve, schools' goal, objective, students' knowledge and skills on subject content, behavior, and

social relationship (Interview. Headteacher). Parental involvement and local community involvement enrich transparency, mutual respect, and support for the school in co-designing its vision, process, and results (Nishimura, 2017).

The school's community, according to one parent who participated in the FGD, is very supportive and upbeat. The school's participative approach has helped to set the tone for its operations in a beneficial and positive manner (FGD, Parents).

One parent spoke during the FGD about his experience with the school's required after-school classes, which start after the regular class period for all students in grades 7 to 10. School provided ample time for us to put our suggestions and feedback for extra classes, and we all parents gave our suggestions and cooperated and coordinated with school's plan for extra classes. The school invited all parents from grades seven through ten and revealed the purpose of conducting extra classes for students. The school shared set goal with parents for conducting extra classes and asked for an additional one and a half hours to hold our students in school (FGD, Parents).

In this viewpoint, emancipatory interest is applied, which suggests that a school should give its stakeholders the freedom to experiment with the most recent trends and pedagogical practices, and that a leader must make the most of each member of the school's potential to explore a range of options in order to foster a climate of cooperation (Habermas, 1972).

According to Sapungan and Sapungan (2014), the involvement of parents in their pupil's learning process supports pupils' self-confidence, attitude, academic success in all related subject courses, and behavior and enhances their social relationship.

Similarly, in the course of generating more information, I interviewed Mr. Pushpa, the headteacher of a case school, and he shared information in this way:

*All the school's construction, teachers' management, placement, fundraising, fund mobilizing, administrative supports, annual programs support, schools' sports items support, library, appointing and designated new teachers in school are carried out with the active contribution and participation by parents and local communities for developing better learning environment for students. (Interview head teacher, July 2020)*

From the expression and reflection of the school head teacher, I came to this point of understanding that parents play a prominent role in the school's improvement, which ensures better teaching and learning activities for students' academic achievement. The participation of parents is needed in the school for planning and implementing school activities for better school and student outcomes. Furthermore, parents' participation in school seems crucial for developing the school's vision, implementing the school's improvement program, constructing the school's infrastructure, and enhancing the school's ecological environment. In this regard, Nokali et al. (2011) stated that dedicatedly engaged parents can improve academic success and minimize school and students' problems.

During FGD with teachers, one teacher mentioned that a high level of parents and community involvement in school supports necessary resources as well as creates a good environment and growth in school (FGD, Teachers). Parents recommend that the school adopts each parent's suggestion and bases its instruction on the needs of both parents and students. To meet our needs, the school added extra classes and English-medium courses (FGD, Parents).

However, I noticed that the school offers extra classes in Nepali and English during my routine visit. But it appears that there are no specialist subject teachers in the extra classes. There doesn't seem to be enough English-speaking experts teaching

in English-medium classes, and subject teachers do not want to teach extra classes after school. A school fails to build an expert team for English medium classes.

From this perspective, despite the school's success, the basic needs of the students have not yet been met. But communities' and parents' active support and contribution help to develop a favorable environment and lead the school toward academic excellence. As explained by the theory of school effectiveness, constructive relationships between the school and parents contribute to students' outcomes and school improvement (Edmonds, 1979).

Moreover, I interviewed a local actor Mr. Nilesh Prasad to find out about local community involvement in the case school. He shared his experience in this way:

*The school's SMC chairperson and the headteacher always consult us during the school's annual plan, academic goals, vision, utilizing school budget, financial income, and expenditure in different school meetings. School also took and implemented all constructive suggestions received from us related to school, teachers, and students. Moreover, they also invited us to every school's annual functions, special functions, and other weekly and monthly functions. We also actively participated in the school's function and other activities related to upgrading and constructing the school's infrastructure, purchasing equipment like computers, lab equipment, sports items, and books, adding facilities for teachers, recruiting new teachers, adding student numbers, and forming PTA. I must say, whatever the challenges and opportunities school teams faced, they shared and consulted with us immediately. Moreover, they correctly recorded all details, information, and activities of students, teachers, and school, and revealed them to us when we asked. (Interview, April 2022)*

From his experience and reflection, I understood that the local community's active and meaningful involvement plays a vital role in the school for holistic growth, building mutual trust, coordination, and cooperation in school. The highest participation of local communities assists the school in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating overall school functions and activities. Moreover, local communities' involvement is needed in the school for developing the school's vision, executing the school's improvement program, and constructing the school's infrastructure. Morrison et al. (2015) stated that the involvement of parents in school holds information exchange, participating in decision-making, volunteering at the school along with coordination, collaboration, and interaction with a teacher in the teaching and learning activities.

In the course of FGD with teachers, all teachers agreed that the local community involvement safeguards school from different unwanted circumstances and challenge and help to eradicate all the problems faced by the school to enhance better teaching and learning process and academic excellence of the students (FGD, Teachers).

I got a chance to attend a school meeting with parents and the community and discovered that the school and the community have strong bonds. Parents and the community actively participated in each school's activities to improve academic performance, academic quality, school development, and student development, and I saw that the school and the parents shared information about their children's activities and behavior. However, I observed that parents were not precisely informed about their children's school activities and behavior. What I found is that the school created a supportive environment for parents and communities. These practices will not help students succeed academically.

Similarly, National Careers Service (2017) said that headteachers need the skill to inspire and lead the stakeholders. Their daily roles are like creating and maintaining a healthy and safe place for learning, insertion high expectations of achievement for staff and pupils, communicating with parents and pupils about students' improvement, and communicate with students, staff, parents, and the local community about school and students' progress.

Similarly, I took some information from a parent Mr. Harihar Poudel about parents' and local communities' involvement in school. According to him, school always prioritized and concerned parents' and local communities' participation. He said:

*SMC chairperson, head teacher, teachers, and in-charge made a regular contract with all parents and they frequently invited and allowed us to observe our pupils' class activities and behavior weekly or monthly. As a parent, I participated in a quarterly parent meeting, annual function, and during result and annual function. School regularly conducts PTA meeting. Parents and teachers collaborate and discuss issues related to students' academics. Similarly, the SMC chairperson and the headteacher share everything about the school's plan, policy, activities, and school matter precisely. We also continuously provide our contribution as per school needs, which develops a positive relationship between the school and parents. (Interview, April 2022)*

From the above expression and reflection of the parents, I came to understand that there is a strong connection between parents' active involvement and a positive environment within the school for students' achievement. Active and high involvement of parents in each activity of school leads to collective efficacy and helps in attaining better outcomes.

During FGD with parents, one parent shared that the relationship between school and parents is at a high level with full cooperation and coordination. School needs financial and other technical help for running technical education program affiliated from CTEVT. At that time, parents, local communities and local organization play a pivotal role in granting affiliation, managing financial resources, managing teachers, managing teaching and learning resources by collaboration with other educational organization for conducting technical education classes (FGD, Parents).

During FGD with parents, they said the SMC chairperson, headteacher, and other teachers did a tremendous contribution to the improvement of overall behavior and activities of our pupils either at home, school, or somewhere else. Furthermore, during the discussion, parents also shared that they can meet any person in school at any time. All teachers give priority to their concerns and problems. Moreover, they said the school invited them during parents' meetings, annual functions, and monthly meetings and allowed them to observe their child's classes which can help them to share and know many things about their pupils' behavior and activities and also motivated them to establish a favorable learning environment for their child at home. (FGD, Parents).

Similarly, Sa'ad and Sadiq (2014) said that the school represents the community's mini-society. On the one hand, to function successfully, the school needs affluent relation with the community. On the other hand, for the survival and development of the community, it needs school too. They further clarified that school is a change agent for socialization and the successful development of education is much more dependent on the relationship between school and community. Hence,

they cannot be considered separate entities and their profound relationship increases the quality of education given to the student.

During my frequent visit to school, I observed that parents are highly welcome in school. The assistant headteacher and for-head teacher spent a high amount of time with parents. The school has cooperative culture, teachers and parents collaborate, discuss, and spend a high amount of time together and discuss profoundly and precisely students', schools' academic and non-academic issues and matters. The partnership between parents and teachers highly impacts students' education (Llamas & Tuazon, 2016).

The information provided by the teachers and parents focused on the emancipatory interest as claimed by Habermas, that it has the potentiality of the emancipation of parents, society which links to justice and equitable being (Habermas, 1972).

Likewise, I took some information from school teacher Mr. Krishna Sapkota about parents' and local communities' involvement in school. He mentioned:

*Active parents and local communities enhance the working environment, teaching, and learning activities, and all school staff and students have become more positive, disciplined, active, and collaborative.*

(Interview, April 2022)

From the above expression and reflection from the teacher, I came to know that parents' and communities' involvement in school can improve discipline and clear behavioral activities for the teachers and students. It is clear that when a school is actively engaged with its parents and community, it can effectively meet school-related needs, which increases students' learning outcomes. Therefore, a good relationship between school, parents, and community always create favorable benefit

for schools. In the course of FGD with teachers, all teachers agreed that school makes all the parents and local communities feel good and appreciated. School consulted them on every important matter and issue and also encouraged them to share their experience, feedback and ideas so that the school could do more for students' academic performance (FGD, Teachers). School has provided flexible time for all parents so that all parents observed teachers' and ours' teaching and learning activities, can share their problems and issues with teachers, and teachers also reflected similar sentiments, and emotions to parents, which established good relations and gained more trust toward teachers (Interview, Student). students' learning achievements are influenced by community participation (Bruns et al. as cited in Nishimura, 2017).

I observed the meeting of parents. In the meeting, headteacher revealed all the plan, policy, activities related to school with every parent, and community during meeting. It has contributed to good, and deep levels of parents and community engagement. During my visit to the school, I observed school received different bits of help from the community, such as funds, voluntary support, discount on construction materials, discounts on the school's essential items and equipment for the construction building, library, labs, and learning and playing materials. I found there was significant participation of parents and community in every school activity and meeting and based on their active involvement, I consider school activities highly influenced parents and community. High parents and community involvement increase students' academic and other extra activities performance, which develops students' interest in school (Observation, Researcher).

According to Habermas's human interest theory, engaging and retaining stakeholders' interest requires that they recognize their value and importance in the

activities in which they are involved. When stakeholders feel important, they participate and increase interest in the school. Once that happens, they start to interact more and feel more a part of the school (1972).

In this regard, I interviewed the headteacher Puspa of a case school. He shared information in this way:

*My teams and I prepared SIP annually and every six and half months all school teams, PTA teams, local actors, local communities, and parents came together to discuss SIP's six and half months' achievement and also discuss, evaluate, control, and execute our activities as per SIP.*

(Interview, head teacher, 2020)

From the interview mentioned above, I came to this point of understanding that a school improvement plan is a guideline and roadmap for school success. School practicing and executing all plans, programs, activities, and goals as per mentioned in SIP, which is prepared with the significant participation of parents, local communities, and school staff. The headteacher is the key person for SIP development and every school's plans, problems, activities, advantages, disadvantages, goals, and achievements of the school are precisely mentioned and highly discussed with parents, PTA, and communities during SIP development which helps to enhance overall school activities and ensure school and students' achievement. In the course of FGD with teachers, all the teachers agreed that in one-year, school reviewed SIP twice with the huge participation of parents, local communities, PTA, SMC, teachers, and head teachers. Similarly, during SMC, PTA, parents, and staff meeting briefly discussed SIP's achievement and failure. SIP is a road map for our school and students' educational achievement (FGD, Teachers).

Similarly, I interviewed Krishna Sapkota, a secondary-level math teacher. He said "Our school develops SIP with the considerable participation of all school stakeholders". He expressed his view in this way:

*We conduct three meetings annually with the teacher-parents, PTA, and local communities, and during that meetings. We also deeply discuss school SIP. We make our plans and activities based on prolonged discussions with parents and local communities.*

(Interview, April 2022)

Based on the interview with the school teacher, I learned that the headteacher and SMCs prioritize developing SIP with the huge participation of parents and communities. During FGD with teachers, one math teacher from the secondary level said that he has been teaching case school since 2018 and within two years, he had participated in more than five meetings related to SIP along with the headteacher, SMC, PTA, and the local community. He said the school practiced and encouraged all parents, and communities to participate in SIP, gave constructive feedback, and contributed to developing school academic excellence (FGD, Teachers). The headteacher and SMC chairpersons evaluate and control each plan, program, and activity of the school based on SIP, and if they found any gap immediately, they would sit together to fill the gap (Interview, Local Actor).

However, during my frequent visit to the school, I did not observe that the headteacher, teachers, SMCs members, PTA heads, and some active local actors and parents sat together and discussed each SIP topics, plans, activities, problems, and goals precisely. This has been found to promote parents' and communities' participation in the school to build trust at a high level and lead the school toward academic excellence (Observation, Researcher).

As explained by the theory of school effectiveness, constructive relationships between the school and parents, establishment deeply rooted, high parental involvement school culture enhances school improvement (Mortimore, et al., 1988).

### **Active Students' Engagement as a Guiding Principle of Well Performing School**

Learning engagement is defined as students' physical and psychological involvement in their educational activities (Junco et al., 2010). Students' engagement in learning is further classified into behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Parsons & Tylor, 2011).

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

The school provides different opportunities and platforms for students to enhance their behavioral, emotional, and cognitive abilities. Therefore, schools conduct different extra-curricular activities (ECA) like cultural programs, literature, and sports activities which enhance students' mental as well as physical health. The different extracurricular activities practiced in school are drama, debate, sports, exhibitions, clubs, social events, and school publications (Massoni, 2011). Therefore, schools prioritizing extra-curricular activities for their students have better positive outcomes.

In my inquiry on it, Mr. Tajendra, the SMC chairperson of the case school said:

*I established every Friday as an extra-curricular activities day in school with reward facilities for both teachers and students based on their behavior, activities, performance, outcomes, teamwork, and dedication to ECA. Extra-curricular activities improve students 'and teachers' physical and mental abilities, which help in their overall performance.*

(Interview, SMC Chairperson, 25th July 2020)

From the above information, I understood that different extra-curricular activities help enhance students' mental and physical capabilities, which improve students' educational attainment. Moreover, these activities also motivated teachers, gave them a platform to boost their physical and mental capacity, and developed a sense of teamwork with school colleagues and students. Extra-curricular activities were carried out in an informal learning environment, reinforcing students' overall formal learning and gaining academic excellence. Extracurricular activities are offered because they support student academic growth, aesthetic appreciation, civic engagement, community relations, and moral development (Gupta & Agrawal, 2007).

In the course of FGD with teachers, a math teacher mentioned that in our school, ECA is also a major contributing factor to students' well performance, better behavior, and better competitive resources in the academic field with highly devoted and determined (FGD, Teachers). Another teacher added that the school managed extra-curricular activities so that every student got equal opportunities in the activities and competitions with the same age and grades. He further elaborated that every week school listed nine to ten different activities for Friday and students need to register their names on Wednesday and Thursday according to their preference. We managed to participate more and more students in ECA (FGD, Teachers). The FGD with students disclosed that we all students have equal opportunities in ECA according to our preferences and likeness such as some like playing volleyball, some like playing chess, some like debate, some like handwriting competitions, some like singing, dancing, while others like children and interaction clubs, etc. but participation is very low in ECA (FGD, Students).

On Friday, I observed ECA and saw only a few students participated and others were spectators. However, I noticed that not all students had the same

opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. I discovered that many female students are not particularly eager to participate. One female student alleged that the school held less specifically geared indoor games for girls and more outdoor games like volleyball, cricket, football, table tennis and basketball. Only a small number of senior girls participated, but the majority of them were not interested (FGD, Students).

The student's information mainly concentrated on Habermas's human interest theory, which contends that students only show a greater interest in activities and courses when they think those activities and courses are worthwhile and equitable. Only then they put forth more effort and perform better (Habermas, 1972). Even with low ECA participation, the school continues to support high academic excellence.

Similarly, I took some information from Mr. Puspa, the headteacher of the case school about extra-curricular activities. He mentioned:

*I believe extra-curricular activities are some important things that enhance students' and teachers' relationships, moral values, and social relations and reduce behavioral problems. Different extracurricular activities teach the student to work in a team and develop a sense of mutual support, discipline, collaboration, and cooperation.*

(Interview, headteacher, 2020)

Based on the interview with the head teacher, I learned that the school prioritized extra-curricular activities for their students to improve positive outcomes. Moreover, extra-curricular activities boost students' and teachers' positive relationships, moral values, and social relationships and also play a crucial role in eradicating behavioral problems through coordination, cooperation, and teamwork. Different extra-curricular activities not only improve the students' physical and

mental health, they also improve students' discipline, moral values, and social relationships and decrease behavioral difficulties (Massoni, 2011).

During the course of FGD, one teacher (Resource Person) further added that the school conducts weekly extracurricular activities for all teachers and students, and based on our outcomes, appropriate reward has been managed. Due to such practices, we all give our full efforts and work harder to improve students, schools, and ourselves outcomes. Such extracurricular facilities for teachers always put extra motivation to take ownership of school change (FGD, Teachers).

Similarly, during FGD, one science teacher mentioned " *Extra-curricular activities also enhanced my drawing skills for the last three years. I regularly participated in art class with students, and due to that class, my artwork improved. During teaching, I had to draw many pictures of science-related courses. Now, I draw any science and geometric-related picture and graphs within minimum time with less effort* " (FGD, Teachers). During an informal meeting with students, students also mentioned that teaching and learning should not have limited only to theoretical content. Beyond that, we need practical skills and knowledge which can improve our learning and cognitive skills (FGD, Students).

The information provided by students and teacher focused on Habermas's practical interest theory, which suggests that students who seek the worth of course and value of a subject, then their study activities are more engaged, developed favorable positive task and engagement attitudes, and feel more connected to the field (Habermas, 1972). This strategy encourages and supports student achievement and school effectiveness.

In this regard, I interviewed a student Deepak Subedi about extracurricular activities in school.

*Me: Does your school always conduct Friday extra-curricular activities?*

*Deepak: Yes, regularly.*

*Me: Which programs are conducted regularly?*

*Deepak: Handwriting competition, spelling competition, Nepali and English poet, story, essay, grammar competition, dancing, and singing competition, different sports like volleyball, basketball, table tennis, chess, quiz, art, interaction, and story sharing club with senior students' program, interaction with a renowned person of society and nation, yoga and meditation also.*

*Me: Why do you participate?*

*Deepak: It's our regular weekly program. It encourages me to attend school regularly and participate because I love to participate in extra-curricular activities. It brings thrills, and pleasures and develops a sense of competition and discipline, and refreshes me physically and mentally for the next week. (Interview, Student 2020).*

Based on the above information, I came to know that the school maintained discipline, a sense of dedication, hard work, and competence among students with the help of weekly extra-curricular activities. Moreover, ECA also helps in decreasing students' absenteeism and increases students' active participation in school's educational activities, which helps students' academic achievement. Similarly, extra-curricular activities also support students in delivering positive outcomes. The teachers also agreed that due to regular weekly ECA in school, students developed a sense of teamwork and discipline, which was also a major contributing factor to students' academic excellence (FGD, Teachers). Extracurricular activities, according to Lunenburg (2010a), support a child's holistic development by adjusting and expanding the curriculum, supporting learning, completing the curriculum, and integrating knowledge.

While talking about the ECA in school, during FGD with students, all the students agreed that they don't think there is any public school having ECA regularly. Therefore, ECA plays an important role in making our learning culture and academic excellence (FGD, Students). During FGD with the teacher, one teacher maintained that the Yoga and meditations classes conducted by the school help to improve our students' innovation, and creativity and also energize their physical and mental health, which directs them to focus more on their study and learning achievement (FGD, Teachers).

I observed yoga and meditation extra-curricular activities conducted by the headteacher. I noticed such Yoga and meditation activities affecting the physical, and mental and strengthening the internal relationship and academic excellence of the students. To become successful, schools should focus on ECA because it develops a collective feeling among students and energizes them to keep learning.

Teachers, however, also suggested that extracurricular activities should focus a little more on training, experimentation, technology, critical thinking, and social behavior activities. We anticipated that these areas would also be included in ECA, but schools are not likely to change anytime soon. Whatever we did for ECA in the classroom, the students accepted it. (FGD, teachers)

Taking into account Habermas's emancipatory interests, which suggest that students view school activities as a crucial tool for transforming learning and accumulating knowledge that contributes to their learning outcomes (Habermas, 1972). This strategy encourages and supports student achievement and school effectiveness.

In the same way, I again enquired with a local guardian Mr. Harihar about extra-curricular activities in the case school. According to a local parent, his child is

always excited to participate in extra-curricular activities in school. He shared his daughter's achievement in this way:

*Due to school and teachers' support, my daughter always participated in competitions organized at regional and national levels by different schools and institutions and she always holds the first position. Extra-curricular activities provide her with a great platform that boosts her confidence level, personality, and learning habit. She always attends school and is now popular in her school as well as other schools in debate and poem competitions.*

(Interview, Parent, 2022)

From local parent's experience and reflection, I came to this point of understanding that extra-curricular activities help to reinforce students' attitudes, personalities, confidence, and learning habit. Moreover, it also motivates the student to attend school regularly and supports learning and holistic development. ECA makes students skillful, and disciplined and enhances their confidence which moves them on to academic achievement. When students become responsible and participate in every school activity, the school achieves more advantages for students and the school becomes more competent in meeting students' needs (Gastic et al., as cited in Kanana, 2015).

During an informal meeting with a parent, he mentioned that what I always used to dream about my child is that my child should strengthen and shine in school in both academic and practical activities. My focus was not only limited to academic results. What I dreamed about my child, this school provided full support and developed environment for my child so that she reached a high level to achieve her ultimate capacity (Interview, Local Actor). In the course of FGD with teachers, all teachers agreed that ECA fulfilled the students' needs and it also reinforced them for

internal changes, which strengthened a habit of learning, searching, devoting, and dedication which ultimately promotes the growth and academic excellence of the student (FGD, Teachers).

Nevertheless, ensuring more practical curriculum is one of the major challenges for case school. Students want more extracurricular activities, but the school does not have a playground or enough materials, and the two sport teachers who work there cannot manage such activities by themselves. Despite the fact, it has improved teaching and learning and raised student competition. Even though there are many obstacles, school continuously conducts ECA, which helps in school effectiveness and improvement over time.

Furthermore, I interviewed teacher Mr. Krishna Sapkota. I raised the question about the extra-curricular activities in school. He mentioned that:

*All school teams are satisfied and feel a sense of pride within us because through extra-curricular activities, we can increase our school and students' academic achievement. We have always successfully held first, second, and third positions in every local, regional, and national game and received many trophies, medals, appreciation certificates, and cash. Therefore, we can enrich our students' confidence level, personality, learning habits, disciplinary behavior, and academic achievement through extra-curricular activities.*

(Interview, teacher, 2021)

From the above school teacher's expression, I came to this point of understanding that extra-curricular activities also motivate teacher, gives positive outcomes, and develops a sense of pride and responsibility due to students' success in extra-curricular activities in a different forum. Therefore, those schools which prioritize extra-curricular activities for their students have a better positive

relationship with the school and its teachers. According to Lunenburg (2010a), extra-curricular activities are crucial for students' integrating learning because they help the student's holistic development via matching and expanding curriculum, supporting learning, enhancing curriculum, and integrating knowledge.

During FGD with teachers, one teacher mentioned that the headteacher also attends many ECA in which the students participate, encourage students to perform better and give better outcomes (FGD, Teachers). During an informal meeting with students, they also claimed that they are always excited and eager to participate in every Friday activity because there are lots of extra activities, and based on our activities, we get some rewards. Similarly, we do not like to miss any extracurricular activities conducted by the school because games correlate physical, mental, academic, and social development where we can learn the value of teamwork, discipline, coordination, creativity, and effort. (FGD, Students). School also showed television shows, documentaries, motivational shows, Science, Math, and Social Studies related course content via multimedia projector for different grades to enhance the teaching-learning process and academic excellence of the student (Interview, Headteacher). The student also claimed that the school has given different responsibilities to them to organize extracurricular activities successfully like multimedia, computer, and a host of activities (FGD, Students).

During my school visit, I got a chance to attend student clubs' program, where students organized different social and environmental programs and collected money and distributed it to needy organizations like the red cross, and school's health club. In the headteacher and SMC chairperson's office, I witnessed hundreds of medals, trophies, and documents of cash rewards received by school students in different local, regional, and national games (Observation, Researcher).

The participants' points of view and reflections are in line with Habermas's human interest theory, which contends that it is crucial for school administrators, teachers, and faculty to ensure that all programs and activities are developed with students in mind in order to engage them in meaningful participation and help them understand why they engage in certain activities (Habermas, 1972).

### **Continuous Assessment System (CAS) as a Guiding Principle of Well**

#### **Performing School**

Students' learning will be effective and long-lasting only if the school evaluates students daily. Students' weak subject areas, poor activities, and behavior are easily traced out through continuous assessment practices. Arega (2014) stated that there is considerable evidence that continuous assessment is a powerful tool for improving the achievement of learning outcomes to ensure quality education and academic excellence in educational institutions.

In my inquiry on it, Pushpa, the headteacher of case school, mentioned:

*Every week I strictly checked and carried out crucial activities to evaluate students holistically in their learning, achievement, skills, and behavior; a) I directed all teachers to continuously check students' homework, and class assignments, continuously observe behavior and activities, know students' real problem, position, learning progress and achievement, b) Daily, I meet the subject teacher and analyze student's progress, activities and set short and long-term objectives for slow learners to improve teaching and learning.*

(Interview, 24th September 2020)

From the above head teacher's experience and reflection, I came to this point of understanding that an effective continuous assessment system helps to enhance students' learning, behavior, and other activities. It is also a useful tool to evaluate and

judge every student's activity, behavior, and progress. Similarly, it is also a crucial technique for teachers and students to get a real and clear picture of their performance in their daily teaching-learning activities. Moreover, continuous assessment develops confidence in students to discuss their problems, weakness, and subject content with teachers comfortably to improve their educational achievement. The Ministry of Education (MOE, 2014) introduced school-based continuous assessment for two main purposes: to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom and to gather school-based grades that would be added to final exam scores for certification and selection.

In the course of FGD with teachers, all teachers agreed that a continuous assessment plays a vital role in increasing the teaching-learning activities. During FGD, one teacher said that although it is an extra load for teachers to evaluate and analyze every activity of students daily from a drop in the school gates to drop out of school gates, we all teachers collaborate to assess all students closely in a child-friendly approach to prevent them from engaging in unnecessary activities and enhanced their learning, behavioral and other activities (FGD, Teachers). Similarly, we maintained every student's portfolio to evaluate the individual performance of the student (FGD, Teachers).

During my ninth-grade class observation, I saw teachers embracing a child-friendly approach to genuinely caring for, persuading, and inspiring each student to learn. I saw teachers maintaining student portfolios.

Taking into account the theory of school effectiveness, which claims that increasing the focus on evaluating students' behaviors, activities, and academic progress through continuous assessment improves students' performance and makes schools effective (Edmonds, 1979).

Similarly, in the course of generating information, I interacted with a student Mr. Deepak Subedi from the case school who expressed in this way:

*All teachers regularly observe and give us feedback on our classroom and school activities, behavior, and performance. Class teacher publishes all students' results, such as; weekly unit test exam reports, daily class assignments, teacher-student interaction, classroom questioning, involvement in the discussion, individual and group work performance of all subjects, and handover all our record files to our guardian. Such practices encourage us to improve our classroom activities, behavior, and study.*

(Interview Student, 2020)

From the above expression and reflection of a student, I came to understand that continuous assessment of a student is continuous work followed and recorded continuously by the teacher. The teacher records and documents students' entire information during class. Regular checking of homework, classwork, and continuously observing students' activities and behavior help teachers assess their students' learning activities, their achievement, and their problem, and teachers can find the best solution to their improvement. Daily or frequent assessments raise changes in students' attitudes and behaviors toward their learning, enabling them to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and adjust their behavior to meet the requirements of the contemporary world (Kirylo, 2015).

In the course of FGD with teachers, all teachers agreed that teachers maintained record files of every student's classroom activities and in every quarter, we handover students' record files to parents where we incorporated students' performance details, unit test papers, quarterly exam paper and handover to parents so that parents can know their pupils' overall performance in school which helps us to

take feedback from parents related to students' learning habits, behavior and activities in the home too ( FGD, Teachers).

I encountered one guardian accidentally at the school gate who was an ex-students and passed SLC/ SEE fifteen years ago from the case school. He shared his past experiences and I still remember, at that time, I was in grade nine, the head teacher, and the assistant head teacher visited every class twice a week to assess each student's attendance, activities, class, and home assignment and every subject wise teacher should report them what they have taught in their class during the week, then the headteacher randomly asked student about their class understanding and he used to keep a record of students' progress in his diary. Based on students' answers, interaction and weekly unit test exam results, he judged our learning, knowledge, and skill in each subject. (Interview, Parent).

When there is more interaction, subjectivity, context, and mutual understanding, according to Habermas's theory of practical knowledge, knowledge can develop (Habermas, 1972). The success of the school was attributed to the high level of interaction between teachers, parents, and students based on their behavior, activities, and progress.

In this regard, I enquired with Mr. Nilesh Prasad, a local actor of Chitwan. According to him, the case school always prioritized continuous assessment of students at the top level. He shared:

*Every week school published class-wise students' names on the notice board whose weekly performance and records were best. From such continuous checking and evaluation, all students have developed their self-study habits at home and school.*

(Interview, local actor, 2021)

It shows that continuous assessment helps to evaluate and analyze students' daily performance, behavior, and activities, and records all the students' portfolios, motivates students to be more self-reliant and self-depend to improve their learning, behavior, and activities habits at home and school which supports to gain successful academic achievement. Continuous assessment support actively involves and engages students in each activity required by the teacher. Arega et al. (2014) also state that continuous assessment is a powerful tool for improving the students' active involvement in learning outcomes also ensuring quality education and academic brilliance in schools.

During FGD with students, one student claimed that continuous assessment encourages us to regularly communicate with teachers, prepare daily notes of all subjects and study more so that we can achieve good outcomes (FGD, Students). In staff rooms, we all teachers discuss weekly progress of our students' performance (FGD, Teachers).

During my frequent visit to the school, in my observation, I found all subject teachers highly engaged in students' assessment. The school has eighty CC cameras in every classroom, and the headteacher constantly assesses students' activities, and behavior through CC cameras.

However, CAS assisted the headteacher, teachers, and students in facilitating the students' learning. But to evaluate each student, the headteacher and the teachers put in a lot of effort and time. It will be beneficial if the school hires disciplinary in-charges or assigns roles to various teachers rather than the first-grade teacher. If a task is given to a different teacher, it motivates students to be more responsible.

In this regard, I again interacted and enquired with Mr. Krishna Sapkota, a local teacher of the case school about continuous assessment practices by the teacher.

He said:

*In every class, after completing teaching, I continuously measured each student's understanding of the teaching topic to test their understanding. Lastly, after measuring their understanding, I give them feedback which helps them to become self-dependent to sort out their mistake. After completing every lesson, I always take a unit test to provide feedback on students' skills and understanding of the lesson.*

(Interview, April 2022)

From the above expression and reflection of the teacher, I came to know that regularly asking a question to students helps in knowledge building on teaching topic, and regularly providing feedback support students to widen their understanding and improve knowledge and skills in the subject content. The teacher should provide feedback at right time, in the right way, so that it delivers good quality information to the students about their teaching-learning activities. Continuous assessment is carried out by the teacher in the classroom, and data is gathered by observing the conditions there (Zhan, 2020). The group of teachers agreed that the teaching objective of teachers is only fulfilled if teachers provide effective feedback to students, timely, positively, and understandably (FGD, Teachers). All the teachers work hard to improve our performance through continuous review, continuous monitoring, and revision of our book and give high-quality time for our understanding of the lesson (FGD, Students).

According to Habermas's practical interest, in order for students to develop a positive attitude and feel more connected to the study, it is important for teachers to

understand all of the different knowledge, skills, and perspectives that students have. Students' performance can only be improved when each student's understanding is acknowledged and their knowledge is continually assessed.

Similarly, I inquired a parent of the school Mr. Harihar about the continuous assessment of the student in the case school. According to him:

*All teachers continuously observe students' behavior and activities from entry to exit from the school and record and report to us if they find any problems. Such practices seem better for improving weak students' academic excellence. Moreover, all school teachers make a regular contract with us to know students' activities and behaviors in the home, and they also frequently invite, inform, and allow us to observe our children's class activities monthly to know their present and past performance.*

(Interview, Parent 2020)

From the above reflection of the parent, I came to know that collecting daily information about students and informing the real picture and performance of the student to parents also help to observe and monitor pupil's activities closely at home. The observation and recording of daily information about students should be organized systematically so that each student's activities and behavior are evaluated and analyzed systematically. The student can understand the difference between their present and past performance only through continuous assessment. Additionally, frequent assessment enables them to see how effective both individually and in teams they can be (Mahmoudi et al., 2014). Students are also becoming aware when their daily activities are observed, monitored, evaluated, and analyzed continuously from observation (Interview, Headteacher).

During FGD with parents, one parent claimed that through ongoing evaluation, it was discovered that students rarely participate in pointless activities. They put a lot of emphasis on teaching and learning activities, and this is evident in the students' grades, changes in behavior, and children's intelligence (FGD, Parents).

However, there are other methods and tools like open-ended questions, peer evaluations, self-evaluations, project work, conferences, checklists, and rubrics. For ongoing student evaluation, teachers only used portfolios, feedback, and direct observation. The challenging aspect of a continuous assessment system, in my experience, is that class teachers must put in more effort, as the work is tedious and requires more documentation. Teachers, therefore, assessed students by using straightforward tools like observation and feedback. The school could be more productive if teachers used different tools and methods for evaluating students' activities, placed more of an emphasis on ICT by providing laptops to teachers, established teachers' appreciation through rewards, and developed a team effort from all teachers.

Similarly, I enquired with Mr. Tajendra, chairperson about continuous assessment practices. He further said:

*For continuous assessment, teachers keep a diary system record of each student based on their terminals and class exams, homework, class activities, interaction, school activities, relationships with peers, extra activities, personal performance, and behavior, parents' complaints, and suggestions.*

(Interview, April 2022)

It shows that for continued supervision and monitoring of each student's learning, activities, behavior, personal achievement, interaction, behavior toward the peer, behavior toward teacher and school, and achievement of school-related activities

like an exam, extra activities, the school develops different teacher hierarchy and assigns the various jobs to each teacher so that every student's learning activities, behavior, and achievement can be assessed. Established teacher hierarchies like in-charge and subject head also help to assess continuously every student's progress effectively. Desalegn (2014) stated that continuous assessment is a good practice for enhancing students' performance, observing students' learning progress, improving the method of teaching, motivating, and grading students' attainment. In the course of FGD with the teachers, one teacher mentioned that "*all parents of the school were happy because of their children's significant growth in learning achievement*" (FGD, Teachers). The school took regular weekly unit tests to understand the students' weekly teaching courses (FGD, Students). Similarly, the coordination between all teachers in students' formative assessment contributed to continuous growth and better outcomes for the students (Interview, teacher).

During my class observation of the case school, I found every day, every class and subject teacher checked each student's diary, classwork, homework, students' activities, behavior, regularity, punctuality, group work, class participation and interaction, and discipline and hygiene actively (Observation, Researcher).

According to the theory of school effectiveness, monitoring daily student progress, activities, and behavior is an effective tool for enhancing students' learning (Marzano, 2005). Similar to this, continuous assessment of student progress offers pertinent and in-depth information about students' progress and results, teachers' teaching strategies, a plan for the coursework, and an improvement strategy for both students and educators that enhance students' performance (Edmonds, 1979).

## **Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities as a Guiding Principle of Well Performing School**

Teachers are more responsible persons in public schools for students' academic excellence. Therefore, teachers perform a crucial role in the well performance of the school. It is challenging for teachers if students are not able to learn and perform better. Students' learning performance is correlated with teachers' activities. Therefore, schools should provide equal opportunities and platforms for the teacher for their consistency in the school.

### **Teachers' Participation in Decision Making**

The involvement of teachers in school decision-making is considered the best approach for improving the performance of the school as well as students. Therefore, the absence of teachers' participation in school decision-making makes school change difficult. Robbins and Judge (2012) find out that when the management of an organization engages their staff in decision-making, it enhances their autonomy and control over their work, and due to such practice, they will be more motivated and committed to their work.

In this regard, I enquired and interviewed SMC chairperson Mr. Tejendra of the case school to enquire about teachers' involvement in decision- making. Upon my inquiry, he said:

*The success of our school is that we embraced the culture of every teacher's active participation in every decision-making, whether the meeting is before or after school or on a public holiday. All teachers like senior, junior, designated, and contractual have equal rights and opportunities to participate in decision-making. Such practices developed ownership and accountability toward our school.*

(Interview, April 2022)

From my interviewer, it was getting evident that the school practiced teachers' active participation in every school decision. Similarly, school and school management also highly motivated teachers to take ownership of the goals and objectives of the school. For a school's academic excellence for a long time and the growth and success of the school teachers' active participation in decision-making is one of the appropriate practices. Lin (2014) stated that the participation of teachers in the decision-making process enriches teachers' commitment to school and also preserves discipline for providing admirable quality services to students and the school.

In the course of FGD with teachers, one teacher mentioned that we all teachers have been playing a prominent role in school meetings with our synergic suggestions our school is running and conducting every activity, decision, and plan. Similarly, such participatory activities in the school's decision-making help to achieve predetermined goals and objectives of the school (FGD, Teachers). During a discussion on the theme of teachers' participation in decision-making with the head teacher of the school, he shared school always has been implementing equal and active participation of all teachers in every school's activities. He further said that "*all teachers take interest in decision making of school, they all participate in every schools' meeting, and also suggest their constructive feedback.*

*Teachers' participation in decision making enhances the environment of unity in school's issues"* (Interview, Headteacher).

From the headteacher's experience, I learned that teachers' meaningful feedback and activities help improve the school's outcomes and support the students' academic achievement. Moreover, teachers' participation in decision-making

enhances the teaching-learning process in school. Teachers' participation in every school's decision-making process enriches the environment of unity and equality among teachers and they are motivated and committed to school. Kumar and Giri (2013) state that if educators are involved in the decision-making process, they have the chance to learn about the fundamental issues and knowledge that have an influence on both the academic success of the school and the performance of the students. The male teacher added, "*The beauty of this school is that school management believes in teachers' synergy*". Another said "*Teachers' participation in school is high compared to other district public schools. Schools believe in teachers' unity and equality. Every teacher's vision, suggestion, and feedback are highly considered in school*" (FGD, Teachers). One PTA member expressed that everything in school has been going smoothly because all teachers contributed a lot to creating such an environment (FGD, PTA).

During my visit, I got a chance to attend one SMC meeting. I observed that all teachers were participating in the meeting. I observed in meeting all teachers, headteacher, and SMC chairperson sit together, they discussed the issues of internet and laptop facility for all teachers profoundly and implemented them in action. I observed teachers' participation in decision-making motivated teachers and also improved their autonomy and control over their work, and due to such practice, they will be more committed to their work.

According to Habermas's human interest theory, a leader in a school must establish a setting where employees and teachers respect one another's differences because each person is unique and must learn to collaborate in an inclusive manner. The improvement of school quality also depends on reducing other forms of discrimination and increasing equity (Habermas, 1971). This strategy of school

support and initiative has inspired teachers to raise student achievement and improve the school.

In the course of generation information, I interviewed teacher Mr. Krishna, and I enquired him about teachers' participation in school. He mentioned:

*Participation in every decision-making in school helps to transform knowledge, skills, and experience from SMC to teachers, teacher to teachers, and teachers to students. Such practices developed friendly relationships, teamwork, collaboration with high gratitude, optimism, and respect.*

(Interview, teacher, 2022)

Based on the interview, experience and action reflect that teachers' active participation in every school activity opens the avenue of distributing and sharing knowledge, skills, and experiences among stakeholders, which also help to select adequate human resources for effective teaching and learning and academic achievement for the students. According to Yip et al. (2012), the participatory approach to decision making improves performance quality, enhances employee capabilities and confidence, and decreases errors due to the sharing of ideas.

In course of FGD with teachers, one teacher reported that school maintained a friendly atmosphere with all teachers and all teachers agreed that school is like our home where we can share, and learn, knowledge and skills from senior and experienced teachers openly and all senior teachers understand the needs of all teachers, they treated with high appreciation, positive attitude, teamwork, cooperation, and collaboration such friendly environment motivated us to become more accountable toward school and students (FGD, Teachers).

However, I noticed that the school gave old and senior teachers priority when it came to decision-making. These teachers are knowledgeable about teaching, but

they may not be as knowledgeable about technology or complex issues involving students or other stakeholders. As a result, there appears to be debate over whether these teachers should serve as a guide, planner, and resource in decision-making, or if other teachers with more recent knowledge of cutting-edge teaching and learning techniques should be included.

One's familiarity with responsibility is also a phenomenon of interest, according to the Habermas's human interest theory (1972). Despite giving senior and experienced teachers more opportunities to participate in decision-making than younger ones, the school has continued to perform well because of this.

Similarly, I interviewed and interacted with a local actor Mr. Nilesh Prasad. He shared information with me in this way:

*Compared to other public schools in our locality, the only case school gets a success in recruiting and retaining expert subject teacher for many years due to teachers' participation in every decision-making and activities. Such practices developed a sense of responsibility toward the school inside teachers and contributed to school and students' outcomes.*

(Interview, local actor, 2022)

From a local actor reflection and information, I came up with the insight that teachers' meaningful involvement in every school decision and activity builds a tight relationship between school and teacher, which minimizes teacher turnover and increase teacher retention that develops high accountability toward school, improves teaching-learning practice and students' performance achievement.

The teacher said that the school assigned high responsibility and accountability to teachers, and such practices motivated teachers to become more professional, and cooperative and contribute greater to student learning and the

school's growth (FGD, Teachers). Moreover, it also helps to recruit and hire highly qualified and experienced human resources for the school (FGD, Teachers). Another teacher said that to cope with intense competition from private schools, and to address contemporary issues, schools concentrate on the expansion of teacher participation in every activity. Due to such practices, we included English-language instruction, Early Childhood Development (ECD) classes, increasing cleanliness and personal hygiene of the students, developed superior infrastructure and facilities (FGD, Teachers).

To get more information, I asked a local parent about teachers' participation in decision-making in school. He shared:

*What I found impressive in school is that all teachers are always dedicated to academic issues to achieve the school goal, and students' learning achievement, learning activities, behavior, and progress due to practices of teachers' participation in school-related issues.*

(Interview, local actor, 2022)

From my interview, the evidence was that teachers participated in every school's activities and issues. That developed a sense of determination, honesty, and care toward the teaching-learning process, and students' overall behavior, activities, and performance. Active involvement of teachers in every decision-making process adds value to the growth of the school and educational achievement. Lin (2014) reviews the literature on the benefit of teachers' participation in school decision-making and finds out that it motivates them to collect knowledge about how to plan and develop policies. Furthermore, it also promotes teachers' commitment to effectively implement all plans and policies for the organization's benefit.

I was able to attend an SMC meeting. I noticed that all participating teachers had the opportunity to voice their opinions during the SMC meeting, which was a novel practice for a public school (Observation, Researcher).

By giving all teachers the opportunity to participate in decisions that foster innovation, creation, and knowledge transfer, the school has been performing well.

The Habermas's human interest theory explains that applying one's knowledge and experience to work is also an interesting phenomenon. The opinions of the participants were also based on their knowledge and experience gained from exploring the real world. Teachers only put in more effort, perform better, persevere longer, participate in activities, and take responsibility when they feel they are valuable to the school (Habermas, 1972).

### **Teachers' Commitment and Mutual Trust**

School performance and students' learning achievement have always been connected with teachers' commitment and mutual trust. Thein et al. (2014) stated that committed teachers are those who are extremely devoted to their process of teaching and learning and recognized by the school as an asset because of their contribution to the growth of students' educational performance and achievement.

In this regard, I interviewed Mr. Krishna Sapkota math teacher of the case school. He said:

*The practices like, the subject teacher exchanging each other's classes and sometimes two teachers teaching in the same class to enhance student knowledge, skills, activities, and behavior effectively. Our responsibility is not only focusing on teaching, we collectively and continuously motivate, and praise students for becoming competitive and resourceful human beings from their efforts, activities, and behavior; for that we give our full time.*

(Interview, teacher 2020)

From the above expression and reflection of the teacher, I came to know that teachers play a prominent role in effective learning for the high educational achievement of the student. The collective coordination between teachers enhances students' performance as well as helps to develop a good relationship and team support for teachers. Teachers' joint commitment and mutual trust contribute to students' development in activities, behavior, and learning. Mutual trust enhances empathy and develops effective communication and builds a collaborative environment in school (Chen & Indartono, 2011).

The female teacher added, "*If students are weak at subject-related matters first and foremost, teachers are presumed as responsible people. Similarly, when school performance is low again, teachers were supposed to be a responsible person*". Therefore, we are highly committed to our duties (FGD, Teachers).

Similarly, one parent claimed that the teaching and learning processes at school were discovered to be more collaborative. These methods improved the students' learning habits and guaranteed ongoing development (FGD, Parents).

As outlined by Habermas's human interest theory, which contends that performance in a given field was significantly influenced by interest in a particular field of work (1971). Teachers instill a sense of ownership in their work, which inspires students to be committed to improving their performance at school, which in turn fosters the school's continued success.

Likewise, I enquired and interacted with the headteacher, Mr. Pushpa, about teacher commitment and mutual trust. He stated that:

*Every Friday, all grade teachers sat on meeting and prepared next week's teaching activities, plans, and discussed with each other earlier weeks'*

*classroom activities and students' learning. All grade teachers shared and discussed their teaching plan and materials with each other and took feedback and suggestions for effective teaching-learning activities.*

(Interview, head teacher 2020)

The above information from the headteacher suggested that teachers' performance has always been connected with teachers' high-level commitment and mutual trust with each other. According to Killion (2015), effective teacher collaboration boosts student achievement and school development. The collective works between teachers help to enhance their teaching-learning activities through proper teaching plans, teaching resources, and effective feedback for their work which benefit the educational achievement of the students and school. Teachers do not focus on their teaching and learning activities but they participate in the evaluation and share ideas, methods, and resources. *“When the teacher comes up with any novel technique of teaching activities, he/she shares it with all staff and all teachers apply immediately in their teaching practices; such practices foster a positive relationship with all teachers”*. (Interview, SMC chairperson, 2021)

From the above expression and reflection of the SMC chairperson, I learned that teachers play a crucial role in bringing up new ideas and methods in teaching-learning activities. Moreover, teachers implement all effective teaching practices in their classrooms that ensure effective teaching-learning and enhance students' performance. In the meantime, all teachers and leaders also have been supportive to a new approach to making teaching-learning activities successful. According to Moran and Garies (2015), mutual trust between teachers is a crucial component of a high-performing school. Similar to this, teachers' high levels of collaboration and unity were established by mutual trust. The male teacher added that we all cooperate to run

different school activities and programs and perform our roles effectively. We have no single conflict or complaint between teachers (FGD, Teachers).

I discovered that teachers had become accustomed to respecting one another's work and cooperating with one another in a variety of school activities, programs, and students' academic progress during frequent visits to the school and formal and informal sitting together in the staff room. The efforts of the teachers help every stakeholder in the school to establish positive relationships, which lead the school toward performing well.

Likewise, I interviewed a local parent Mr. Harihar and enquired about teachers' commitment and mutual trust in the case school. He expressed it in this way:

*All teachers are full-time teachers. They spend lots of time in preparation before getting into the classroom. Teachers worked with high trust, unity, collaboration, and regularly discussed with each about classroom activities, students' work, students' learning activities. It gives a crystal clear of the quality of work done by teachers and the increased performance of both teachers and students.*

(Interview, April 2022)

From the information provided by local parents of the case school, I came to understand that monitoring and checking the progress of students with high commitment and devotion enhances academic excellence. High teachers' commitment and mutual trust add a milestone to creating deep cooperation, participation, and dedication of teachers toward students' skills and knowledge in learning activities for achieving high students' educational achievement. According to Thien et al. (2014), a teacher's commitment to the school includes a strong belief in and acceptance of the institution's values, goals, and culture, participation in school activities to achieve

those goals, significant effort with little in return, and a desire to continue working there. One of the teachers mentioned that teachers' high commitment to students' learning provides opportunities for students to place their problems effectively and get involved in different activities with high outcomes (FGD, Teachers). High levels of dedication and cooperation among teachers in the classroom are reflected in how well the school and its students performed in various local, district, and national-level activities like exams, extracurricular activities, and social activities (FGD, Teachers).

Considering this, I interviewed a student Mr. Deepak Subedi. According to him, all teachers have high accountability and responsibility toward students' learning, growth, and relationship. He shared information in this way:

*All our teachers are highly accountable for students' future and knowledge building. As a student, I never found any teacher's single 'carelessness during teaching. All teachers are passionate about their work, and they are also seriously concerned about our problems, learning, and growth. Every day they brought different approaches to teaching, which makethem thrilled in the class environment.*

(Interview, Student, 2020)

From my interview, it was evident that high teachers' commitment improves students' learning because teachers create class environments more student-centric and students get more opportunities to put their problems that supported student educational achievement to the next level. Hagenauer and Volet (2014) stated that an environment that emphasizes caring between the teacher and student favors students' academic development, and learning will be more enjoyable.

During FGD with students, they said every day all our teachers prior informed us that they are going to teach these things in classes. Before starting classes, teacher

give some questions, play, and do puzzles, and request students to answer within time, and those who answer the first, subject teachers distribute small gifts like candy and pencils to establish a jubilant learning classroom environment. (FGD, students). A Math teacher reported that "I understand my job is more challenging, complex, and harder. I have huge liability toward class, skill development, students' future, growth, and establishing a good teacher-student relationship. So to build interest, devotion, and passion for my subject, every day in each class, I have been establishing different class settings, introducing different innovative teaching methods, and creating a pleasure and stress-free class environment which helps to develop profound interest, attention, and good relationship with students (FGD, Teachers).

Taking into account Habermas's practical interests, which recommend that the teaching and learning environment include an authentic discussion and understanding of the various perspectives of learners while making decisions by accepting that students have previously learned. The school is doing well, and it has been able to improve students' performance by recognizing their various points of view and igniting their interest in a particular field.

Moreover, to get more information, I again interacted with a local actor Mr. Nilesh Prasad, who said:

*In weekly meetings, every teacher discussed precisely and openly all matters of the school, their roles, parents' complaints, students' activities, and their mistakes. Similarly, they pre-set their next week's daily activities, targets, and achievements and work accordingly with set planning.*

(Interview, local actor, 2021)

Based on the above discussion, I would like to conclude that teachers' high commitment and mutual trust play a pivotal role in enhancing the relationship

between teachers and teachers, teachers and school as well as teachers and students. Teachers' high commitment and mutual trust in each other helps to develop a favorable student and child-centric environment in the classroom and school. Cox (2017) stated that in school, teachers should accept different roles like; managing the classroom, encountering parents, and working supportively with school staff. He further added that in today's scenario, a teacher's role is multidimensional such as; they have to perform the role of surrogate parent, class disciplinarian, mentor, counselor, role model, and planner. Moreover, they have other additional activities such as working with colleagues and the community to place clear and obtainable student standards.

Every teacher is dedicated to upholding the school's mission and tenets, and they go above and beyond to do so. The high level of commitment and trust between teachers helped to foster a classroom and school culture that was student- and child-centered (FGD, Teachers).

However, parents believe that partnership, open communication, political neutrality, cooperative and collaborative approach with parents would lead to higher student achievement. However, school staff and teachers are occasionally engaged in political activities and treat parents who hold different political ideologies differently. In order to oversee teachers' activities and look into specific intervention areas, it appears that a discipline committee has been formed.

In the classroom, I noticed that teachers were not only limited to teaching and learning but also bore full responsibility for supervising, mentoring, and directing students' activities and behavior toward the right path (Observation, Researcher).

According to the theory of school effectiveness, learning should be centered on the environment, and teachers' knowledge, expertise, and involvement should be

valued for helping students become more engaged, develop positive attitudes, and connect with their school.

### **Chapter Essence**

In this chapter, I explored the perceptions of my participants based on my research question that deals with SMC chairperson, headteacher, teachers, students, parents, and local actors' perceptions of how the school has been performing well. I selected one well performing public school in Chitwan. I spent a prolonged time collecting in-depth data there. I interviewed and interacted with the SMC chairperson, headteacher, teachers, students, parents, and local actors to collect data concerning my research topic. During my interview, I interacted with and interviewed different school stakeholders. All my interviewees stated their views and opinion differently about case school. Likewise, a different participant expressed their view about their roles and activities in making a well performing school.

It was seen that the SMC chairperson, headteacher, teacher, local community, and parents play an important role in improving school performance. The active monitoring and supervision with effective strategies of the SMC chairperson were found responsible for school well performance. Similarly, the continuous assessment system was effective for headteachers' performance in school. Likewise, the involvement of parents and local communities, and the roles of teachers in the school were found effective for well performing schools.

Lastly, coordination, trust, collaboration, and the relationship between teachers, SMC, parents, local actors, and local community for school improvement were also explored.

## CHAPTER VI

### REASONS FOR WELL PERFORMING SCHOOL

This chapter includes the theme of my third research question mentioned in chapter I. My research question highlighted exploring the participant's experience, ideas, and knowledge about why school has been well performing. So, in this chapter, the finding is comprised based on the interview, observation, document review, and focus group discussion with the participants and resource person. The discussion is based on the participants' information connected with my literature support. The finding is presented critically by interlinking with the past study and theory. The information has been organized into themes in accordance with Habermas's human interest theory and the school effectiveness theory for school improvement.

#### **Enhancing and Maintaining Positive School Climate**

Enhancing and maintaining a positive school climate is the main goal of a well performing school. Positive climate offers a tremendous support in creating and suitable and pleasant space for effective teaching and learning in school (Horner et al., 2010).

In the course of generating information, I interviewed SMC chairperson Mr. Tajendra. He shared:

*Enhancing students' behavior, disciplinary, social, and academic success, makes them more responsive. I believe the development of responsive students in a well- performing school is inevitable. (Interview, April 2022)*

The views and reflections made by the SMC chairperson indicated that a well performing school helps in the holistic improvement of students in academic, behavioral, social, moral, disciplinary, and responsible and helps open an avenue for

effective learning and academic excellence. Only a good school can make child-friendly platforms for students by providing an affluent climate to meet each pupil's academic performance. Well performing schools with safe climate provide a supportive role to the students' growth. Therefore, successful student behavior has been connected to a school having effective, safe, preventive, and positive school climate (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Horner et al., 2010).

Parents mentioned that they have not complained about the school's climate toward the enhancement of pupils' academic, social, behavioral, and moral output (FGD, Parents). One of the parents claimed that the school maintained the school climate in such a way that it always supports students' holistic development and learning (FGD, Parents). Similarly, during FGD with students, one student added that school has been performing well to enhance teaching and learning effectively, and encouraged us to become more responsible and improve our effective performance (FGD, Students). When students became responsible, the school achieves more advantages for students and the school becomes more competent in meeting students' needs (Gastic et al., as cited in Kanana, 2015).

School effectiveness theory also suggests that inspiring school climate helps students learn more effectively. In order to make the school effective and improve students' performance, schools foster an environment where students are highly responsive to their behavior, activities, academic performance, and the teaching-learning process.

In the course of generating information, I interviewed Mr. Puspa, the head teacher. He shared as:

*We assure all parents, students, community members, and other stakeholders of the school that we have no space for low academic performance, prejudiced*

*activities, or disobeying rules such as involvement in bullying, physical and mental violence, aggressive behavior, social-economic violence, teachers, students, and parents' disengagement, disturbing classes. Therefore, to enhance positive outcomes for students and develop high academic achievement, develop students' holistic behavior and enhance the school's huge connection, a well- performing school is needed. (Interview, headteacher 2020).*

The perception and reflection of the headteacher indicated that a well performing school develops such a climate where there is no space for misconduct, unacceptable behavior, and activities, poor educational performance, and disobeying rules from students as well as from other school staff. Well performing schools always accelerate school student-friendly climate harmoniously and positively. Effective schools focus more on student-centered pedagogical practice. A positive school climate adds behavioral enhancement, academic achievement, and holistic development of the students (Thapa et al., 2013).

The male math teacher added that "in our school, the low social-economic background is in high number. They are vulnerable in physical, social, emotional, learning, and financial resources. If the school became effective like ours, the school called all parents, community, and donors to a meeting to agree on the agenda to provide free of cost all necessary needs to low social-economic background students by managing and utilizing funds of the school. Only effective public schools can address such students' problems, provide a support system to those with poor socioeconomic backgrounds and improve their academic strength (FGD, Teachers).

During the FGD with the teachers, one teacher asserted that the students' actions, conduct, and performance should be consistent with the school's established culture. For students to perform well, the school imposed a number of codes of

conduct, including a dress code, a prohibition on applying cosmetics, a deadline for arrival, and a prohibition on breaking school regulations (FGD, Teachers).

I noticed that the school had strict disciplinary code of conduct during one of my routine visits. Many rules and regulations as well as codes of conduct were implemented at school. Due to strict discipline, the seniors who graduated from Case School were able to land good jobs in a variety of fields and build wonderful careers. Such an effort had an impact on students' academic performance in the SLC/SEE (Observation, Researcher).

Taking into account the Habermas's technical interest, which suggests creating knowledge through controlling environment setting (Habermas, 1972), the information provided by the teachers suggests that the school performing well focuses more on cause-and-effect, rules and regulations, restriction, and definition.

In the course of generating information, I interviewed Mr. Krishna, a secondary Math teacher. He shared as:

*Only a good school can develop a positive working environment, positive and constructive communication and relationship between teachers and students, teachers and parents, teacher and community, and school and community through collective efficacy and satisfaction. To develop a progressive relationship between all stakeholders for high academic performance, a well-performing school is needed. (Interview, April 2022)*

From the above expression and reflection of the teacher, I came to understand that a good school promotes a positive climate and a positive climate enhances teachers', collective efficacy and satisfaction of parents, communities, and students, which is also an important instrument for academic achievement. A well-performing school can bring all its important stakeholders together and

develop a cohesive relationship for a longer period of time. During informal interaction with the SMC chairperson, he mentioned, *“School has been performing well to meet the expected outcomes and target of all educational stakeholders”* (Interview, SMC chairperson). When there is a good school climate, all stakeholders work together to create a welcoming, safe, and comfortable learning environment. This environment encourages open communication and group decision-making, which lays the groundwork for the school to set up a system of high academic achievement for all students (Developing a positive school climate, 2009). *If the school performs well, we are also motivated to support in every aspect of school development, such as financial, managerial, administration, construction, plan, policy and so on.* (Interview, Parent)

From the expression and reflection of a parent, it is evident that a well performing school can gain the trust of the parents and community due to its performance. To establish a school climate in such a way that maximizes parents’ participation, and collaboration improves the professional and harmonious relationship with the parents- community-school and improves a resourceful school environment for academic excellence, a school needs to be performing well.

The teacher revealed that the partnership between parents and school plays a mammoth role in supporting students' learning. Parents' participation in the school contributes to continuous growth in the physical and academic performance of the school. Therefore, the parents participated in the school ranked it as an effective and better school. Therefore, to increase parents’ participation, environment in every need of the school, our school needs to perform better (FGD, Teachers). The school has been conducting quarterly class-wise parent and teacher meetings after examinations.

We all parents participate because the school fulfills our needs by delivering well performance and academic excellence for our pupils. Therefore, it is our responsibility to discuss our child's performance, support learners, support school teams in financial, managerial, and policy, and alert them for continuous well performance. (FGD, Parents)

During my frequent visit, I observed the school developing a culture that focused more on a coalition with all stakeholders in every decision-making process. School had been inviting parents and communities for consultation, feedback, and volunteers, and allowing plenty of time and opportunities for teachers and parents, teachers and community, to work together. I observed the school team consult parents, communities, and teachers from time to time and discussed profoundly with students' learning matters.

According to Habermas's explanation of emancipatory interest, it has the potential to emancipate society through its connections to justice, equitable being, and responsibility. The school is performing well by including all of its parents and the local community in each and every activity with the idea of inclusivity in the school activities so that they learn a culture of acceptance, teamwork, and harmony.

In the course of generating information, I interviewed student Mr. Deepak Subedi. He expressed his view in this way:

*In comparison to other public schools, the school has been performing well because it is the most child-friendly and child-centered with excellent student results, physical security, and social-emotional security. Students from more than thirty districts have been taking their basic, and secondary level education in our school only because of its student-friendly climate. As a student, I never witnessed a single teacher show carelessness while teaching*

*in order to improve students' learning. This encouraged all students to put in more effort, be more enthusiastic about learning, and have high levels of dedication and discipline. All educators have a strong commitment to their work and students.*

(Interview, Student 2020)

From the above expression and reflection of the student, I came to understand that an effective school assists all students with more care, guidance, and suggestion to enhance students' ability, academic excellence, behavior, and social and civic relation with more focus on problem-solving and real-world context education for better life-long learning. Effective schools focus more on student-centered pedagogical practice. A positive school climate adds behavioral enhancement, academic achievement, and holistic development of the student (Thapa et al., 2013).

In a focus group discussion with students, one of the participants asserted that the school has a good policy of fostering a learning environment that provides chances for knowledge formation (FGD, Students). In the course of FGD with teachers, one male teacher mentioned that only a strong supportive environment increases students' learning activities and performance. Our school is rich in student support climate, prioritizing good coordination and collaboration between teachers (FGD, Teachers). All teachers are highly accountable for maintaining a student-friendly climate for better student outcomes, which are essential for a well-run school (FGD, Parents). Another teacher added that child-oriented pedagogy develops a sense of discipline, hard work, dedication, and enthusiasm for learning among students, which controls students' unwanted actions and behavior and builds a positive and acceptable environment (FGD, Teachers).

However, I discovered during my class observation that the teacher found it challenging to manage students from other districts. Students from various districts attend schools, and it can be challenging to understand their cultures, norms, values, language, and opinions. Due to this, I have noticed that students from other districts have trouble communicating and exchanging information, making it challenging to keep the teaching-learning process going and meet their needs. Children from linguistic and racial minorities, politically or geographically marginalized groups, and low socioeconomic groupings also experience hardship that impedes quality education for all children.

Despite these challenges, the school has been successful due to inclusivity, and teachers and school administrators place a higher priority on child-centered pedagogy in the classroom so that all students can learn the values of tolerance, hard work, teamwork, and harmony.

In the course of generating information, I inquired a local actor Mr. Nilesh. He mentioned:

*A good school keep maintaining and developing good teacher –students’ relationship. High bonding between teachers and students creates a good teaching-learning environment and maintains child-centred pedagogy that enhances students’ performance and leads to high growth and high academic outcomes (Interview, April 2022).*

Based on the above interview with a local actor, I came to know that good bonding between teacher and student plays a pivotal role in developing a pleasant and student-friendly environment in the school. Amicable interaction and relationship between teachers and students creates good teaching-learning activities which turn school toward a focal point of academic excellence for a longer period. Students’

involvement in school enhances teaching practice, improves discipline and control of students' behavior, and develops community relationships among the school, pupils, and youth. Involving students in school management can develop a sense of legitimacy in school (Paudel, 2017).

The math teacher mentioned, "I understand my job is more challenging, complex, and harder. I have huge liability toward class, skill development, students' future, growth, and establishing a good teacher-student relationship. So to build interest, devotion, good relationships, bonding, and interaction with all students on my subject, every day in every class, I have been establishing a different climate in class like changing a class setting, introducing different innovative teaching methods, creating pleasure and stress-free class environment, solving students' problem which help to develop profound interest, attention and good relationship (FGD, teachers).

I observed that the school practiced the teachers' log book system. The class monitor maintained teachers' log book. It gives detailed information about teachers' entry times, teaching subjects, and class activities, along with teachers' exit times from the classroom. I noticed that teachers' activities inside the classroom also play a major role in creating a favorable students support environment and relationship. Maintaining a proper record of teachers' activities in the classroom also awares teachers to establish a good bonding with students and teach and perform better inside the classroom to enhance better school and students' achievement.

According to the theory of school effectiveness, a positive school climate that places a high value on relationships between students, teachers, and administrators helps students perform better and propels the school toward effectiveness and improvement (Edmonds, 1979).

### **Chapter Essence**

In this chapter, I explored the perceptions of my participants based on my third research question that deals with SMC chairpersons, headteacher, teachers, students, parents, and local actors' perceptions about why the school has been performing well. I selected one well performing public school in Chitwan. I spent a prolonged time collecting in-depth data in that school. During my interview, I interacted with and interviewed different school stakeholders, and all of them stated their views and opinions differently about the case school. Likewise, a different participant expressed their view about the reason for school has been performing well. It was seen that establishing and maintaining a positive school climate along with a student-centric atmosphere in the classes and school was found to be a major aspect of well performing schools.

CHAPTER VII  
KEY INSIGHTS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND PEDAGOGICAL  
IMPLICATIONS

This chapter includes key insights, a discussion based on the interview, observation, and FGD of a well performing public school in Chitwan. This chapter also explores how the study will be useful for future researchers, policymakers, and educators of public schools. Therefore, this chapter primarily focuses on a summary of the collected information, a conclusion based on the findings and summary, and the experience, knowledge, practice, and reflection on the entire process are emphasized as the implications of the study.

**Key Insights**

Public schools are funded, executed, and maintained by the government (Khanal et al., 2020). Public schools receive state money for its staff's remunerations as well as all day-to-day administrative expenses (Thapa, 2013). A well-performing school is one where there is a high level of parental and community involvement, faculty trust in the principal's leadership, emphasis is placed on the school's climate, teacher professionalism, high academic standards and expectations, and high student performance (Tschannen & Gareis, 2015).

Based on the opinions, experiences, and information I gathered from my case school's participants, a well performing school has a strong instructional leadership from the headteacher, high and active parental involvement, ongoing assessments of students' progress, engaged students participating in both course-related and extracurricular activities, teachers participating in decision-making, teachers' commitment and mutual trust, and a secure and orderly school environment.

The success of the school was largely due to the headteacher. The head teacher appeared to be providing instructional leadership in the execution of all tasks, including managing school resources, tracking students' progress, setting goals for school development, and other activities. The headteacher also appeared to be developing teacher ability and skills by giving teachers opportunities for professional growth both inside and outside the school system, which contributed to the efficient running of the school. By enhancing teachers' professional development, the school focuses on elevating public school education and all other aspects of high-quality education. The dedication and diligence of the headteacher toward their work and the school have an impact on the success of the school.

The school has placed a strong emphasis on requiring students to participate in course-related or extracurricular activities. This gave the students the opportunity to improve their cognitive, behavioral, social, teamwork, and innovative thinking skills. The implementation of a continuous assessment system has aided in learning's ongoing improvement. Maintaining a portfolio, providing feedback, and conducting intense observation are all useful tools used in education. The roles and responsibilities of teachers were well-described, and these groups took part in making decisions and developed a high level of commitment and trust. Teachers got together once a week to share ideas, skills, knowledge, experience, and responsibilities and to make plans for the coming weeks.

The discipline has been enriched by the code of conduct adopted by students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. The school's success in achieving its goals was largely due to the community's and parents' strong involvement in all programs, decisions, policies, and plans at the school. The local level has been successful in creating a successful plan for the development of the schools under it. The issue of

erratic attendance and dropout can be solved through the parents' participation. A secure and well-run school climate places a greater emphasis on child-pedagogy and responsible child development fosters trust in parents and the community and aids in the development of administrative and financial support from parents and the local community. Therefore, the physical and educational infrastructure is perfectly managed by making the school ideal for teaching and learning.

Well performance of the school was majorly contributed to the consistency of the teachers and students, the professional and qualified teachers who contributed to the high-achieving students, effective management for monitoring and supervision, the interactive nature of the teaching and learning process, and collective decision. Additionally, physical, emotional, and social-economic security as well as persistent student motivation for good behavior, actions, and performance were some of the best practices that contributed to the success of the school. The participants are mostly practicing and focusing on the above-mentioned areas to make a well performing school over a while. In addition, parents, local communities, and students appreciate school's leadership and teachers who accept and value all of these groups' interests, needs, and perspectives when planning activities for teaching and learning.

Like when I was in school, my father also hoped that school leader and teachers would take into account the concerns of parents and students. Stakeholders desired a school that actively promoted students' overall development by taking into account their individual interests like safe and organized school climate, review of students' progress, qualified and proficient teachers, course and extra-curricular activities for cognitive, behavioral and social growth, high teachers' commitment and accountability for students.

Similar to this, the opinions and experiences of my participants from a case school shed light on the fact that a school can only be a well performing, if its leaders are able to manage its resources effectively, set clear, attainable, and time-bound goals, highly value the active participation of teachers and parents in decision-making and establish a child-centric school climate that fosters physical and mental security. In addition to this, a school can only be a well performing one if teaching-learning activities include elements that are engaging, and enjoyable and improve cognitive, behavioral, psychological, and socioeconomic outcomes, and develop students' competency.

Participants' experiences and opinions show that in well a performing school, SMCs, headteacher, teachers, parents, local communities, and PTA are intensely involved in all school activities and programs to improve students' academic performance. This involvement is motivated by a desire to give children a bright future and a secure career. In a well performing school, teachers and headteachers care about their students' academic success. Every student was encouraged for their accomplishment by the school leader and the teachers. The development of an efficient academic program for students, along with prompt and timely feedback, seems to inspire and motivate students to actively participate in and improve their learning activities. Every student's classroom activities and homework are commented on by teachers, and students often show an interest in pointing out their mistakes and solidifying their understanding.

The actual concrete elements of a well performing school include strong SLC/SEE results, high levels of parental and community involvement in school administration, a secure and supportive environment, a school leader who serves as both manager and leader, inclusive practices, a culture of information sharing, the

development of trust with all parties involved in the educational process, innovative teaching and learning techniques, resource management in the school, placing the student as the center of attention, and teacher professional development. The subject teacher, however, is first among them. A true teacher is one who is knowledgeable in the subject under discussion and is fully committed to assisting students in learning in a way that they find enjoyable while always offering guidance and counseling as needed. This includes academic staff, retired school teachers, entrepreneurs in education, and teachers in decision-making processes. Thus, SMC team appears to be vibrant.

Building on Edmonds (1979) and others, Teddlie and Reynolds (2000) identified nine universal elements for effective schools: strong school leadership, a focus on teaching and learning, a supportive school climate, high expectations, monitoring progress, parental involvement, effective teaching, professional development for teachers, and student involvement (Reynolds et al. 2014).

## **Discussion**

### **Head Teacher's Instructional Leadership**

The school emphasized the headteacher's effective leadership in managing resources, setting goals for developing infrastructure, teachers' and students' monitoring to benefit the learner, and teachers' professional development with quality staffing turning the school into a focal point of excellent academic achievement. Headteachers' instructional leadership has always prioritized and promoted effective teaching and learning. The headteacher of the school holds regular weekly meetings with the teachers. These gatherings give teachers and students a chance to hear instructions from the principal. To improve the teaching-learning process and raise student performance, the headteacher made all decisions after in-depth discussions

with teachers, parents, local communities, students, and other educational stakeholders. The success of the headteacher depends on organizing a team, coordinating activities, and working with all parties at school. To maintain the spirit of effective and high-quality education, the headteacher plays a crucial role in school reform and progress. A well-established theory connecting leadership and the teaching-learning process is considered to be instructional leadership. Therefore, instructional leadership highly concentrates on teaching and learning activities by keeping school vision, mission, goals, and school climate at the center (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Mestry et al., 2013).

Instructional leadership plays an important role and responsibility in managing resources. Headteachers are responsible for all activities that are crucial for managing resources in school for making school effective to improve the effective and better teaching and learning activities. Headteacher is a focal person who takes entire accountability to maintain effective and better teaching and learning activities by managing required resources and enhancing the knowledge and skills of students as required in subject and grade-wise. Headteachers with instructional leadership manage all necessary resources like humans, materials, or finance in the appropriate place and create an environment that promotes the growth of both teachers and children in teaching and learning. DeMatthews (2014) states that headteachers can carry out different activities, methods, and decisions for the growth and improvement of the teaching and learning process in school. The case school headteacher manages and provides all necessary resources to teachers that address and fulfill all the necessary needs of the students. This improves the performance of the students, which leads to school effectiveness.

From the finding, it can be concluded that the headteacher as an instructional leader, takes important steps to manage resources properly. Identifying, raising, management, and prioritization of resources acquired in and around public schools are key components of well performing schools. Resources are optimized, alternative resources are used, funds are generated and managed, human resources are managed, and the available resources are used effectively and efficiently. In well performing schools, headteachers are highly passionate and determined to the growth of students' achievement through managing and arranging all the needed resources for teaching and learning activities which increase the value, trust, and belief of parents, and local communities to send their pupils to school.

Considering the school effectiveness theory, which suggests that school leader having instructional leadership has a significant impact on student outcomes and school improvement, they appeared more passionate and determined to raise and manage the necessary school resources.

From the second sub-theme headteacher having instructional leadership plays pivotal roles and responsibilities in improving school infrastructure, leading to better student outcomes. So the headteacher has instructional leadership development goals for school's infrastructure improvement and enhances instruction and learning practices. The case school headteacher meets the expectation of the students, teachers, parents, communities, and SMCs of growth and development of teaching and learning by upgrading, constructing, child-friendly school infrastructure, and keep motivating and satisfying all the schools' stakeholders. For a school to perform well, safety and security at the school are major concerns. The institution complies with all infrastructure standards necessary for efficient teaching and learning. For active planning, implementation, and monitoring to ensure safe classrooms, the availability

of books, libraries, toilets, pure drinking water, play areas, sports equipment, computer labs, and ICT development, the head teacher enlists the help of community members, including parents, teachers, donors, and other socially recognized leaders and entrepreneurs.

Out of the many roles and responsibilities of headteachers, the case school head teachers always set high goals to improve students' outcomes and achievement by adding more facilities for students to enhance their skills and knowledge with collaborative teamwork. In school, headteachers develop and communicate their goals, and planning to all school stakeholders and work as guides or heads to implement a student-centered school climate in a proper manner.

From the finding, it can be concluded that headteachers appear to develop and execute different school-related physical infrastructure goals which strongly impact students' learning. So headteachers as instructional leaders engage themselves in developing child-friendly school infrastructure with existing resources in supporting the teaching and learning environment within a school. Qutosni and Khaki (2014) stated that headteachers are actively involved in providing quality education to students to meet all the expectations of stakeholders like improving teaching and learning, developing and enhancing school infrastructure, motivating teachers, and positively influencing the parents.

A well performing school headteacher as an instructional leader enhances the physical environment with all basic needs to improve school and students' performance through effective coordination with all stakeholders for the child-friendly and child-centric school infrastructure for high-quality students. In well performing schools, headteachers always prioritize security and suitable school infrastructure as the first and foremost requirement to ensure better teaching and

learning. The physical and educational infrastructure is perfectly managed, making the school ideal for teaching. The head teachers are essential for establishing school goals for an effective teaching and learning process and enhancing students' outcomes, which in turn promotes students' outcomes, school effectiveness and school improvement (Mazano, 2005).

From the third sub-theme, headteacher aware of instructional leadership plays a crucial role in monitoring teachers and students for better outcomes and academic achievement of the students. In the case school to influence all teachers and students, headteachers always promote and embrace positive behavior, interact daily with teachers and students, keep records and collect information about students', teachers' activities, behavior, learning, knowledge of course content deeply to understand teaching and learning practices. Therefore, instructional leadership is found to have a stronger influence on student learning than other leadership types. Moosung et al. (2012) and Taole (2013) state that instructional leadership plays an important and pragmatic role in establishing a learning culture among students and teachers.

A headteacher not only gets stuck in managerial and administrative work, they regularly meet the teachers to check the progress of teaching and learning, students' skill and knowledge development, observe class teaching regularly and check students' knowledge and skills building in subject content, and monitor each student's behavior, activities, and notebooks in the classroom. Blase et al. (2010) state that headteacher having instructional leadership always keeps track of students' development and progress by examining the assessment of learners to enhance curriculum delivery and implementation.

From the finding, it can be concluded that students' and teachers' monitoring along with class observation, supervision of each student's activities, behavior,

learning skills, and knowledge development is an integral part of instructional leadership. Headteachers as instructional leaders monitor and supervise teachers' and students' classroom activities, behavior, learning, skills, and knowledge development and must provide constructive guidance and positive feedback to enhance teaching and learning practices and promote the growth of an effective and well performing school. Headteachers should supervise instructional activities to reduce educational loss (Hada, 2014). Timely monitoring of students' and teachers' activities and behavior helps headteacher check whether they are psychologically ready for teaching and learning activities. Regular monitoring also prevents the school from extreme political, students' and teachers' engagement in politics and groups. In well performing schools, there is an effective practice of promoting monitoring teachers' and students' activities, and behavior.

A study carried out in Kenya by researcher Mobegi et al. (2010) stated that head teachers should ensure sufficient departmental organizations and supervision in classroom monitoring to ensure that different teaching methods are applied in the classroom in a child-friendly environment. Taking into account school effectiveness theory, continuous monitoring students' activities, behavior and learning process improve students' outcomes and increase school effectiveness.

From the fourth sub-theme, headteacher with instructional leadership plays an essential role and responsibility for school teachers' professional development and quality staffing in school. In the school, the headteacher motivates teachers to participate in different training and development programs, and encourages them to learn more to enhance their teaching ability by providing professional development opportunities. In case school, headteacher always plays an important role in the growth of teachers through proper training, development, and instruction to improve

whole teaching-learning practices. A paper presented in a workshop on international best practices in schooling reform claims that good teachers are the main determinants of learner performance and an effective schooling system need to attract and retain talented teachers and improve their knowledge and teaching skill (CDE, 2009).

Headteachers are always highly enthusiastic about bringing growth of staff, social harmony, professional development, and students' academic achievement through various trainings and workshops. Technical and vocational education witnesses the effective instrument in achieving outcomes such as sustainable development, social cohesion, a culture of peace, and international citizenship (Bagale, 2015). Staff development and quality staffing are a passion for headteachers. They believe that if I develop my staff, they will grow, and if they grow, it will help in learners' growth and better academic performance.

From the finding, it can be concluded that teachers' professional development and quality staffing was considered essential long-term tools for improving teachers' ability, skills, and knowledge and enhancing teachers' confidence and motivation which brings innovation and creativity during learning and instruction practices, promoting well performing school. Developing teachers' capability, knowledge and skills is the core responsibility of the headteacher. Blase et al. (2010) state that headteachers vigorously cooperate with their teachers in educational opportunities inside and outside school. In well performing schools, headteacher and instructional leaders have always been emphasizing teacher training is an important tool for effective teaching and learning practices.

In this regard, if I link and compare the activities of a headteacher, I realize that headteachers' knowledge gained through experience was equal to the thought of school effectiveness theory and Habermas's human interest theory. The headteacher as

an instructional leader plays an important role in making the school effective and in students' academic achievement.

### **Parents' and Local Communities' Support**

The school has emphasized active parents' and community involvement, which motivates teachers and parents to establish a favorable school environment for teaching and learning and academic excellence. The parents' and local communities' involvement has been reflected in continuous growth and better results over a long period in the local, provincial, and national examinations, which ramp up the gratification of all educational stakeholders. The community's and parents' active participation has contributed to the success of the school (Sharma, 2019). The headteacher and SMC came to the realization that the primary stakeholders who could support the school's improvement were the parents and local communities. Increasing collaboration and fostering trust are key aspects to the school's success. Local government representatives also participate in the coordination, support, and monitoring that led to Case School's success. The local level has been successful in creating a successful plan for the development of the schools under it. PTA and SMC saw active participation from parents and the neighborhood. All interested parties actively participated in creating plans, policies, and implementing and overseeing various school-run programs and activities. All of the activities of school were open to the public, and everyone took part in the decision-making process. There are numerous committees and boards that support a successful school, according to our research.

The school has been conducting a regular monthly meeting with parents and teachers, teachers and students and allowed every parent to observe their pupils' classroom. The school has set different slogans in different periods, such as 'my

school my responsibility, 'help for change', 'two hands one help', and 'one brick from my side' contribute to the collecting financial and other technical support for the construction of school infrastructure in different periods tremendously. This reflected strong collaboration between school parents and communities for enhancing the teaching-learning environment of the school.

From the finding, it can be concluded that the school has been establishing a strong and successful relationship with parents and communities to fulfill its goals and mission. The issue of erratic attendance and dropout can be solved through parental participation in school. Collaboration with current and former local, provincial, and national government representatives, social and business leaders, parents, SMC/PTA members, and coordination with numerous NGOs and INGOs was found to be successful. By improving academics and morale through successful performance, the school keeps good relations with the neighborhood and close ties with the community. Nishimura (2017) states that developing trust between people and school communities' involvement in school plays a crucial role.

Parents and communities were found to be active participants in planning, controlling, directing, monitoring, and evaluating all school activities and programs run by the school. As explained by the theory of school effectiveness, and Habermas constitutive interest constructive relationships between the school and parents contribute to students' outcomes and school improvement.

### **Active Students' Engagement**

The school has emphasized active student engagement, such as course and extracurricular activities to improve students' behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive abilities. Students' active participation in extracurricular activities supports them to perform better in the academic world compared to those who are not. By

embracing such beliefs, the case school has been conducting extracurricular activities every Friday to improve students' behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive and thus increase well performance in school. The school has delegated authority to numerous student groups to plan events and competitions in a variety of extracurricular pursuits. Students are supported and given opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities by the SMC chairperson, headteacher, sports teachers, and other teachers.

Every Friday, students of all grades actively participate and perform extracurricular activities. The school also conducts games for teachers too. Both students and teachers take part actively in weekend sports both inside and outside school. By conducting weekly extracurricular activities, schools develop a platform for students to meet their interests. In school, teaching-learning activities are also improved by extracurricular activities. Students were found fully engaged because of child-friendliness games. All parents were also impressed by students' involvement and performance in extracurricular activities and getting equal and a fair chance to take part in extracurricular activities according to their grade, physical structure, and age. This practice promotes an effective school.

From the finding, it can be concluded that the school emphasizes that students participate in different clubs like the students' club, interaction club, environment and social club, alumni club, scout and red cross club, and different students' houses. The activeness of different student clubs with absenteeism of groups and political affiliation contributed to the school's effective and well performance over a longer time. In a well performing school, reward for students and teachers was also an important factor for success. Extracurricular activities develop a positive attitude, discipline, cooperation, good conduct, and make students mentally and physically,

create an effective and pleasant learning environment for well performance. Students are also motivated and praise school for embracing both theoretical and technical life-related education in school. Extracurricular activities develop a learning environment for students and extracurricular activities are also responsible for leading school. Through extracurricular activities, school tries to build trust and strong bonding between SMC, headteacher, teachers and students. Extracurricular activities provide a greater opportunity for innovation, creativity, and a sense of teamwork. This has been found to promote school effectiveness in the form of improved students' behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive abilities. Habermas constitutive Interest also supports this key insight as the theory states that there is a prominent role of parental and local community for a well performing school (Habermas, 1972).

### **Continuous Assessment System (CAS)**

The school has emphasized a continuous assessment system to assess students' knowledge and skills on subject content. Every day all teachers are involved in assessing ongoing assessment of students' activities, behavior, and learning progress levels. To know the students' mastery of learning, subject content, activities, behavior, and performance, school keeps all records of students in a report file based on students' terminals and class exams, home works, class works, classroom interaction, school activities, relationship with a peer, extra activities, personal performance and behavior in classroom and teachers' written feedback.

Teachers used different indicators to assess the students based on their performance, activities, behavior, and participation. Teachers recorded daily each student's class activities, behavior, and knowledge and skill in the subject content. When students entered school premises, teachers assessed students by their

punctuality, regularity, neatness, and behavior in the classroom, the teacher assessed students by homework, class work, classroom participation, skill, classroom discipline, and project work, etc. Teachers regularly observe activities, behavior, and learning and note them down in the school's format. The main objective of CAS is to assess students regularly about how they are, what they have learned, what are their positions in learning, developing skills about subject content, and what should be done to ramp up their overall outcomes. The main purpose of CAS is not only to gather information about students but is a continuous process to improve their improvement (Baniya, 2012). CAS enhances lower students' academic performance and gives them a chance to learn with a friend in a friendlier manner. The teacher also revealed that students sit in a group for discussion, brainstorming, and solving problems in a team with a more comfortable and engaging environment.

From the finding, it can be concluded that a well performing school maintains record files or portfolios of each student, including weekly or monthly unit test sheets, mark sheets of the terminal exam with answer sheets, project work, drawings, graphs, and creative work, some class work assignment and teachers' written feedback. The teacher agreed that they continuously observed and evaluated students' activities and reported to the assistant headteacher, headteacher, and class teacher throughout the year. Teachers mentioned that class teachers and assistant headteachers managed to keep records. All the participants have a similar belief that continuous assessment tremendously enhances students' overall performance and development. In the case school, the continuous assessment system has been found to be extremely effective in all grades. Different tools are used to evaluate the students' learning outcomes. By fostering a positive learning environment, schools give each student their undivided

attention. Instead of lecturing the students, the instructors continued to work as facilitators with them.

Teachers were engaged in extensive classroom interaction with the students. Teachers encouraged their students to build their insight. With the help of the CAS adoption strategies, the students now have more power to work on transformation, knowledge generation, and exchange. Teachers play an important role in continuously monitoring, evaluating, and testing student activities, behavior, and performance. I found all teachers trained about CAS. School provided effective training through senior CAS expert. CAS provides an opportunity for the students to put their problems and teachers are found able to address students' problems (Sharma, 2019). Schools has effectively implemented CAS for their students' holistic development. Continuous assessment in school is also aligned with the underline value of the school effectiveness theory and Habermas Human Interest.

### **Teachers' Roles and Responsibilities**

The school has emphasized teachers' active roles and responsibilities in decision-making. In every school meeting, all teachers concentrated only on how to improve the teaching and learning of the student under the rules and policies of the government. The school has equally prioritized both old and new teachers in school decision-making. School emphasized old and experienced teachers in senior positions, guides, and planners with assigned different roles and responsibilities. Similarly, the school emphasized young and new teachers for smooth functioning of teaching and learning activities, teaching with innovation, creativity, teaching with technology and support for the headteacher and old teachers, and overcoming every difficulty for the smooth running of instruction and learning course. When the school teachers

participate in school decision-making, it improves teachers' feeling of psychological ownership and responsibility, improves their attachment toward school, and contributes highly to the growth and benefit of the school (Han et al., 2010).

Therefore, schools always believe that the essential part of an effective school is teachers' determination, and contribution toward the teaching and learning process that highlights teachers' active participation in decision-making.

Teachers who participated in decision-making contributed to the prompt implementation of every action and activity in school. Lunenburg (2010a) states that the success of school function is critically connected with the decision and decision-making activities embraced by school. Due to teachers' involvement in decision-making, school overcame all its challenges, smoothly functioning all its actions, plan, and activities without any hurdles, and developing good understanding and bonding among all teachers. When the teachers actively participate in decision making, they get a chance to accumulate lots of knowledge and experience of school-related issues and information, which helps to improve school and students' achievement (Kumar & Giri, 2013). By practicing good practices of teacher participation in decision-making, the school continuously demonstrated good student results and performance.

Teachers' involvement in school also contributes to effective school management, continuous growth, and quality education in the case school.

From the finding, it can be concluded that well performing school teachers' participation in decision-making enhances teachers' skill, knowledge, trust, respect, and commitment in teachers and brings improvement in teaching and learning practices. It develops teamwork for the growth of the school. Teachers' suggestions and feedback lead to effective and well performing schools. Teachers' participation in decision-making helps to develop a social and healthy relationship among teachers,

headteachers, and students, which improves the sense of respect, accountability, ownership, and involvement in the daily problems of the school. Teachers' involvement in decision-making enhances the decision quality because they have ample knowledge, skills, and information about the school system that affects the quality of decisions (Yukl, 2013). School effectiveness theory also supports this key insight as the theory states that there is a crucial role of teacher for a well performing school.

Similarly, the school has emphasized teachers' commitment and mutual trust for the success of the school. Positive attitude, cooperation and collaboration, teamwork, career, and working security as well as senior teachers' and head teachers' consultation and motivation created exemplary commitment and mutual trust amongst teachers toward school. Thein et al. (2014) state that committed teachers are highly devoted to the teaching and learning process and are a crucial asset for school because they make changes in students' educational performance and achievement.

The school has committed teachers who are working hard with full devotion, and spend more time with students and school and also give extra effort in school programs, activities, and teachers' problems. Such committed teachers help the school to show well performance over a continuous period. Teachers have high commitment and mutual trust to become highly successful in the teaching field and they give their continuous effort and devotion to the teaching profession. Strong commitment among teachers develops a strong commitment in school, and the teaching-learning process contributes to ownership and accountability toward their jobs and outcomes.

Due to teachers' commitment, the school has introduced English medium teaching and learning and meets the parents' and contemporary expectations. The

hierarchy and divisional roles such as division of subject-wise teachers, and in-charge developed high commitment and mutual trust among teachers in school. The cooperative and collaboration among teachers such as day to day interaction to share their innovative practices of teaching, day-to-day class, and students' activities, making shared and common decisions, and finding effective solutions to teaching and learning.

From the finding, it can be concluded that mutual trust among teachers, teachers, creates a good working environment in school and teachers allocate their extra time from morning to evening for teaching and learning practices with more dedication and hard work. Rather than giving lectures to the students, the educators interacted with students as mediators. Teachers serve as moderators, enhancing the learning and teaching processes with their expertise. All students clearly understood the material being taught in the classroom, thanks to the dedication of the teachers who delivered it. Students believe they really did not have to read a course book to comprehend what was being tried to teach. Teachers hold the opinion that reading school books is not sufficient for students to improve their skills and knowledge. As a result, by working together with other teachers, educators can foster a collaborative, child-centered work environment. In well performing schools, teachers are committed to schools, committed to teaching work, and the teaching profession, committed to students, and develop mutual trust between teachers to work within a group (Sharma, 2019). The school has committed teachers, which is a valuable asset for its success.

### **Enhancing and Maintaining Positive School Climate**

The school has emphasized developing a child-friendly environment for students by providing an affluent climate to meet each pupil's academic performance. It provides a supportive role to the students' growth by creating a better environment

for teaching and learning. It also provides career and life-related skills to students to enhance their skills, and knowledge and build high confidence and competence level. The school enhances students' behavior, disciplinary, social, and academic success, and makes them responsive. The students who passed out from the school have developed competency, a good image, and excellent professional careers in different fields. Schools develop holistic development of students for a longer time. The school provides both theoretical, practical, and life-related education and knowledge for their students which promotes and enhances a positive school climate for teaching and learning. A positive school climate connects with several academic, social, and behavioral outcomes along with students' academic achievement (Wang et al., 2014).

In school, all teachers are friendly with students. All teachers and headteachers support students to fulfill their needs and help to perform better students' academic performance, which creates a good environment in school to move toward betterment over a longer time. The school moves according to society's demands, time, students' needs, and guardians' expectations and builds trust with students, parents, and the community.

The school has emphasized full attention to all students from grades early to secondary level and effectively managed and provided all required teaching and learning resources. It seems to understand the value of developing child-centered pedagogy, a child-friendly climate in the school, and ensuring excellent student performance, physical security, and social-emotional security as it is important and useful for individual, community, school, and societal achievement.

Absenteeism and dropout affect the teaching and learning process and hinder the growth of students' learning, experience, and academic achievement. The school witnessed a hundred percent pass rate with zero percent of absenteeism, dropout, low

academic performance, prejudiced activities, disobeying rules such as involvement in bullying, physical and mental violence, and repetition rate of students, which promotes high competency of the student and school effectiveness. The school has received tremendous effort and support from all parents, local communities and other educational stakeholders. Schools create a child-friendly and conducive learning environment and provide plenty of opportunities for all students and teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge.

From the finding, it can be concluded that the school maintained and enhanced the school climate, promoting high parents, local communities, and other educational stakeholders. All stakeholders' involvement in school activities built trust and supported in students' academic performance. A better school demonstrates a clear connection between the holistic development of the students and academic achievement. It is inevitable to ensure quality education, enhance students' behavior, disciplinary, social, and academic success, thereby enhancing their high morale. A well performing school is not only the sole responsibility of the headteacher. It is the collaborative effort of all stakeholders of the school. An effective school motivates all parents, communities, teachers, and students to enhance teaching and learning, and their focus is on the result, students' achievement, and students' learning at a high point. According to Habermas's explanation of emancipatory interest (1972), it has the potential to emancipate society through its connections to justice, equitable being, and responsibility. The school is performing well by including all of its parents and the local community in each and every activity with the idea of inclusivity in the school activities so that they learn a culture of acceptance, teamwork, and harmony.

### **Practices of Existing Norms of the Government of Nepal**

During this research, some questions remain unanswered. For students in grades 7 through 10, the schools remained open for all shifts from morning to evening on holidays both nationally and locally, occasionally during strikes called by different political organizations, and even on Saturdays. Similar to this, the school has established different departments, including those for student counseling, marketing, advisory committees, legal committees, a public relations committee for school construction, financial assistance, and relations with other stakeholders. In addition, the school continues to charge parents for tuition in the name of education reform fund, even though the government now offers free basic education. The school leases its land to various private educational institutions, including colleges. Without proper infrastructure and planning, kindergartens are like prisons for kids. Children should not be kept in kindergartens designed to develop good habits and character. More children are repelled from kindergartens than are drawn to them. There are more teachers than necessary in the Basic Primary, which is a complete waste of public funds. The school requires new students to take an eligibility test in every grade, which is against the rules of compulsory education. The school hires a lot of staff from school funds, including teachers and security guards, and pays them poorly compared to the government standards. The school frequently sends teachers to training and development opportunities, but no records are kept of why the school sends the teacher for training and development. Huge financial and non-financial rewards and incentives are provided by the school for its teachers, but it is not made clear for what purpose these rewards and incentives are given. For over fifteen years, the school has had the same SMC chairperson. Only local educators were given

priority at the school, which also permitted educators to run the hostel. Parents were also coerced into taking part in various clubs, social events, programs, and activities.

### **Conclusions**

The conclusions of the study are based on the discussion of the study. A qualitative case study was used for this study. It was used to conduct research for exploring well performing school and its effectiveness in continuously achieving well performance for quite some time. A well performing public school in Chitwan was the focus of this research. The experience and opinions of the participants are included in the discussion of how and why schools perform well. Six participants from well performing public school took part in the activity. The participants' experiences, which serve as an important information in this study, can be related to the similar experiences of numerous other participants, making it possible to interpret and comprehend how a well performing public school has affected the participants' perceptions of education and school going forward.

This study may serve as a turning point in the development of future educational initiatives, particularly in terms of ensuring the leadership and activities necessary for well performing schools. Instead of collaboration-based education, which is largely governed by the government, it appears that today's educational stakeholders prioritize their own personal interests. Headteacher, SMCs, PTAs, teachers, parents, local communities, and students all seek out opportunities to get involved and share their areas of interest in order to be a part of the process of creating well performing schools. They want their curiosity to be satisfied by participating in a variety of school activities at school and to feel equally valued and taken into account when designing educational programs to raise student achievement. Participants' shared experiences have brought to the surface a common

desire for the school and policy- makers to assign roles, responsibilities, authority, and tasks without undervaluing their contribution to school activities. The local level has been successful in creating a successful plan for the development of the schools under it. The issue of erratic attendance and dropout can be solved through the parental participation. The physical and educational infrastructure is perfectly managed, making the school ideal for teaching and learning. It suggests the need to be methodically planned, run, and financially supported in collaboration with parents, communities, and other interested parties.

The strategies implemented to promote well performing school include headteachers' instructional leadership, which enhanced the school's ability by managing school's available resources, goal setting for infrastructure development, students' and teachers' active monitoring and support teachers' professional development and quality staffing with coordination and collaboration between parents, communities, teachers, and students more effectively to consistently perform well for a longer time. A true teacher is someone who is knowledgeable in the subject at hand and is fully committed to assisting students in learning in a way that they find enjoyable while always offering guidance and counseling as needed. Otherwise, they would lose their sense of professional ethics. Teachers should not make a distinction between their children and their students. The professionalism of the teachers will dictate the standards of the students. Therefore, before beginning their classes, teachers should always be academically prepared. Students in the class can be inspired by a teacher who is more prepared. Students who are motivated learn more quickly and effectively. It can be concluded that the headteacher is the main source of leadership in schools and play a leading role in promoting school improvement.

The findings of the study reveal that the effectiveness of the headteachers' leadership results in a high level of teachers' existing participation and a high level of desired participation in the school's decision-making process, which increases teacher consistency and develops mutual trust among teachers. Teachers' participation in school decision making, the school management committee, and the parent-teacher association has also improved academic performance at the school, and the implementation of the continuous assessment system is highly effective because teachers have a good understanding of continuous assessment. All teachers collaborated to ensure that classroom instruction is reviewed using information from sources such as formal and informal observation, lesson plans, and student work. Teachers can improve their instruction by providing concrete and constructive feedback. Coordination and collaboration require a high level of agreement from all stakeholders.

To improve the performance of the school, the headteacher as an instructional leader, provides ample ideas (theoretical knowledge) for solving day-to-day problems in order to create a better school for teaching and learning. The findings depict that the public school modality represents the people's understanding in benchmarking educational quality. In the event that the school's headteacher does not only play a dynamic role, but also serves an administrator of rules and regulations and an instructional leader with clear communication of programs that are aligned with the school's goals and expectations. The headteacher, along with teachers, develops weekly, monthly, and yearly activities, and plans for school enhancement and effectiveness with a high level of communication with all educational stakeholders, and creates a reward system to improve performance of teachers and students', provide incentives for teachers, create safe and organize school climate that enhance

the teaching and learning process in the school. Therefore, a clear understanding of the connection between school effectiveness theory, and Habermas's human interest theory is essential for well performance of a school.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

After concluding the study, it provides profound ideas and knowledge for the policy and practices in making a well performing public school. It would be helpful for policymakers, educators, and future researchers.

If we see the policies and plan for how to make a public school well performing, all the policies, and plans are advocating only for SMC, teacher roles and responsibility, and leadership along with the few roles and responsibilities of a headteacher. There are several plans and policies in the field of public school betterment but the practices and implications have not been implemented as policies state. The minimum standards, knowledge, skills, and ways that make public school well performing would be an effective insight to address the present need of all other public schools in Nepal. The study suggests that there is a need to reform education regulation such as The Education regulations should consider redefining the role of a headteacher to meet the required needs and expectations of the current scenario. In general, the coordination, supervision and evaluation of instruction, actively monitoring students and teachers' activities, and progress, promoting professional development of all teachers, ensuring safe and organized climate for teaching and learning process, high level of parents and community involvement with maximize communication between teacher, students and parents, students' supporting activities along with a continuous assessment of the students', and teachers' consistency in decision making with a high level of leader involvement enhance the performance of

school. The local level has been successful in creating a successful plan for the development of the schools under it.

The research shows that under headteachers' instructional leadership, the effective involvement of parents, local communities, school management, and teachers can contribute to the well performance of the students and school. A committed headteacher, teacher, parents, local communities, school management and students always try to become professionally sound. This research also helps educators to understand the value of school effectiveness theory for well performance of students and school. Moreover, this research also helps educators to know about coordination, collaboration approach and the value of safe school climate, continuous assessment of the student, students' support activities, teacher participation in decision making, parents and local community involvement, setting school goals, managing school resources, professional development of the teachers, teachers' commitment and mutual trust. Effective leadership with coordination and cooperation between all stakeholders is the main effort to improve any public school. The coordination and cooperation between all school stakeholders with headteacher leadership qualities are focused on the education policy of Nepal. If all stakeholders perform their responsibility correctly, then the public school of Nepal will have performed effectively.

This study has only focused on a well performing public school in Chitwan. So, the ideas are only from the participants and resource persons who are from Chitwan district and a case school. The study does not cover all areas responsible for well performance of a public school. This research has opened an avenue of inquiry in the public school of Nepal. Therefore, this research has added a brick to academia to explore more knowledge, ideas, experience, and information practices pertaining to

well performing public schools. The research is only concentrated on the public school education experience of the participants.

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## APPENDIX I

## HEAD TEACHERS' AND SMCS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Functions, Duties, and Power of a School Head Teacher

- a) Clause 94, sub-clause Khaa) of the Education Act has made the provision to prepare programs for running classes in the school in consultation with teachers, and supervise whether or not the classes have been run as per the program.
- b) Clause 94, sub-clause (Cha), to operate the administrative function of the school.
- c) Clause 94, sub-clause (Ta), to take departmental actions including dismissal from the service on the recommendation of the Management Committee, against any teacher or employees appointed to the school on its own resources who do not perform their official duties.
- d) Clause 94, sub-clause (Tha), to maintain records of the punishment given to teachers and other employees and to show such records to District Education Officer when they want to see them.
- e) Clause 94, sub-clause (d), to submit reports relating to conduct, behavior, and work performance of teachers and other employees to the District Education Office and Management Committee.
- f) Clause 94, sub-clause (Dha), is recommended to Management Committee and District Education Office for reward and punishment to teachers.
- g) Clause 94, sub-clause (Ta), to submit salary reports of the teachers and other employees appointed on their own resources of the school to the Management Committee for endorsement.

- h) Clause 94, sub-clause (Da), to prepare annual programs of the school and to implement it having approved by the Management Committee.
- i) Clause 94, sub-clause (Na) to send teachers to District Education Office for training and development having got it approved by Management Committee.
- j) Clause 94, sub-clause (Ba), to spend budget according to the direction and power entrusted by Management Committee to him/her and to maintain or cause to maintain account of income and expenditure.
- k) Clause 94, sub-clause (Ra), to send the salary report of the teachers working in the school under the post approved by the Nepal Government to the District Education Office for approval.
- l) Clause 94, sub-clause (Wa), to abide or cause to abide by the directives given by Management Committee and District Education Office.
- m) Clause 94, sub-clause (Sha), to fill in the work performance evaluation form of teachers appointed on the school 's own resources and to submit them to the Management Committee.

APPENDIX II

Figure 1

Award and recognition received by school for its results and performance.



Figure

2

Award and recognition received by school for its results and performance.



APPENDIX III

Code of Conduct

Figure 1

Teacher Code of Conduct

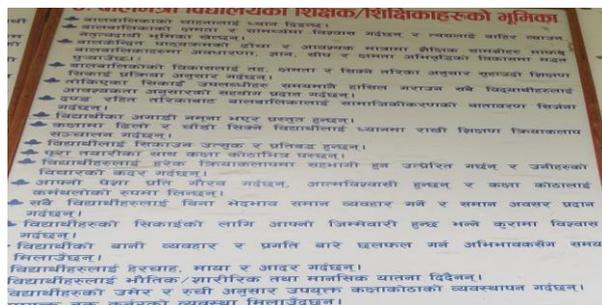


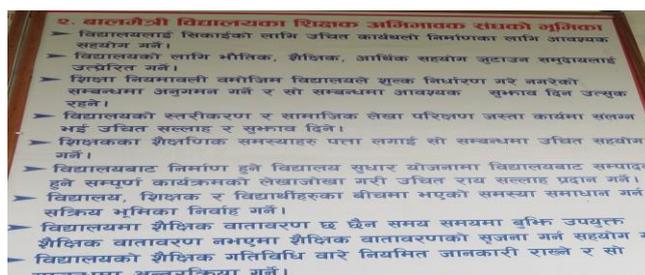
Figure 2

Teacher Code of Conduct



Figure 3

PTAs Code of Conduct

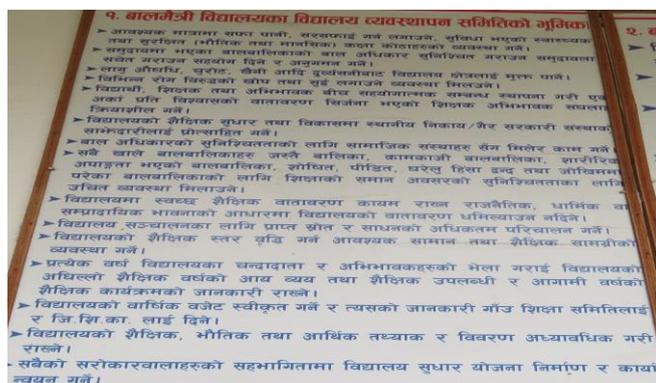


## APPENDIX IV

## Code of Conduct

## Figure 3

## SMCs Code of Conduct



## APPENDIX III

## INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR CASE STUDY RESEARCH

**Plan for interview (I translated these questions into Nepali while asking them.)**

- i. The time period for generating data from the field (physical) was sixty days run from 17<sup>th</sup> July 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022.
- ii. The number of participants was six.
- iii. The number of research school was one; from one geographical.
- iv. The geographical location was Chitwan (metropolitan).
- v. The questions for interviews were the same for all the participants.
- vi. The enquiries were slightly different from participant to participant.
- v. The questions were open-ended (semi-structured) in nature.

The main questions were the same as mentioned in the proposal.

- vi. The interviews were initiated with informal conversation (rapport building) in the beginning.
- vii. The time for the interview was 40 minutes to 60 minutes according to the time comfortable for the participants.
- viii. The mode of interviews was physical, face to face.
- ix. The interview went till the period up to data saturation
- x. The interview was conducted with a participant consuming a comfortable time period.
- xi. The Kathmandu university guidelines were strictly followed as an ethical consideration.
- xii. The information of participants was collected from the school administration; information like name, gender, age, permanent address, academic

qualification, length of job period, marital status, level of teaching, name of the school.

- xiii. The medium of the interview was mostly Nepali and English with the first teacher participant who felt comfortable conversing.
- xiv. The interviews were recorded by mobile and camera and record in my laptop.
- xv. The research diary and reflective notes were maintained every day.
- xvi. The interview was conducted focusing on the research questions.

### **Questions for interviews**

**Purpose of the research proposal:** To explore and analyze a good performer public school of Chitwan.

#### **For rapport building:**

- i. Greetings: Namaste or Good morning. How are you?
- ii. Where are you from?
- iii. When did you start teaching in school?
- iv. Which subject do you teach
- v. What are the classes you teach?
- vi. How long have you been teaching?

#### **The research questions (Questions for generating data for the research):**

1. What are the areas responsible for well performance of the public school?
2. How has School Gyandev in Chitwan been performing well?
3. Why has School Gyandev in Chitwan been performing well?

## APPENDIX IV

## FGD TOOLS

**A. School Teachers**

1. Roles and leadership of headteacher
2. School climate/ Infrastructure
3. Teacher retention / commitment/mutual trust
4. Teacher training and development other facilities/  
benefits/motivation/staffing
5. Role of teachers in decision- making participation
6. Participation of teachers in policy matters in public schools.
7. Academic culture and good practice.
8. Student assessment/ engagement/monitoring/student behavior
9. Support of headteacher and SMC
10. SMC and PTA involvement
11. Parents and local community participation.
12. Teacher politics
13. Division of work

**B. School Students**

1. Access to public education for students
2. School's education/ teaching-learning practices
3. Students' politics
4. Students' codes of conduct
5. Facilities available

6. Problems
7. Professional teacher/ quality staffing
8. Students support/student engagement
9. New practices adopted by schools.
10. Students' assessment
11. Students' monitoring
12. Parents and local community involvement

**C. Parent-Teacher Association/Parents**

1. Role of parents in public school
2. Contribution of parents to promote public education
3. Problems of parents / students in public school
4. Politics in school
5. Monitoring
6. Facilities available in school
7. Role of PTA to improve schools functioning
8. School – community relation
9. Problem Address-Parents'
10. Contribution toward School-Parents'

APPENDIX V  
OBSERVATION

1. School/classroom culture-environment observation
2. Students activities observation
3. Teachers activities observation
4. Principal/SMC/PTA/ observation
5. Students learning and gaining activities
6. Head teacher leadership observation
7. Infrastructure observation

A WELL PERFORMING PUBLIC SCHOOL OF  
CHITWAN: A CASE STUDY

**Research Questions:**

My research aims to answer the following questions with the help of case study of the school.

1. Why and how has a public school in Chitwan been performing well over a period of time?

**In-depth interview questions for SMC Chairperson, head teacher, teacher, student, parent, local actor**

S.N.	Research Questions	Focus Components	Interview Question
1	Why and how has a public school of Chitwan been performing better.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School climate</li> <li>2. Student assessment</li> <li>3. Student centered learning and teaching</li> <li>4. Academic performance</li> <li>5. Roles and leadership of head teacher</li> <li>6. SMC and PTA involvement</li> <li>7. Local community involvement</li> <li>8. Teachers' role and responsibilities</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How school performing well from long period of time?</li> <li>2. How do you maintain school climate?</li> <li>3. What are the best practices in your school which others don't have?</li> <li>4. How is your classroom condition? (is it disable friendly, can we move around the school and classes)</li> <li>5. How do you perform your leadership role to lead your school for student assessment?</li> <li>6. What technique do you use for student assessment?</li> <li>7. Could you explore how you have been contributing for student centered learning and teaching.</li> <li>8. What has school done to make learning and teaching environment</li> </ol>

			<p>appropriate for students?</p> <p>9. How sufficient are resource (time, money, material, HR, infrastructure, information) to uplift learning and teaching?</p> <p>10. What has school done to make academic performance of student better?</p> <p>11. How responsive you have been as a principal providing an involvement platform for teachers, parents, SMC, PTA and community?</p> <p>12. Does your leadership and roles help school for well performing school?</p> <p>13. How often you all (principal, teachers, SMC, PTA, parents and community) meet together for school matters.</p>
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