

School Governance: Role of School Management Committee in School Development

Kuldip Neupane

A Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Submitted to

Graduate School of Education

Office of the Dean

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This research studied the intricate dynamics of School Management Committees in Nepal, examining their evolution, functions, and the alignment between policies and practical outcomes in the context of school governance. Main objective of the study was to analyze the gap between policy and practices of SMCs in school development followed by the subordinating objectives from the historical analysis of its evolution to the current practices of it in the context of dual appearance in community and institutional schools. The theoretical bases for the research were governance, and the leadership and the management aspects underlying in governance theory.

The research applied embedded mixed method design with the domination of qualitative data and analysis over quantitative. Data source were existing literature, policy documents, field notes and interviews for qualitative analysis and questionnaire for quantitative analysis. The study was conducted at Godawari Municipality, Lalitpur District, Nepal where both (community and institutional) types of schools are located. Quantitative data were collected from the teachers, head teachers, and parents and qualitative data were collected from head teacher, SMC members, educational bureaucrats, and educational experts, all among the stakeholders from school system. The quantitative data revealed the stakeholders' dissatisfaction toward SMC' performance while qualitative data exposed mixed views suggesting for the adequate knowledge support to the members of SMCs.

The major findings unfolded across five themes starting from SMCs adaptation according to the social and educational changes. The research found that SMCs have good contribution to the school development in Nepal, from the inception of schools till now. The next theme derived was the SMCs' governance comparison of community and institutional schools where they acted essentially in different ways.



SMCs in community schools were active with low performance whereas in institutional schools, they were less active but the performance was higher in comparison.

The third theme drawn was the political influence and capacity gaps in SMCs suggesting for the prolonged capacity building program. The lack of role perception because of the capacity gap created confusions at various levels. The fourth theme described the evolved tension in and to SMCs. The role ambiguity and power struggle; inconsistent resource allocation; teacher management challenges; and capacity and expertise gap were tensions found in and to them. The final theme explained overcoming the governance challenges in SMCs. The core overcoming factor is to provide sufficient governance knowledge to the SMC members.

Analyzing tangible SMC roles in school development exposed policy-practice gaps for intervention. The conclusion of policy-practice gap contributes significantly to educational governance discourse, offering actionable insights for policy makers and stakeholders amidst the evolving educational landscape in Nepal.

यस अनुसन्धानले नेपालका विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति (वि.व्य.स) हरुको जटिल गतिशीलता अध्ययन गरेको छ । वि.व्य.सहरुको विकासक्रम, कार्यहरु, र विद्यालय सञ्चालन सन्दर्भमा नीति र व्यवहारिक परिणामहरु बीचको समन्वय परीक्षण गरिएको छ । यस अध्ययनको मुख्य उद्देश्य विद्यालय विकासमा वि.व्य.सको नीति र व्यवहारबीच रहेको अन्तरको विश्लेषण गर्नु थियो । यससँगै यसको विकासको ऐतिहासिक विश्लेषणदेखि लिएर हालको व्यवहारसम्म, र सामुदायिक तथा संस्थागत विद्यालयहरुमा वि.व्य.सको दुई भिन्न रुपहरुको सन्दर्भमा अध्ययन गरिएको छ । अनुसन्धानको सैद्धान्तिक आधार शासन (governance) हो, जसका धेरै पक्षहरुमध्ये नेतृत्व र व्यवस्थापन पक्षहरु समावेश भएका छन् ।

अनुसन्धानले सम्मिलित मिश्रित अनुसन्धान विधि (embedded mixed method design) अपनाएको छ, जसमा गुणात्मक (qualitative) विश्लेषण प्रधान छ भने मात्रात्मक (quantitative) विश्लेषण सहायकको रुपमा प्रयोग गरिएको छ । गुणात्मक विश्लेषणका लागि विद्यमान साहित्य, नीतिगत दस्तावेजहरु, फील्ड नोट्स, र अन्तरवार्ताहरु स्रोत बनेका छन् भने मात्रात्मक विश्लेषणका लागि प्रश्नावलि प्रयोग भएको छ । अध्ययन ललितपुर जिल्लाको गोदावरी नगरपालिकामा सम्पन्न गरिएको थियो, जहाँ सामुदायिक र संस्थागत दुवै प्रकारका विद्यालयहरु अवस्थित छन् । मात्रात्मक तथ्याङ्क शिक्षक, प्रधानाध्यापक, र अविभावकहरुबाट संकलन गरिएको थियो भने गुणात्मक तथ्याङ्क प्रधानाध्यापकहरु, वि.व्य.स सदस्यहरु, शैक्षिक कर्मचारीहरु, र शैक्षिक विज्ञहरुसंगको अन्तरवार्ताबाट संकलन गरिएको थियो ।

मात्रात्मक तथ्याङ्कले वि.व्य.सहरुको कार्य सम्पादनप्रति सरोकारवालाहरु असन्तुष्ट रहेको देखायो भने गुणात्मक तथ्याङ्कले मिश्रित धारणा प्रकट गर्दै वि.व्य.स सदस्यहरुलाई पर्याप्त ज्ञानको सहयोग आवश्यक रहेको सुझाव दियो ।

अनुसन्धानका प्रमुख निष्कर्षहरु पाँचवटा विषयगत शीर्षकहरुमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । पहिलो शीर्षक सामाजिक र शैक्षिक परिवर्तनहरु अनुरूप वि.व्य.सहरुको अनुकुलन छ, जसले नेपालमा विद्यालय स्थापनाको सुरुवात देखि अहिलेसम्मको विकासमा तिनीहरुको महत्वपूर्ण भुमिका रहेको वर्णन गर्छ । दोस्रो शीर्षक हो सामुदायिक र संस्थागत विद्यालयहरुमा वि.व्य.सहरुको शासन तुलना, जहाँ सामुदायिक

विध्यालका वि.व्य.सहरु तुलनात्मक रुपमा सीका भएतापनि कार्य सम्पादन कमजोर रहेको भने संस्थागत विध्यालयहरुमा वि.व्य.सहरु कम सक्रिय भएतापनि कार्यसम्पादन उच्च रहेको निष्कर्ष वर्णन गरिएको छ ।

तेस्रो निष्कर्ष वि.व्य.सहरुमा व्याप्त राजनीतिक प्रभाव र क्षमता अन्तर हो, जसले वि.व्य.स सदस्यहरुमा लामो अवधिको क्षमता अभिवृद्धि कार्यक्रमको आवश्यकता औल्याएको छ । भुमिका बोधको अभावले वि.व्य.स सदस्यहरुमा व्याप्त कार्यसम्पादन अक्षमताको पनि वर्णन यहि शीर्षकमा गरिएको छ । चौथो निष्कर्षले वि.व्य.स भित्र र तिनीहरुप्रति उत्पन्न तनावहरुको वर्णन गरिएको छ जसका प्रमुख कारणहरुमध्ये सदस्यहरुमा आफ्नो भुमिकाको अस्पष्टता, शक्ति संघर्ष, स्रोत वितरणमा असंगतता, शिक्षक व्यवस्थापन चुनौति, र दक्षताको अभाव प्रमुख तनावहरु छन् । अन्तिम शीर्षकले वि.व्य.समा शासन चुनौतिहरुको समाधानका बारेमा उल्लेख गरेको छ जसमा प्रमुख वि.व्य.स सदस्यहरुलाई पर्याप्त विध्यालय नेतृत्व, व्यवस्थनपन र सुशासन सम्बन्धी ज्ञान तथा तालिम उपलब्ध गराउनु हो ।

विध्यालय विकासमा वि.व्य.सको ठोस भुमिका विश्लेषण गर्दा नीति र व्यवहारबीचको अन्तर यस अनुसन्धानले स्पष्ट देखाएको छ र त्यसको सुधारका लागि हस्तक्षेप आवश्यक छ भन्ने कुरा पनि देखाउँछ । नीति - व्यवहार अन्तरको निष्कर्षले नेपालको बदलिंदो शैक्षिक परिदृश्यमा शैक्षिक शासनसम्बन्धी बहसमा महत्वपूर्ण योगदान पुर्याउँछ, र नीति निर्माता तथा सरोकारवालाहरुका लागि व्यवहारिक सुझावहरु प्रस्तुत गर्दछ ।



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I hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge, this dissertation, titled '**School Governance: Role of School Management Committee in School Development**' is my original work unless otherwise stated. This work has not been submitted for any research degree previously, and it is not currently under consideration at any other university. I understand that a copy of my dissertation will be available at the Tribhuvan University Library. By signing below, I consent to my dissertation being accessible to anyone who requests it for academic purposes.

Kuldip Neupane

28th April, 2025 (2082/01/15)



My late father, my family, my Gurus, my community and teachers



It is my pleasure to certify that Mr. Kuldip Neupane, has prepared and submitted his dissertation entitled '**School Governance: Role of School Management Committee in School Development**' for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in education studies. I would like to recommend the dissertation to the research committee of the Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu for approval.

.....


Supervisor

Professor Hem Raj Dhakal, PhD

Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu

28th April 2025 (2082/01/15)



This dissertation entitled '**School Governance: Role of School Management**

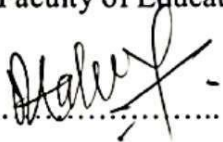
Committee in School Development' by Kuldip Neupane for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education has been approved.

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Table of Content

List of Tables	i
List of Figures	ii
Abbreviations	iii
CHAPTER I	1
Introduction	1
Background	1
Problem Statement	7
Research Questions	10
Rationale of the Study	11
Limitations of the Study	16
Delimitations of the Study	17
CHAPTER II	19
Literature Review	19
Governance: Balancing Leadership and Management	20
School Governance: A Confluence of Leadership and Management	51
Community Participation in School Governance	68
School Governance Shift in Nepal	71
Researches and Reports of School Governance	74
Theorizing the Literature	79
Summary of the Literature Review	80
Research Gap	81
Conceptual Framework	84
CHAPTER III	86
Research Methodology	86

Research Paradigm	86
Philosophical Standpoints	88
Research Design	88
Research Method	91
Sampling.....	94
Data Collection Tools and Techniques	97
Analysis and Interpretation of Data.....	101
Reliability, Validity and Trustworthiness	103
Ethical Considerations.....	106
Methodological Framework	108
CHAPTER IV	110
Evolution of SMCs: Shaping School Development Over Time	110
School Governance in Nepal: Then and Now	110
SMC: Governance, Leadership, and Educational Management.....	150
SMC's Impact on School Development: A Governance Framework	156
Discussion on the Historical Evolution of SMCs Over Time	169
Chapter Summary.....	181
CHAPTER V	183
The Role of SMCs in Community and Institutional School Context	183
SMC in Community Schools.....	183
SMC in Institutional Schools	190
SMC Functioning: Community and Institutional School Difference.....	198
SMC Tensions: A Governance Perspective	202
Chapter Summary.....	205

CHAPTER VI	207
SMCs: Governance Through Policy and Bureaucracy	207
Policy Perspectives on SMCs in School Governance	207
Bureaucratic Perspectives on SMCs in School Governance	217
Chapter Summary	228
CHAPTER VII	230
SMCs: Governance Roles Through Stakeholder Views	230
Community School SMCs' Governance Perception	237
Institutional School SMCs' Governance Perception	251
Stakeholder Perceptions of SMC Performance and Functioning	264
Chapter Summary	271
CHAPTER VIII	273
Impact of Management Committees on School Development	273
SMCs in Adapting to Social and Educational Changes	273
Comparing SMC Governance in Community vs. Institutional Schools	279
Political Influence and Capacity Gaps in Nepal's SMCs	284
SMC Tensions Developed over Time	289
Overcoming Governance Challenges in Nepal's SMCs	292
Chapter Summary	299
CHAPTER IX	301
Conclusions and Implications	301
Conclusions	301
Implications	304

References.....	307
Appendix 1.....	340
Rights and Duties of SMCs Mentioned in Education Act and Directives.....	340
Appendix 2.....	344
Questionnaires.....	344

List of Tables

- Table 1. *Sample Population (Quantitative)*
- Table 2. *Demographic distribution of respondents (parents)*
- Table 3. *Demographic distribution of respondents (teachers)*
- Table 4. *Parents' perception of community school SMC's governance*
- Table 5. *Teachers' perception of community school SMC's governance*
- Table 6. *Parents' perception of institutional school SMC's governance*
- Table 7. *Teachers' perception of institutional school SMC's governance*
- Table 8. *Impact of political influence in SMCs*
- Table 9. *Dimensional conclusion of community and institutional school SMC functioning*
- Table 10. *Governance literacy gap in SMCs*
- Table 11. *Challenges leadership and management attributes of governance in SMCs*

List of Figures

Figure 1. Summary of Governance and Its Leadership and Management Aspects

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Figure 3. The Embedded Design

Figure 4. Methodological Framework

Figure 5. Joint Display of Integrated Findings on SMC Governance

Figure 6. Overcoming governance challenges

Abbreviations

A.D. – Anno Domini

CERID – Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development

CIAA – Commission for Investigative Abuse of Authority

DANIDA – Danish International Development Agency

EFA – Education for All

GoN – Government of Nepal

GoNMoE – Government of Nepal Ministry of Education

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organization

NESP – Nepal Education System Plan

NIRT – National Institute for Research and Training

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NNEPC – Nepal National Educational Planning Commission

OPSBA – Ontario Public School Boards' Association

P1, P2,... P13 – Participant 1,, Participant 13

PTA – Parent Teacher Association

R.Q. – Research Question

SCC – School Conduction Committee

SD – Standard Deviation

SMC – School Management Committee

SLC – School Leaving Certificate

SPC – School Provisional Committee

SSDP – School Sector Development Plan

SSRP – School Sector Reform Plan

UKAID – United Kingdom Agency for International Development

UN – United Nations

NESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNDP – United Nations Development Program

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

USAID – United States Agency for International Development

USOM – United States Operations Mission

v.s. – vikram sambat (Nepali Date)

WHO – World Health Organization

CHAPTER I

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the primary concern addressed in the research. It outlines the examination of the issue and discusses the problem with it that serves as a focal point for the study. As part of the process of narrowing down the research focus, this chapter formulates the research questions. Finally, it offers insights into the reasoning behind the research and acknowledges its limitations and delimitations.

Background

The Education Act of 1971, in its 7th amendment in 2002, established the School Management Committee (SMC) in the repertoire of school governance with the objective of enhancing school development. The governance of schools (Regmi, 2021) within the global framework encompasses intricate interactions among diverse actors spanning national governments, supranational entities like the World Bank, and non-state organizations, further influenced by dynamic networks, shaping a competitive policy landscape.

The primary aim of the establishment of SMC was to foster community responsibility for the comprehensive development of schools since GoN 2016 in SSDP (2016/17 – 2022/23) says, “the Education Act gives SMCs major responsibilities for governing and managing schools... While SMCs need to focus more on school level planning... SMCs and PTAs are responsible for internal management and day-to-day functioning of schools” (p. 16) and “the Act established the SMC’s primacy in school decisions, bringing back the legal power of local community in school management” (Khanal, 2013, p. 63). Subsequently, every school has implemented a management committee . Nonetheless, there has been no

discernible enhancement in students' academic performance as NIRT (2016) mentioned that "students' achievement is also a major problem at all levels" (p. v) and Chapagain (2021) concludes that "the performance of most of all community school students is underperformance" (p. 32).

SMCs are responsible for school development for they serve as the primary governing body, encompassing participation from various sectors. Each actor is anticipated to actively engage in school governance. However, despite two decades having "shift from government controlled educational management to a new governance mechanism [with SMCs], Nepal has not made any significant progress in its educational indicators" (Regmi, 2021, p. 39) since "good governance in school education sector is still a challenge" (GoN, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology 2019, p. 4). There are reasons behind it.

The primary factor contributing to the ineffectiveness of the SMC is its political alignment as "Some members of SMC belonging to different political parties and are bounded by certain political ideology" (Shah, 2016, p. 65). The prevailing reality is that, rather than selecting knowledgeable and experienced members, individuals with strong political affiliations tend to get selected since Political groups are continuing to lobby for their preferred approach to power sharing in the selection of the SMC (Khanal, 2010; Bhattarai, 2022). The striking truth is that one must align themselves closely with a particular political party to secure an election to the SMC. And that is why, GoN 2016 in SSDP (2016/17 – 2022/23) mentioned, in its 'strategies for improving governance and management', to "develop a strategy to reduce the political affiliation of school level staff, teachers and managers and to strengthen community affiliation" (p. 52) observing the situation. In spite this effort, the situation has not changed.

The next reason is corruption as Ghimire (2015) “has critiqued the Nepal’s education system as most corrupt sector presenting the evidence reported by the Commission for the Investigative Abuse of Authority (CIAA)” (Khadka, 2021, p. 101). Khadka added “according to the CIAA’s report of 2013/14, largest numbers (13% out of all cases) of corruption-related cases were registered and reported education sector having maximum corruption and irregularities” (p. 101). Thyness (2011) in Shah (2016) says “there is lack of transparency, accountability and [there is] rampant corruption in education sector at school level in Nepal” (p. 4). The legacy has continued as Budhathoki (2022) mentions “With the decentralization of the school education sector in Nepal, corruption has also been decentralized” (p. 225). Corruption is closely intertwined with the political alignment. To secure an election, individuals often need the backing of a political party, as the party provides two significant forms of support: the influence of its political ideology and the collection of funds. In many regions of Nepal, SMC elections are viewed as significant opportunities for potential financial gain. Consequently, members of the community’s elite often either directly nominate themselves for these positions or exert influence over certain candidate from minority groups.

The third reason is the lack of education and training in SMC members as NIRT (2016) has identified the “low awareness of parents and communities, which is tied to lack of capacity in School Management Committee ... to ensure that children receive quality education” (p. vi) and the situation has not improved yet. The individuals involved in the SMC often lack a clear understanding of their roles in the school’s development and in enhancing students’ academic achievements. Their primary focus tends to be on securing materialistic support from government bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international non-governmental

organizations (INGOs), rather than on actively improving the day-to-day classroom teaching by motivating the teachers (Neupane, 2023). There are two key issues at play here: firstly, many SMC members are unfamiliar with the specific duties and responsibilities associated with their roles in the committee. Secondly, due to their limited education and awareness, school head teachers and teachers can easily manipulate them to serve their interests.

The fourth reason is the rising tension within and to School Management Committees following the country's transition to federalism (Daly et al., 2019). The Local Government Act of 2017 allowed local government representatives, particularly ward chairpersons (or their appointees), to join the SMCs. In certain municipalities, ward chairpersons have even asserted their right to serve as the SMC chairperson, a move that has been legitimized in some areas. However, this has led to resistance from the teaching community and head teachers, who are not prepared to accept this change.

According to the theory of governance, actors should possess enhanced leadership and management capabilities. In the context of SMCs, they are expected to function as leaders who envision the school's development and managers who manage the whole school system since effective school governance (Glatter, Mulford and Shuttleworth, 2003) assigns leaders the task of aligning education with stakeholder preferences and managers must identify and respond to parents' demand efficiently, necessitating entrepreneurial leadership to integrate educational and managerial aspects. This involves creating strategic plans aimed at improving the school by motivating teachers and the head teacher to deliver quality education. Additionally, SMCs are tasked with overseeing the day-to-day activities of the head teacher, teachers, and students, effectively serving as watchdogs. These

comprehensive responsibilities encompassed within school governance collectively contribute to the school's development. The literature says that SMC focus on the students' educational development, e.g. Lewis & Pettersson (2009) in Khadka (2021) says "effective governance is essential factor for the development of education as it is assumed as an entry point to educational development" (p. 98). The presumption of forming SMC in school is for the school's development.

School development is a multifaceted process that involves the continuous improvement of various aspects of the educational environment. Key indicators of school development provide a framework for evaluating the effectiveness and progress of a school in fulfilling its mission to educate and nurture students (Mohzana et al., 2024). Among these indicators, academic performance stands out as a crucial measure. Improved standardized test scores, graduation rates, and college acceptance rates reflect the school's ability to provide a strong educational foundation. However, academic performance also encompasses the holistic development of students, including critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence, which are essential for their success beyond the classroom.

Teacher quality is another vital indicator of school development. The qualifications, expertise, and ongoing professional development of teachers significantly influence student outcomes (Astiwi, Siswanto and Suryatama, 2024). Schools that prioritize the continuous growth of their teaching staff, offering regular training and opportunities for skill enhancement, create an environment where effective instructional practices thrive. This, in turn, leads to more engaging and impactful learning experiences for students.

Curriculum and instruction are central to a school's development. A well-designed curriculum that is aligned with current educational standards and relevant to

students' future needs is essential for preparing them for the challenges ahead (Harque and David, 2023). Schools that offer diverse learning opportunities, including extracurricular activities and special programs, foster student engagement and promote a well-rounded education. Furthermore, the quality of infrastructure and resources available to students and teachers plays a critical role in the overall development of a school. Modern, well-maintained facilities and access to up-to-date technology are essential for creating a conducive learning environment.

Student well-being is another key indicator of school development. A safe, supportive, and inclusive school environment is fundamental to students' academic and personal growth (Sayfulloevna, 2023). Schools that invest in health and wellness programs, counseling services, and initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion contribute to the overall well-being of their students. Parental and community satisfaction also serve as important indicators of a school's success. When parents and the community are actively involved in school activities and decision-making processes, it strengthens the school's connection to its stakeholders and fosters a collaborative environment (Sakamoto, 2021).

Finally, school leadership and management are pivotal in driving school development (Kilag et al., 2023). Effective leadership, characterized by a clear vision and the ability to inspire and manage change, is essential for steering a school towards continuous improvement. Strong management practices, efficient resource allocation, and the involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process are crucial for sustaining school development over the long term. Collectively, these indicators provide a comprehensive picture of a school's progress and areas for growth, guiding efforts to create an educational environment that meets the needs of all students.

Leadership and management are central to the governance of any institution, particularly in the context of school development. Effective leadership in schools involves setting a clear vision, establishing goals, and guiding the institution toward achieving its mission. Leaders in education, such as principals and governing teams, play a crucial role in shaping the school's culture, fostering collaboration among staff, and inspiring both teachers and students to strive for excellence. By cultivating a positive and inclusive environment, school leaders can motivate their teams to embrace innovation, implement effective teaching practices, and address challenges proactively. This strategic vision and guidance are essential for driving continuous improvement and ensuring that the school remains responsive to the needs of its students and community.

Management, as a key component of governance, involves the day-to-day operations and resource allocation that support the school's development goals. Efficient management practices ensure that the school's resources, whether financial, physical, or human, are utilized effectively to enhance educational outcomes. This includes managing budgets, maintaining facilities, and ensuring that teachers have the tools and support they need to deliver high-quality instruction. Additionally, good management involves creating systems for monitoring progress, evaluating performance, and making data-driven decisions. Together, strong leadership and effective management create a robust governance structure that not only supports but actively drives school development, leading to sustained growth and improvement over time.

Problem Statement

School governance underscores the pivotal role played by governing agencies in driving the overall development of a school (Connolly and James, 2024). The

School Management Committee serves as the immediate local governing body of the school and is mandated by the Education Regulation of 2002 to work towards the betterment of the school. The ubiquitous assumption here is that SMC members are well-versed in their roles and responsibilities, and there is an expectation that they will act in a manner consistent with their perceived duties.

The evolution and transformation of the concept of SMC in Nepal, influenced by various regimes over time, have shaped its role and functioning within the educational landscape. This developmental process has, in turn, guided the behavior of SMCs in specific ways, with consequential impacts on the development of schools. Therefore, the key questions that emerge from this context are: How has the conceptual evolution of SMC impacted on school development? Do the members of SMCs have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities? Are they functioning in accordance with the expectations set forth by the theory of governance and the duties prescribed by the policy? Are SMCs functioning identically in community and institutional schools or is there disparity? And finally, how are the SMCs going through the tensions? These inquiries serve as important avenues for examining the effectiveness and alignment of SMCs with the broader goals of pragmatic educational governance.

To answer these questions comprehensively, this research adopted a mixed methods approach. Quantitative data, collected through structured questionnaires, provided measurable insights into the understanding, practices, and patterns of SMC functioning across institutional and community schools. Complementing this, qualitative data, gathered through interviews, document analysis, and participant narratives, illuminated the deeper, context-specific experiences, challenges, and

tensions that SMCs face. The integration of both data types allowed for a more nuanced and holistic understanding of how governance is enacted at the school level.

The progress of a school is intricately linked to the actions taken by the School Management Committee, encompassing elements such as strategic planning, day-to-day oversight, instructional guidance, monitoring, and effective communication. The SMC operates in alignment with how its members perceive their roles and responsibilities. Drawing from the theory of governance, it is evident that leadership within the SMC should have the capacity to envision institutional goals, while management is responsible for tracking and ensuring the realization of those objectives. Relying solely on a political or power-centric understanding of governance does not equip the SMC to effectively focus on the school's development. Consequently, the country has not witnessed significant advancements in school development.

In light of these considerations, there is a compelling need for a thorough examination of the tensions that may exist in and around SMCs because of the existing gap between policy and practice. A mixed methods study holds the potential to not only quantify trends and perceptions but also interpret the underlying causes, meanings, and contextual realities. Such a study holds the potential to shed light on areas where improvements are needed to facilitate more effective school development since the National Education Policy 2076 v.s. (corresponding to 2019 A.D.) also mentions that “SMC will be made responsible and accountable for making decision on school policy” (p. 46).

Research Questions

This study is ultimately geared towards addressing the overarching question: “What are the prevailing disparities between the policies and practices of SMCs that are creating the tensions in the context of school development?”

This inquiry is grounded in the theoretical lens of governance, which emphasizes visionary leadership, accountability, participatory management, and responsiveness to stakeholder needs. Drawing on leadership and management aspects as central to governance theory, this research sought to understand how SMCs envision, lead, and manage school development processes, as well as how they respond to the institutional and contextual demands of governance structures. The use of a mixed methods approach, qualitative interviews, document analysis, and narratives, combined with quantitative surveys enabled a layered understanding of both the policy prescriptions and the lived realities of SMCs.

To delve into this overarching question, the following specific research questions were examined:

1. How has the evolution of SMC over time influenced their contribution to the development of schools?
2. How do SMCs function within the contexts of community and institutional schools?
3. What are the leadership and management responsibilities of SMCs delineated in policy documents related to school development, and what perspectives do bureaucrats hold regarding the leadership and management functions of SMCs?

4. How do community members and teachers perceive the leadership and management roles carried out by SMCs in the community and institutional schools, respectively?
5. What are the practical roles and actions undertaken by SMCs in the context of school development?

Rationale of the Study

The School Management Committee in Nepal has rich historical legacy, dating back to the inception of the formal school system in the country during mid-19th century. These committees have played a pivotal role in governing and enhancing the development of schools, making them a crucial non-governmental entity deeply rooted in the principles of governance theory. Investigating the SMC's historical evolution can provide profound insights into its growth, development, and the intricate dynamics it has woven into Nepal's educational landscape.

The groundwork challenges in Nepal's educational system explored in the research are political alignment, corruption, and insufficient knowledge and experience within SMCs. By highlighting these challenges, the research takes a proactive approach to address issues hindering the effectiveness of SMCs, offering a pathway for improvement. Literature review delves into governance principles, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and public participation. By examining the evolution of school governance in Nepal, the research identifies a crucial policy-practice gap. This is essential for policymakers and practitioners to bridge, ensuring that theoretical ideals align with the practical implementation of governance principles.

The significance of studying the SMC's history lies in its substantial responsibilities in the governance and development of schools. SMCs act as the

linchpin between municipal administration and school management, rendering them indispensable in the educational framework. Over the course of time, political revolutions have induced changes in the context, content, and nomenclature of SMCs. Unpacking the factors that have driven these transformations is essential, as they have left a profound imprint on the education system. Thus, delving into the historical evolution of SMCs not only helps us comprehend their fundamental role in school development but also provides valuable context for understanding their contemporary behavior within the education system.

The analysis of the historical development of SMCs in Nepal provides a nuanced understanding of their adaptability in school governance. The historical trajectory, from grassroots-driven committees to state-intervened structures, reflects the dynamic nature of governance. Stakeholder perspectives further highlight the evolving roles, emphasizing leadership and management theories within SMCs. The distinct roles of School Management Committees in community and institutional schools are explored in this research. It sheds light on their proactive engagement in community schools, coupled with a gradual pace of development. In contrast, their relatively passive involvement in institutional schools is accompanied by commendable performance, garnering the interest of policymakers.

Tensions within SMCs have been a recurrent theme since their inception, with political affiliations often serving as a significant catalyst. Structural and functional changes have been afoot within SMCs, particularly in the context of community schools versus institutional schools. To illuminate these tensions and gain a deeper insight into how SMCs perceive their roles in school development, a comparative study between these two categories of schools is essential. Such an exploration is pivotal for effective policy formulation.

Governance theory underscores the pivotal role of governing bodies in propelling institutional development. As this research focuses on the leadership and management aspects of governance within SMCs, it seeks to evaluate how these committees function as leaders and managers of educational institutions. SMCs are entrusted with the task of shaping a school's vision and overseeing daily operations to achieve educational goals. To ensure effective governance, it is paramount to understand how various stakeholders, including community members and teachers, perceive the leadership and management roles of SMCs. This insight can guide SMCs in fulfilling their roles more effectively, forging a symbiotic relationship between theory and practice.

The analysis of the leadership and management roles of School Management Committees through the lens of governance, as perceived by policymakers and bureaucrats, scrutinizes the disparities between the assigned and assumed roles of SMCs as outlined in policy documents and the actual experiences of bureaucrats involved in SMC functioning. The exploration of this policy-practice gap highlights a valuable opportunity for policymakers to intervene strategically in the realm of school development, given that the observed realities of SMC functioning diverge from the designated roles specified in policy. This nuanced examination underscores the potential for policy adjustments and strategic interventions to better align the intended functions of SMCs with the on-the-ground realities, ultimately contributing to more effective school governance and development.

Furthermore, analyzing the alignment between policy directives and actual SMC practices in school development is not just beneficial; it is essential. Bridging the gap between policy and practice is a critical challenge that policymakers must grapple with to enhance the governance structure within SMCs. By scrutinizing this

issue meticulously, we can unearth valuable recommendations for fine-tuning the governance mechanisms within SMCs, promoting more seamless coordination between the theoretical framework and practical implementation.

SMC members' nuanced understanding of their roles and responsibilities is the linchpin to their effective performance and, by extension, positive educational outcomes. Yet, existing reports and research have not consistently depicted a clear picture of SMC effectiveness. Thus, conducting an in-depth investigation into SMC members' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities quantitatively is not just prudent; it is imperative. This endeavor can offer invaluable insights, not only for SMC members but also for school head teachers and education policymakers, offering a roadmap for refining and optimizing the governance structure within the education sector. In summation, the study of SMCs is not merely an exploration of the past but a compass for steering the future of education in Nepal towards excellence and equity.

Stakeholders' perspectives underscore the importance of practical outcomes and effective decision-making within SMCs. Community involvement emerges as a recurring theme, emphasizing the need for local participation in school management and policy decisions. This aligns with emphasizing real-world problem-solving and community engagement.

Scrutinizing the tangible roles played by School Management Committees in the development of schools suggests that the clarity of roles among SMC members is hindered by factors such as their educational background and alignment with specific political ideologies. In light of these findings intervention factors that, when addressed, could enhance the performance of SMCs in driving school development. These identified factors serve as crucial indicators for policymakers, offering valuable

insights into areas where strategic interventions can be most effective in promoting the desired outcomes in school governance and development.

A key methodological contribution of this study lies in its adoption of a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data to achieve a holistic understanding of school governance. In a context as socially embedded and politically sensitive as the functioning of SMCs in Nepal, a single-method approach would have been limiting. The quantitative data captured patterns, trends, and levels of stakeholder satisfaction, while the qualitative data provided deeper insights into lived experiences, power dynamics, and contextual complexities. The triangulation of findings enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the research, enabling it to reveal not just what is happening, but why it is happening. This integrated design allowed the research to bridge macro-level policy discussions with micro-level practices and perceptions, thereby offering richer, more actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and education leaders.

The main findings, encapsulating the role of community involvement, leadership, management, and adaptability offer a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics within SMCs, providing valuable insights for educational stakeholders, policymakers, and practitioners. They underline the significance of a balanced and adaptable approach to governance, leadership, and management. The emphasis on efficient resource utilization, decision-making, and the evolving roles of SMCs in different school contexts provides actionable insights for enhancing educational governance in Nepal.

In conclusion, this research significantly contributes to the discourse on educational governance in Nepal. By addressing challenges, and offering practical insights, it becomes a valuable resource for shaping the future of Nepal's educational

governance. The emphasis on adaptability, community involvement, and leadership principles aligns with the ever-changing landscape of education, making the research relevant and impactful.

Limitations of the Study

Nepal's educational landscape consists of diverse types of schools, including community schools, institutional schools (privately owned), *Gumbas*, and *Mothersas*. This research predominantly concentrated on SMCs associated with community and institutional schools, omitting the study of *Gumbas* and *Mothersas*. Likewise, the study of ancient educational institutions like *Gurukul* is not a part of this research.

In terms of population coverage, this research focused on SMC members selected from specific schools within the Godawari Municipality. Another population group included community members closely connected to these schools, as well as teachers. These individuals provided valuable perspectives on SMCs through their own experiences and viewpoints. However, it is important to note that this study did not incorporate the viewpoint of students, despite their status as significant stakeholders in the education system.

The population limitation of quantitative study is teachers and parents only. While distributing the questionnaire the education level of parents was considered which consists of 0.03% from community schools and 0.06% from institutional schools who were under SLC. This population may have less understanding of the existence of SMC.

These acknowledged limitations are essential to consider when interpreting the findings of this research. While it offers valuable insights into the governance of SMCs in Nepalese schools, it should be viewed as a specific exploration within the broader realm of governance studies.

Delimitations of the Study

The governance of schools in Nepal involves multiple layers of governing bodies, each with its distinct role and responsibilities. This study, however, narrowed its scope to examine the governance patterns specifically within School Management Committees. While SMCs are pivotal in school governance, it is crucial to recognize that they are just one component of a larger governance structure.

This research intended to explore the roles, functioning, and challenges of SMCs under the theory governance, delimiting to its leadership and management attributes. The concept of governance itself is expansive, encompassing a multitude of disciplines, including but not limited to management, leadership, law, politics, sociology, and anthropology. Given the breadth of this subject, it is important to acknowledge that this research cannot comprehensively cover all these disciplines. Instead, it primarily focused on the intricate relationship between governance and leadership and management which is employed as the theoretical lens for this research.

In this research, leadership and management are identified as key attributes of governance, each with distinct qualities that shape the study's framework. Leadership is characterized by decision-making, a participatory approach, accountability and responsibility, and social responsibility. These qualities emphasize the role of leaders in guiding and involving others, ensuring accountability, and upholding social responsibilities. On the other hand, management is defined by pursuing goals, relationship management, communication, effectiveness and efficiency, network management, and monitoring. These qualities highlight the practical aspects of achieving objectives, maintaining relationships, ensuring effective communication, optimizing processes, managing networks, and monitoring progress. Together, these

two attributes—leadership and management—along with their respective qualities, form the dominant theoretical foundation for this research.

The research design employed in this study is an embedded design within the mixed-method framework. The process began with a qualitative exploration of the historical evolution of School Management Committees and their impact on school development, with a focus on the development of SMCs in both institutional and community schools. This qualitative investigation extended to an analysis of policy documents and the perspectives of bureaucrats regarding the role of SMCs in school governance. The next step embedded a quantitative exploration of stakeholders' views on SMC activities in school governance which is nested with qualitative insights. Descriptive statistical tools, including mean and standard deviation, were utilized to effectively arrive at the study's conclusions.

The objectives of this study were delimited to exploring the evolution of School Management Committees and their impact on school development; by focusing on examining the current functioning of SMCs in both community and institutional schools; through evaluating the role of SMCs through the perspectives of policy, bureaucrats, and stakeholders such as parents and teachers; with the goal of analyzing SMC tensions and identifying gaps between policy and practice.

Similarly, the sample delimitation for this study is confined to 468 parents and 208 teachers for the quantitative analysis. Likewise, for the qualitative analysis, adhering to the principle that a participant's view can be sufficient, the study purposefully included 4 head teachers, 4 SMC members, 3 bureaucrats, and 2 education experts.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This chapter provides a thorough exploration of school governance, emphasizing the dimensions of leadership and management within the framework of governance. The literature review triangulates these dimensions with the broader concept of school governance, revealing their interconnectedness. Focused on maintaining relevance, the chapter excludes an extensive exploration of governance aspects beyond leadership and management. It also examines school governance policy in Nepal, community involvement in governance, historical exploration of school governance in Nepal, and pertinent research and reports on governance's impact on educational development. The aim is to offer a comprehensive understanding of existing literature, highlighting the crucial role of leadership and management in school governance within the educational context.

The literature review process went through various steps. First I did a general study of governance from the literature available. When it was uncovered that governance has various dimensions, then I focused the study on two: leadership and management, which are basic qualities of school governance. Further I identify the key words governance, leadership, management, school governance, school leadership, school management, educational management, and school board. Then a thick literature search started which led to Tribhuvan University library, Kathmandu University library, and the websites like TU e-library, ProQuest Dissertation, Google Scholar, Research Gate, NepJol, and Sodhganga. After the thick literature study and analysis, I searched for its link to the overall analysis which ended in community participation in school governance, school governance history in Nepal and their related research and reports in national and international context.

Governance: Balancing Leadership and Management

Governance as defined by Keping (2018), is a complex interplay of institutions and actors, extending beyond traditional governmental boundaries. This concept gained prominence in a 1989 World Bank report (Karatas, 2020) and has since become a central discourse in political, academic, and various domains, identified as rich with democratic potential (Everatt, 2019b). Despite its European origins, governance practices have proliferated globally, reaching developing and underdeveloped nations.

At its core, governance emerges from power decentralization, addressing questions of decision-making authority and mechanisms for holding decision-makers accountable (Asaduzzaman and Virtanen, 2016). This decentralization reflects a broader trend, especially in democratic settings, challenging traditional government-centric approaches (Paquet and Wilson, 2015 in Atzori, 2015). The governance process involves diverse public and private entities, serving to counterbalance undue influence by governmental bodies, thereby achieving a power equilibrium within a given system.

Governance theory encompasses a multitude of terms such as accountability, control, responsiveness, transparency, public participation, economy, efficiency, and more (Ekundayo, 2017). Despite its ubiquity, the term remains elusive and undefined (Everatt, 2019a; Imaginario and Guedes, 2020). In the realm of public affairs, governance operates at the intersection of government and program implementation, embodying principles of fairness, transparency, trustworthiness, and accountability (Reddy et al., 2020).

Understanding governance requires interdisciplinary integration, spanning management, leadership, law, politics, and sociology. The distinction between

government and governance is context-dependent, with varying relationships to concepts like leadership, management, justice, democracy, and decentralization. Scholars continue to debate whether governance should be approached as a process or a product-oriented concept.

Governance, defined as the process of decision-making and implementation impacting society (Edwards et al., 2012), emphasizes the management and leadership of societies, governments, and organizations (Stoker, 1998). Crucially, the participation of stakeholders in decision-making is central to governance, with accountability resting on the shoulders of decision-makers (UNDP, 1997 in Everatt, 2019b). The decision-making process assumes responsible, transparent, and accountable actors, requiring long-term considerations and participatory social interactions.

In the pursuit of desirable outcomes addressing stakeholders' expectations, governance challenges the conventional government-centric model. Stoker (1998) describes governance as a change in the balance between the state and civil society, advocating for participatory governance practices (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009). Participatory governance, linked to community-level governance and active citizenship, aligns with democratic principles, emphasizing community involvement in decision-making processes.

Governance serves as the foundation for social audit, fostering a sense of ownership through social interactions before decisions are made (Torfing et al., 2012 in Ansell and Torfing, 2016). Transparency, a cornerstone of governance definitions by organizations like UNDP and the World Bank, ensures social validity for decisions, validating correctness through participation. Social participation

contributes to procedural fairness, with governance playing a pivotal role in achieving effective decision implementation, stakeholder acceptance, and consensus.

Governance, distinct from law, functions as a framework within the law, promoting the rule of law (Balarin et al., 2008; UNDP, 1997 in Everatt, 2019b). The governance process adheres to the legal framework of specific societies, emphasizing key governance principles like accountability, adherence to the rule of law, and state organization. Governance is inherently context-specific, respecting national boundaries and aligning with the principles of national democracy.

Incorporating principles of management, governance addresses the “how” of achieving specific objectives, recognizing the pivotal role of resource management (Abdullah and Valentine, 2009). Effective regulation and management of human, economic, and infrastructural resources are deemed crucial for democratic development and economic growth. Governance, viewed as a communicative relationship (Bang, 2003 in Chhotray and Stoker, 2009), involves the coordination and communication of multiple governing and influencing actors within a dynamic and interactive social system.

Governance’s interdisciplinary nature connects it with politics, sociology, leadership, and management. Positioned within the policy development cycle, governance encompasses the entire spectrum of development activities, requiring effective leadership and management. Leadership, defined by Zalenik (1977) in Jackson and Parry (2011), involves developing vision and driving change, while management, as described by Levy (2004) in Jackson and Parry (2011), monitors progress and solves problems. Leadership and management within governance involve understanding their roles, especially when conflicts arise (Blyth, 2017).

Distinguishing between the skills and functions of leadership and management is essential in governance. Leadership primarily focuses on influencing people and driving change, seeking to create a vision and mission. In contrast, management maintains and monitors institutions, overseeing day-to-day activities to achieve organizational goals (Saputra, 2021). Moreover, as highlighted by Roberson and Perry (2021) and Ali and Anwar (2021), institutions are maintained and monitored by managers, while leaders seek to overhaul them.

In summary, governance encompasses institutions and actors both within and beyond the government, focusing on decentralized power and balancing decision-making authority. Governance theory integrates terms such as accountability, transparency, and participation and involves various disciplines like leadership, management, law, politics, and sociology. Leadership in governance involves influencing and driving change, while management is concerned with monitoring progress and problem-solving. Leadership seeks to create a vision and mission, while management maintains and monitors institutions. The distinction between leadership and management is crucial in governance, as leadership focuses on influencing people, while management oversees daily activities to achieve organizational goals. Governance combines these aspects to achieve desirable outcomes in the context of development process. The following paragraphs delve into the leadership and management aspects of governance in more detail.

Leadership aspect of governance. The current paradigm places “governance” at the core of understanding development, as highlighted by Baland, Moene, and Robinson (2009), cited in Pillay (2019), where the vision and mission of a leader (leadership) play a vital role in the governance process. Leadership skills are essential in governance, as Chhotray and Stoker (2009) point out, stating that “in

order to manage networks ... managers and, more particularly, politicians need to learn new skills of leadership” (p. 29). Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) add that governance encompasses multifaceted meanings and serves as a counterpart to “public sector management” and “public sector leadership” (p. 1).

In the context of leadership within governance, it's important to note that no single leader acts as a commander; instead, all participants should embody leadership qualities, given that “Governance is where ‘no one is in charge’” (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009). Governance has been linked to and separated from participation, delivery, institutions, leadership, states, and sectors (Everatt, 2019b). Effective governance often involves skills such as diplomacy, communication, and bargaining to achieve coordination (Rhodes, 1997b, cited in Chhotray and Stoker, 2009). A new aspect of leadership suggests delegating tasks for timely and effective work completion. As Chhotray and Stoker (2009) suggest, “if network theories argue that the key governance task is to manage networks effectively, then delegation theories argue that the key to effective governance is getting the structure of delegation right” (p. 32).

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to governance, it's important to recognize that effective governance typically includes strong leadership, a conducive culture, and effective communication (APSC, 2010a, cited in Edwards et al., 2012). Under the umbrella term “leadership aspect of governance,” this research focuses on decision-making, participation and collaboration, accountability and responsibility, and social responsibility, with a detailed description of these leadership qualities.

Navigating collective decision-making: The essence of governance.

Governance primarily revolves around the process of making collective decisions. As Chhotray and Stoker (2009) emphasize, “Governance theory, as such, has both an

explanatory dimension and an advisory character” (p. 214). This dual aspect of governance theory encompasses the inclusion of diverse voices and recommendations from various stakeholders during the decision-making process. Scholars and researchers assert the importance of engaging multiple actors from different communities in decision-making. As Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) argue, “Governance is not only about determining the destination but also about determining who should be involved in decision-making and in what capacity” (pp. 4-5).

Furthermore, Chhotray and Stoker (2009) contend that the most effective governance occurs when individuals are actively engaged in self-regulation. Aktan (2008) offers a conceptualization of governance that involves “reducing the discretionary power of central bureaucratic authorities by expanding and strengthening interactions and transactions among affected parties within a decision area” (p. 181). Additionally, the functional separation of power, as outlined by Fama and Jensen (1982) and cited in Geeraert (2022), enhances oversight in decision-making by segregating “the approval and monitoring of decisions from their initiation and execution” (p. 23). In essence, governance revolves around the rules governing collective decision-making processes in contexts characterized by a multitude of actors or organizations, where no formal control system can dictate the terms of interactions among these entities (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009).

The governance perspective also highlights the growing involvement of the private and voluntary sectors in both service delivery and strategic decision-making processes (Stoker, 1998). This expanded definition of governance encourages maximum participation in decision-making, ensuring that the exercise of power reflects the interests of every community, ethnicity, sector, and individual. According to World Bank experts Kaufmann, Kraay, and Zoido Labaton (1999), governance

encompasses the customs and institutional mechanisms that govern the exertion of power and authority within a nation (cited in Karatas, 2020). The United Nations Development Program defines governance as “the use of political, economic, and administrative authority in managing a country's affairs,” emphasizing the complexity of mechanisms, processes, relationships, and institutions involved in this practice (Karatas, 2020, p. 2665). In this definition, the inclusion of various actors in both the decision-making process and its outcomes is implied.

Governance arrangements generally grant certain individuals the right to have a say while imposing responsibilities on everyone to accept collective decisions (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009). Community governance, for instance, aims to establish and nurture a collective identity within local authorities, allowing communities to have a voice in decision-making (Halsall, 2012). According to Graham et al. (2003), governance involves an interplay of structures, processes, and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are made, and how citizens and other stakeholders participate in these processes (cited in Asaduzzaman and Virtanen, 2016). In essence, governance seeks to understand how collective decision-making is constructed and is built on the foundation of finding consensus (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009) and ensuring that power is exercised in a manner that reflects the interests of a diverse range of actors (Fihtag, 2022).

The reviewed literature on the decision-making attribute within the leadership aspect emphasizes the importance of collective decision-making. In this context, collective decision-making refers to decisions that incorporate input from all stakeholders. Leaders must make informed decisions about who should be involved and to what extent each stakeholder should participate. The decisions made have a significant impact on the well-being of every stakeholder, highlighting the importance

of involving a diverse range of voices in the decision-making process. In the realm of politics, the decision-making process often involves navigating various layers of power dynamics among stakeholders. Socially and economically influential groups may carry more weight in this process, which can be fraught with risks. Governance plays a crucial role in balancing these dynamics. The concept of governance ensures that everyone has the right to voice their opinions while also obliging all stakeholders to accept the decisions reached collectively. Within the leadership aspect of governance, it is essential to determine what needs to be decided, how the decision should be made, and who should participate in the decision-making process. Ultimately, achieving a common consensus is of utmost importance in decision-making.

Enhancing governance through broad participation. Participation is recognized as one of the six principles of good governance in Addink (2019), and both the United Nations and WHO advocate for a broad spectrum of participation in governance processes. Governance, as described by Andree et al. (2019), extends beyond the state and its affiliated agencies, encompassing the formal and informal roles of a diverse array of actors in policymaking processes. This expanded view of governance acknowledges the importance of including a wide range of voices in decision-making as “processes include more than the state and its associated agencies, given the formal and informal roles of a wide range of actors in policy making processes” (Andree et al., 2019, p. 5). Everatt (2019b) emphasizes that in this highly political context, governance can serve as a tool to address global inequalities rooted in a history of racism, slavery, and colonialism. Governance's role is to support and oversee the government to ensure the active participation of all citizens, thereby challenging historical inequalities since “Governance in this highly political context

can be used as a tool to question the global inequalities inherited from the past – a past of racism, slavery and colonialism” (Everatt, 2019b, p. 29).

Pillay (2019), drawing from Olukoshi’s work, underscores the importance of meaningful citizen participation in policy making and the confidence citizens should have in their ability to shape public policy. This highlights the relevance of participation not only in policy formulation but also in its implementation for “we cannot talk meaningfully about democratic governance and accountability if citizens cannot take an active part in policy making and be confident that their active citizenry will shape public policy” (Pillay, 2019, p. 61). Warren Smit (2016), as detailed in Abrahams (2019), outlines four forms of governance, along with potential actors and typical concerns related to infrastructure, politics, economics, and development. In this context, the focus on potential actors underscores the necessity of involving all stakeholders who are directly affected by policies and decisions. Their participation is crucial to addressing and mitigating concerns related to governance as “the possible actors, here, is the participation of all the stakeholders. It is necessary for their participation since they are the one who get affected by the policy” (Abrahams, 2019, p. 103).

“The formal state apparatus has frequently proved to be inadequate in dealing with growing social complexities, and the actors from voluntary and private sectors have become increasingly involved in the governance process” (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009, p. 165). This highlights the necessity of involving stakeholders due to the limitations of the formal state apparatus. “It suggests that behind every mode of governance lies a specific understanding as different policy actors seek the best arrangement to attain their purposes” (Howlett et al., 2012, p. 205). This emphasizes the diversity of perspectives and objectives that shape governance.

Participation is not only important but also necessary in governance because “reflecting the original thrust on democratic participation, it is argued that participatory governance can ‘make for better citizens, better decisions and better government’” (Cornwall, 2004; Mansbridge, 1999; Geventa, 2002 in Chhotray and Stoker, 2009, p. 172). This underscores the positive impact of participatory governance on citizens, decisions, and government. Edwards et al. (2012), promotes the participatory approach in governance. The quote highlights the importance of the participatory perspective in governance, acknowledging its various conceptions and definitions: “all conceptions and definitions of governance-related concepts are contingent upon the particular scholarly, regulatory, or other perspective that governance observers and participants bring to their governance standpoint or role” (Edwards et al., 2012, p. 11).

Participatory governance is seen as a distinctly democratic form of decentralization, defined by an increase in the scope and depth of subordinate group participation in authoritative resource allocation (Heller, 2001, in Chhotray and Stoker, 2009). This definition emphasizes the democratic aspect and increased participation in resource allocation. Fischer (2006), as cited in Chhotray and Stoker (2009), considers participation as integral to the concept of governance itself, going beyond government to evolve new modes of problem-solving and decision-making. This highlights that governance remains incomplete without participation and its potential for innovate problem-solving.

Maximizing participation stands as a cornerstone of effective governance, facilitating collective ownership of decisions. It serves as a means to promote equality and reduce disparities among diverse societal groups. Governance emerged with the aim of fostering inclusive development, involving individuals across various

dimensions such as race, gender, ethnicity, economic status, and both public and private sectors. Participation plays a crucial role in amplifying the voices of marginalized populations. As previously discussed, participation in decision-making processes is imperative, as decisions impact all members of society. The participatory approach is well-suited to address the complexities of heterogeneous societies, even those that may superficially appear homogeneous. Incomplete development initiatives pose greater risks than projects that were never initiated. In such instances, limited participation heightens the potential for objections during implementation. Therefore, greater participation serves to minimize potential objections and enhance the likelihood of achieving intended goals. The leadership aspect extends beyond involving all stakeholders solely in decision-making phases, encompassing their engagement in problem-solving throughout implementation stages. The participatory approach aligns closely with democratic principles.

Accountability and Responsibility in Governance: A Global Imperative.

Global development institutions universally prioritize accountability and responsibility within the realm of governance. Actors involved in governance are expected to demonstrate responsibility and be accountable to stakeholders. Prominent development organizations, including the World Bank, United Nations, Overseas Development Institute/World Governance Assessment, and MO Ibrahim Foundation/Ibrahim Index of African Governance, emphasize accountability and/or responsibility in their governance definitions (Pillay, 2019). The concept of accountability and responsibility in governance serves as a check on power, as it inherently demands that power be answerable at all levels. Governance's insistence on accountability can be unsettling to those in positions of power and those who may seek to misuse that power (Everatt, 2019b). The World Bank's annual publication, the

Worldwide Governance Indicators, assesses countries across six dimensions, “Voice and accountability; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; control of corruption; rule of law; and political stability and absence of violence” (WHO, 2014, in Pillay, 2019, p. 59) and aggregates these scores into a single index.

Regarding accountability, Everatt (2019b) emphasizes that when governance becomes detached from power and accountability, both on a global and local scale, it loses its purpose and significance. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also places accountability at the core of governance. In addition to the fundamental elements of good governance, Ekundayo (2017) highlights eight attributes endorsed by UNDP, “Political participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus, equity and inclusiveness, efficiency and effectiveness, and accountability” (p. 155). Kaufmann et al. (2009) prioritize accountability, as evidenced by the Worldwide Governance Indicators, which assess six dimensions of governance, “Voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption” (p. 2).

Governance is seen as a crucial mechanism for ensuring accountability in power structures, regardless of where that power is situated (Everatt, 2019b). Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) assert that governance revolves around power, relationships, and accountability, addressing questions about who makes decisions and how decision-makers are held accountable. Everatt (2019b) underscores that the tension between power, accountability, and governance is where meaningful progress should be pursued, particularly in the quest to combat impunity and foster accountability. Ultimately, governance, as argued by Everatt (2019b), serves as a

mechanism for cultivating accountability in various dimensions, including action, empowerment, and transformative change.

The literature places a strong emphasis on accountability and responsibility within the realm of governance. Governance, based on this concept, places the well-being of stakeholders, particularly citizens, at its core. As a result, governance is expected to be accountable to these stakeholders during the decision-making and implementation processes. The responsibility for decisions ultimately falls upon the participants who represent their respective constituencies. Maintaining a balance of power in decision-making and implementation helps minimize the risk of failure. Therefore, governance should take responsibility for ensuring this balance of power. The effectiveness of implementation is closely tied to the efficiency of those in governance. It is essential for the actors involved in the governance process to bear both responsibility and accountability for their actions.

Governance Dynamics: A Social Responsibility. UNDP (1997) in Everatt (2019b) states, “Governance comprises of complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences” (p. 22). It emphasizes that governance becomes more inclusive, responsive, and allows for more social diversity (Katzenbach and Ulbricht, 2019). Governance is deeply concerned with society where development works proceed, providing a platform for the members of the society to put their voices and exercise their power. Pillay (2019) underscores, “good governance promotes freedom from violence, fear and crime, and peaceful and secure societies that provide stability needed for development investments to be sustained” (p. 58).

The underlying assumption of governance is that the development process can only move forward when citizens feel secure in expressing their voices and casting

their votes. This perspective suggests a shift in society, as indicated by Davis (2002), Richards and Smith (2002), Kooiman (2003), Heritier and Eckert (2008), Gunningham (2009), Lynn (2010), and Howlett et al. (2021). Howlett et al. (2021) argue that “not only are such dichotomies historically inaccurate, many scholars have pointed out that the features of new governance arrangements are often promoted as effective responses to changes in state-societal relations” (p. 204).

In strengthening society, the concept of governance signifies a departure from the state-centric view of power and societal steering, a view challenged by recent empirical and ideological developments, as noted by Ansell and Torfing (2016). They define governance as “the interactive processes through which society and the economy are steered toward collectively negotiated objectives” (Ansell and Torfing, 2016, p. 4), recognizing that society comprises multiple groups, including those defined by gender, caste, ethnicity, and economic status. The notion of governance empowers even those without formal authority and power in policy-making, in contrast to traditional government. It refers to the creation, execution, and implementation of activities driven by shared goals among citizens and organizations, whether or not they possess formal authority or policing power, as suggested by Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016). Additionally, Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) highlight the importance of the relationship between civil society and the state, as emphasized by Halfani and his colleagues (1994), and underscore Hyden's (1992) perspective on the legitimacy of the public realm, which focuses on interactions between the state and social actors and specific types of relationships among political actors that are socially sanctioned rather than arbitrary.

The emergence of the governance concept has strengthened democracy by facilitating societal interactions between elected representatives and voters. This

process enables voters to easily express their interests and objections. Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016), emphasized that governance is a process in which an organization or society steers itself. When applied to society, governance broadens its scope, leading to the conclusion that “the dynamic nature of society is one of the reasons why the concept of ‘governance’ has remained blurry” (Asaduzzaman and Virtanen, 2016, p. 10). It is better understood when examined at the societal level.

Janet Newman (2001), as discussed in Chhotray and Stoker (2009), posits that the quest for alternative approaches culminates in social interactions, as social arrangements are constructed through the production and negotiation of meanings. Furthermore, “a stable governance practice based on trust rather than monitoring and sanctioning may foster a culture of mutual trust and cooperation through social interaction” (Geeraert, 2022, p. 25). Chhotray and Stoker (2009) elaborate that there is a widely accepted notion that social behavior cannot be rationally and consciously directed, changed, or engineered. In this sense, governance is not a goal to pursue but rather a description of social reality. Therefore, governance is seen as more of a description of social reality than an objective to be actively pursued (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009). Halsall (2012) states that the purpose of community governance is to establish and nurture a collective identity within local authorities. Dhakal (2021) highlights that terms like “social exclusion” and “inclusion” are gaining prominence in policy discourse, particularly in developing nations like Nepal.

The literature discussed above highlights the role of governance in bridging society and the state. Governance is concerned with addressing social diversity and ensuring freedom from violence, enabling diverse voices to be heard. While increased involvement may lead to conflicts, these conflicts can have both positive and negative outcomes. It is the responsibility of the governance process to manage conflicts

positively, as they can contribute to positive societal change. This positive change is more likely to occur when the governance process is socially inclusive. Social inclusion is facilitated through extensive social interactions among diverse groups. These activities, when amplified in society, contribute to the concept of social self-steering, which involves addressing the dynamics of society. The governance process also fosters mutual trust among individuals, describing the social reality by nurturing collective identities.

In summary, the leadership aspect of governance emphasizes the critical role of leadership skills in the governance process. It highlights that effective governance involves not one single leader but rather multiple participants embodying leadership qualities. Decision-making in governance includes input from diverse stakeholders, ensuring a wide range of voices and recommendations. Participation is a cornerstone of good governance, promoting inclusive development and giving citizens a say in policymaking and implementation. Accountability and responsibility are fundamental, serving as checks on power and ensuring transparency. Social responsibility in governance underscores its role in fostering societal interactions, addressing social diversity, and empowering diverse groups. Governance is about bridging society and the state, enabling citizens to express their interests and participate in decision-making, ultimately contributing to positive societal change. This leadership aspect of governance recognizes the importance of leadership skills, participation, accountability, and social responsibility in achieving effective governance and inclusive development.

Management aspect of governance. Sadiki (2003) emphasizes that governance and management are tightly interwoven elements within a process aimed at enabling educational institutions to provide effective and efficient education.

Edwards et al. (2012) define governance as concerned with how societies, governments, and organizations are managed and led, encompassing the structuring of affairs, decision-making processes, the exercise of power, and the management of relationships and accountabilities.

UNDP (2014a) in Pillay's work (2019) further elucidates the management aspect of governance, describing it as a guiding force that shapes the management processes within various domains. It is evident that governance and management are intricately connected, playing essential roles in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of institutions and organizations, including educational institutions. They involve the orchestration of actions, the decision-making apparatus, the handling of authority, and the navigation of intricate relationships, all while upholding accountability for the greater good.

Governance	Management
Set the norms, strategic vision and direction, and formulate high-level goals and policies.	Run the organization in line with the broad goals and direction set by the governing body.
Oversee management and organizational performance to ensure that the organization is working in the best interests of the public and, more specifically, the stakeholders who are served by the organization's mission.	Implement decisions within the context of the mission and strategic vision.
Direct and oversee the management to ensure that the organization is achieving the desired outcomes, and ensure that the organization is acting prudently, ethically and legally.	Make operational decisions and policies, and keep the governance bodies informed and educated.
	Be responsive to requests for additional information.

Source: UNDP 2014a in Pillay, 2019, p. 67

According to UNDP, as the table says, management is a part of governance where governance process sets the high-level goals, policies and strategies and oversee the process of implementation whereas management works on a part to pursue the goals in day-today activities. Atzori (2015) adds, "scholars have described as governance without government (Peters and Pierre, 1998) this emerging pattern of

management, characterized by major shift of power from public to private sector and by increasing dominant role of market in public affairs” (p. 13) to reveal the private and public involvement rather than merely government in the process of governance. Likewise, to clarify about the public and private involvement in governance, Kooiman and VanVliet (1993) in Stoker (1998) asserts “the governance concept points to the creation of a structure or an order which cannot be extremely imposed but is the result of interaction of a municipality of governing and each other influencing actors” (p. 5). And while managing day-to-day activities Mohd Norazmi et al. (2021) in Boon et al. (2021) says “management needs to be prudent in placing where an employee should be, the types of tasks that are appropriate for the employee and the needs that need to be met” (p. 5234).

The theory of management encompasses several key elements, as described by scholars. This research highlights several aspects of management, including the mission to achieve goals, relationship management, effective communication, effectiveness and efficiency, the operation of networks, and governance as a form of monitoring. These aspects align with the descriptions and definitions of governance provided by the scholars and researchers, as discussed below.

The dynamic interplay of governance and management in goal pursuit. The management aspect within the realm of governance is primarily concerned with achieving predefined goals. This aligns with UNDP's comparison of governance and management, which highlights that governance sets high-level goals, policies, and strategies, overseeing their implementation, while management focuses on the day-to-day activities aimed at goal pursuit. Mission-oriented objectives drive the pursuit of goals, and Edwards et al. (2012) aptly articulate governance as a domain concerned with the constitution and operation of systems, delving into the reasons and methods

behind their functioning. They explain that “Governance is concerned with how and why systems of all kinds are constituted and operated” (p. 11).

Moreover, governance is a multi-level process, that it encompasses the establishment of monitoring mechanisms, consequences for defections, incentives for cooperation, dissemination of information, promotion of trust-based reciprocity, and other efforts aimed at creating conditions conducive to the likelihood of collective action (Holahan and Lubell, 2016), which is necessary while pursuing any goals. Governance, as a product of democratic and decentralized power and responsibility distribution, actively seeks the engagement of local actors. In this regard, the concept of local governance advocates for the involvement of actors beyond public institutions in decision-making processes at the local level (Karatas, 2020).

Leadership and management typically hold distinct roles within an organization. Leadership is responsible for establishing a vision and goals, while management focuses on implementing and achieving those objectives. However, within the realm of governance, a predominant trend in the literature suggests that both goal setting and goal pursuit involve extensive in governance participation. In the pursuit of these goals, governance must prioritize the preservation of social order and address multi-level processes. Given that governance serves as the link between society and the state, effective coordination between these entities becomes paramount during goal pursuit. Ultimately, the pursuit of goals aims to fulfill the collective needs of a diverse society.

Strategic relationship management in governance for goal attainment. The existing literature emphasizes the importance of relationship management for achieving targeted goals. Governance encompasses a broad spectrum of relationships, including both internal and external dynamics, as well as their intersections (Pont et

al., 2008). It “includes how they structure and otherwise order their affairs, make decisions and exercise powers, and manage their relationships and accountabilities” (Edwards et al., 2012, p. 9) in the process of pursuing goals. Effective governance encompasses ‘suitable governance committee structures’ along with strategic planning, performance assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (Edwards et al., 2012) where the committee structure enhances relationship management, thereby increasing effectiveness in strategic planning, performances, and evaluation.

The governance committee structure is the result of the relational aspect. As a result of this relationship, “governance recognizes the capacity to get things done which does not rest on the power of government to command or use its authority. ‘It sees government as able to use new tools and techniques to steer and guide’” (Stoker, 1998, p. 16). “The term governance is referred to as a process by which the government use their administrative, economic, social, and political powers to implement and administer a particular plan” (Sansui & Martadha, 2012, in Akram, 2020, p. 38). It is the skill in which government bodies maintain relationships with social actors and reformers using their power positively. Jessop (1998; 2002) defines governance as “the hierarchy of reflexive self-organization” (Ansell and Torfing, 2016, p. 3), as the relationship can be hierarchical or horizontal. Both of these relationships affect the involvement of multiple actors. Governance involves a multiplicity of actors individually and institutionally.

Individuals and institutions possess their unique perspectives and interests, and “governance processes, whether formal decision-making structures or informal collaborations, are themselves also manifestations of power relations” (Andree et al., 2019, p. 26). Power within governance processes can manifest in various ways, including instrumental, structural, and discursive exercises (Johnston and Andree,

2019). To effectively manage relationships, several key tasks come into play. The first task involves defining a situation, identifying key stakeholders, and developing linkages between the relevant parties, the second is concerned with influencing and steering relationships to achieve desired outcomes, and the third involves what others commonly refer to as ‘system management’ (Stoker, 1998). Within the governance process, these relational activities constitute a crucial component of the managerial skillset aimed at attaining goals. Stoker (1998) underscores one of the recommendations of the governance approach, emphasizing its capacity to unveil the relationships among all individuals and institutions participating in shared activities. “Above all, as Bang (2003) emphasizes, it is important to view governance as a ‘communicative relationship’” (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009, p. 37).

Governance presents a formidable and expansive challenge, demanding the management of various intricate facets. It entails the intricate task of overseeing various elements within and outside an organization. To enhance efficiency and effectiveness, it is essential to adeptly manage both internal and external relationships. Moreover, achieving tasks within the stipulated time frames hinges upon the structural arrangement of relationships, which also plays a pivotal role in balancing power dynamics. This structural relationship aspect encompasses two distinct dimensions: hierarchical relationships, predominantly involving government entities, and horizontal relationships that pertain to interactions with social actors. The management facet of governance shoulders the responsibility of overseeing and coordinating the activities of these diverse actors through effective relationship management, making it a vital component of the governance framework.

Communication strategies for effective governance and stakeholder engagement. Effective communication is crucial in informing all stakeholders about

the mission and tasks required to achieve specific goals. As Rosenau (1995) emphasized in Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016), “Governance is a process where communication is central” (p. 4). Governance can be understood as a collaborative effort involving various actors within a social-political structure, and successful governance hinges on ensuring that all stakeholders are well-informed. This aligns with the view that governance is a system or order that results from joint endeavors by all relevant role players (Karatas, 2020).

Engaging the community through effective communication can activate citizens’ participation and foster more active forms of citizenship, as noted by Chhotray and Stoker (2009). They suggest that participatory governance is closely linked to community-level governance and can promote more active citizenship. Additionally, Saputra et al. (2021) argue that a fundamental aspect of good governance is “obtaining a fair opinion with an exception” (p. 328), underscoring the importance of fair and transparent communication. From a governance perspective, governing is inherently interactive because no single actor, whether public or private, possesses the knowledge and resources needed to unilaterally address complex issues. Stoker (1998) underscores this perspective, stating that governing from a governance standpoint is inherently interactive.

The involvement of collective actors and their interaction ensures good governance. Communicative actions make citizens responsible in governance. It is about “how people are treated not merely as customers or consumers (as in the new public management approach) but as citizens, who have the right to hold their governments to account for the actions they take or fail to take” (Ekundayo, 2017, p. 154). Edwards et al. (2012) insist that “Governance now engages multiple institutions and participants in multiple governance interactions” (p. 13). Information and

communication raise local accountability since “the fact that governance gives importance to localization, localization in service or delegation of authority shows that governance is not an issue that only concerns the central administration” (Karatas, 2020, p. 2663). Edwards et al. (2012) focus on communication by saying “while there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to governance, it is important to realize that effective governance will contain strong leadership, culture, and communication” (p. 19).

“It would be a mistake to view the new focus on governance as tied to an apolitical or managerial understanding of dynamics of social interaction” (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009, p. 19). Hence, the public interest is the topmost in the process of achieving any social goals. “In answering such questions as ‘what is the work of governance thinking?’ or ‘What does governance thinking achieve?’, a first consideration is the idea of ‘public interest’” (Abrahams, 2019, p. 109), and so the public interaction and communication hold significant importance while governing. World Bank keeps ‘voice and accountability,’ United Nations focuses on ‘transparency,’ Overseas Development Institute emphasizes ‘fairness,’ and MO Ibrahim Foundation votes ‘human rights’ (Pillay, 2019) at their topmost level in the process of governance. Without effective communication, these goals cannot be achieved.

Effective communication is an essential element in achieving timely and successful outcomes in management. Governance aims for effective results, and achieving these results on schedule requires efficient internal and external communication. Communication plays a crucial role in facilitating participation and enhancing the quality of interactions. Managing the multitude of actors involved in governance is a significant aspect that demands effective communication. The

complexity of governance lies in its ability to navigate multifaceted and dynamic social interactions through the means of communication. To ensure the success of governance initiatives, fostering open and transparent communication channels is of paramount importance.

The nexus of effectiveness and efficiency in governance for development.

One of the managerial tasks in the process of governance is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the process. “Is governance concerned with efficiency and effectiveness in delivery, or the nature of the state, or civil society, or all of the above?” Everatt (2019 b) questions. Pillay (2019) answers ‘good governance is more (the) effect than cause’ of development. The task of governance is to govern the effectiveness in the process of development works since “besides structural material factors, ideas and cognitive factors are also important determinants of governance outcomes” (Geeraert, 2022, p. 26). And it is increased when “governance supports an understanding that advocates the inclusion of civil society and the private sector, which play a role other than the central government, in decision making process” (Karatas, 2020, p. 2664).

Putman (1993) in Stoker (1998) says “governance is connected to the concern about social capital and social underpinnings necessary to effective economic and political performance” (p. 19). Effectiveness increases when the collective problem is solved by individuals in a group. Since governance is not the action done by a single actor, a collective problem solving is required. “Solving collective dilemmas requires enhancing individual decisions through governance arrangements that alter individual payoffs and result in a joint outcome that leaves at least one individual better off without harming any other individuals” (Holahan and Lubell, 2016, p. 21). Halsall (2012) have noted that there are strong connections between the properties of social

capital and effectiveness of governance. “The purpose of community governance is to establish and nurture a collective identity within local authorities” (Halsall, 2012, p. 2).

“For social capital to work effectively it must first of all be practiced efficiently within governance as the ideas around social capital are strongly linked to governance” (Halsall, 2012, p. 2). The development works run effectively with high efficiency when a good social order is established. “The socio-legal perspective shares with other disciplines that governance is concerned with establishing social order” (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009, p. 14). To create a social order, the problem solving task is not mere the responsibility of public sector rather Kooiman (1993) in Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) defines governance as “the forms in which public or private sectors engage in problem solving, not separately but in conjunction with other actors in society” (p. 4) as in its initial conception, governance was oriented towards elucidating the practice of social steering which has since evolved ... to refer to the exercise of building and managing state institutions for delivery of public value (Latib, 2019) effectively.

The notion of governance emerged as a response to the need for enhanced effectiveness and efficiency in development endeavors. Traditional government-centric approaches often fell short of meeting citizens’ expectations, prompting a shift towards governance models. Improved efficiency results from the optimal utilization of resources, including both tangible assets and the intellectual capacities of governing bodies. Additionally, efficiency is bolstered when all stakeholders share a common understanding, leading to more effective project completion. Furthermore, effectiveness in governance hinges on the ability of individuals to collaboratively address collective challenges. In this context, the concept of social capital becomes

relevant, promoting heightened effectiveness through shared social resources and relationships. Governance is typically evaluated based on its effectiveness, and this effectiveness is intricately linked to the degree of efficiency achieved in the process.

Network management in governance: cooperation and conflict

management. Now, we discuss another aspect of management, which is network management. According to Bottenburg (2022) “governance as networks is concerned with the competition, cooperation, and mutual adjustment between organizations in the complex environment in which an organization operates” (p. 37). Katzenbach and Ulbricht (2019) define governance’s core as “coordination between actors based on rules” (p. 2). Muller (2019) cites Rhodes (2007), stating that “governance refers to governing with and through networks” (p. 171). In Stoker’s (1998) five propositions of governance, he mentions that “governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors” (p. 16). Karatas (2020) emphasizes that governance implies the effectiveness of factors other than administration in problem-solving, which often involves networks.

Furthermore, Everatt (2019b) adds that governance is a process marked by numerous local moments. According to Chhotray and Stoker (2009), Salamon (2001) mentions that “in a sense, the ‘public administration problem’ has leaped beyond the borders of the public agency and now embraces a wide assortment of ‘third parties’ that are intimately involved in the implementation, and often the management, of the public business” (p. 21). Here, the ‘third parties’ refer to networks of actors. Scholars have unequivocally stated that governance is a process involving multiple actors and institutions. Managing the network among these actors and institutions is a challenging task.

Pillay (2019) asserts that “broader definitions of governance encompass politics, policy, public administration, the interaction of these with civil society and the private sector, and the effects the various institutions have on socio-economic outcomes” (p. 58). Booysen (2019) observes that “recognizing that oppositional networks help deliver de facto public policy and governance, while being oppositional, the current contribution assesses and theorizes these networks through the lens of adversarial network governance” (p. 143). Chhotray and Stoker (2009) mention that “a fourth governance mechanism can be identified that stands in contrast to the others, which are simply variations of standard political tools for managing conflicting interests, by recognizing that politics in governance often involves the search for identification of shared goals” (p. 22).

Pillay, Booysen, Chhotray and Stoker emphasize the pivotal role of networks in conflict management within governance. These networks ensure active participation of various actors beyond government agencies in decision-making processes. As per Stoker (1998), governance networks encompass not only influencing government policy but also undertaking responsibilities traditionally within the realm of government operations. Chhotray and Stoker (2009) posit that the governance perspective fundamentally entails the operation of networks comprising a complex mix of actors and organizations, stressing that “governance is about autonomous self-governing networks of actors” (p. 27). The management aspect of governance underscores the need to manage pluralism effectively to facilitate constructive interventions. Legal pluralism, as described by Chhotray and Stoker (2009), acknowledges the existence of multiple legal spheres and places particular emphasis on developing hypotheses regarding their interrelationships.

Within policy-making networks, it is common for these networks to connect various actors who share common interests in policy matters and engage in resource exchanges to pursue these shared objectives. This cooperative approach is seen as an effective means of achieving common policy goals (Booyesen, 2019). The term governance perceives these networks as valuable resources for fostering constructive input through the inclusion of pluralism. Governance views private and civil society actors as active contributors and instruments in the co-production of public policies, rather than mere passive subjects of government regulations, recognizing that “governance perceives private and civil society actors as resources and instruments for co-produced public making, instead of reducing them to passive targets and subjects of public regulations” (Ansell and Torfing, 2016, p. 2). Chhotray and Stoker (2009) stress that networks can be influenced and guided to perceive and understand their environment in specific ways, thereby allowing them to be effectively managed. Networking within governance also plays a pivotal role in policy development and reshapes the traditional role of governance, as research often demonstrates the effective impact of policy-making and governance networks in bringing about changes in governance (Ansell and Torfing, 2016).

It is crucial, however, to avoid conflating governance with networks, as doing so results in a narrow definition of governance that excludes forms of steering, control, and coordination not reliant on stable horizontal networks. Ansell and Torfing (2016) caution against this conflation and assert that governance extends beyond the scope of network structures. Chhotray and Stoker (2009) draw attention to the theory that underscores the significance of managing networks as a central aspect of governance, highlighting that “one of the theories that drew attention to, first, the management of networks as key to governance” (p. 26). The confluence of actors and

institutions within governance networks poses a challenging task, and the recognition of these networks as vital components in governance processes reflects their capacity to influence and shape governance in multifaceted ways (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009, p. 29).

Many scholars have extensively explored the networking management aspect of governance, which is undeniably a significant component. It is evident that governance encompasses a multitude of actors and organizations. These organizational and actor networks are established to foster cooperation and mutual adjustments, ultimately enhancing overall effectiveness. In the context of government, governance entails the management of both hierarchical and horizontal networks for various actors, involving a series of interactions in network management. Well-orchestrated networks play a crucial role in conflict management by fostering positive relationships among diverse actors, all in pursuit of common interests.

Governance dynamics: Monitoring to manage. Monitoring plans and programs constitutes a fundamental aspect of governance. Everatt (2019b) notes that “in both cases, governance and monitoring and evaluation (being commonly conjoined though distinct activities), there is a multi-level focus” (p. 32). While governmental agencies often exercise authoritative governance, many public and private entities engage in democratic governance when participating in governance processes. According to UNDP (1997), governance is defined as “the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels” (p. 22). The effectiveness of monitoring country affairs necessitates governance. Governance's management component is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness and efficiency of resource utilization in implementing

plans and programs. Governance involves collaborative efforts between government and non-governmental entities.

Although Salamon (2001) argues that governments may gain partners but lose direct control in the realm of governance (Chhotray and Stoker, 2009), collaborative monitoring efforts can enhance both effectiveness and efficiency. Among various monitoring models, Latib (2019) posits that “governance is the stewardship of formal and informal political rules of the game” (p. 45). It is within this context of fair rules and unbiased competition that governance operates (Everatt, 2019a). Governance can also be defined as entities whose primary responsibility is to establish the set of rules and laws that bind decision-making within a given system (Covarrubias and Llamas Covarrubias, 2021). “Good governance can also support the United Nations Sustainable Goals as an effective management behavior to strengthen the rule of law” (Fathia, 2021, p. 94). Bralton and Rotchild (1992) as interpreted by Asaduzzaman and Virtanen (2016) suggest that “governance involves creative intervention of political actors to change structures” (p. 4).

The reviewed literature reveals that the concept of governance originated primarily to address the monitoring responsibilities of government in development projects. The ultimate assessment occurs following periodic monitoring activities, which primarily focus on government agencies. This monitoring process assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of the development initiatives. As discussed earlier, involving multiple actors contributes to enhanced effectiveness. Consequently, monitoring also encompasses evaluating participation and involvement in governance processes. It's essential to emphasize that governance operates within the framework of the rule of law, and this legal framework guides the monitoring process as well.

In summary, the literature explores the management aspect of governance, emphasizing its pivotal role in the context of educational institutions. Governance and management are depicted as tightly interconnected elements essential for facilitating effective and efficient education. Governance encompasses setting strategic norms, vision, and high-level objectives, along with overseeing organizational performance to ensure alignment with public interests and stakeholders' needs. On the other hand, management translates these high-level directives into day-to-day activities, ensuring their successful implementation while upholding ethical and legal standards. Effective communication is highlighted as a crucial element, fostering transparency and accountability in governance. Furthermore, the text underscores the importance of achieving both effectiveness and efficiency within the governance framework, along with the role of networks and social capital in enhancing governance outcomes.

Additionally, the reviewed literature underscores the multifaceted nature of governance, acknowledging its various components and challenges. It highlights the management of relationships, effective communication, and the orchestration of networks as integral aspects of governance. Monitoring is depicted as a fundamental process for evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of resource utilization in implementing plans and programs. Governance is described as a collaborative effort involving diverse actors from governmental and non-governmental sectors, working together to shape and manage political, economic, and administrative authority at all levels. The literature ultimately underscores the complexity of governance and the importance of skillfully managing the interactions between various stakeholders to achieve desired goals and outcomes.

The relationship of Governance and its leadership and management aspects is illustrated in the figure below:

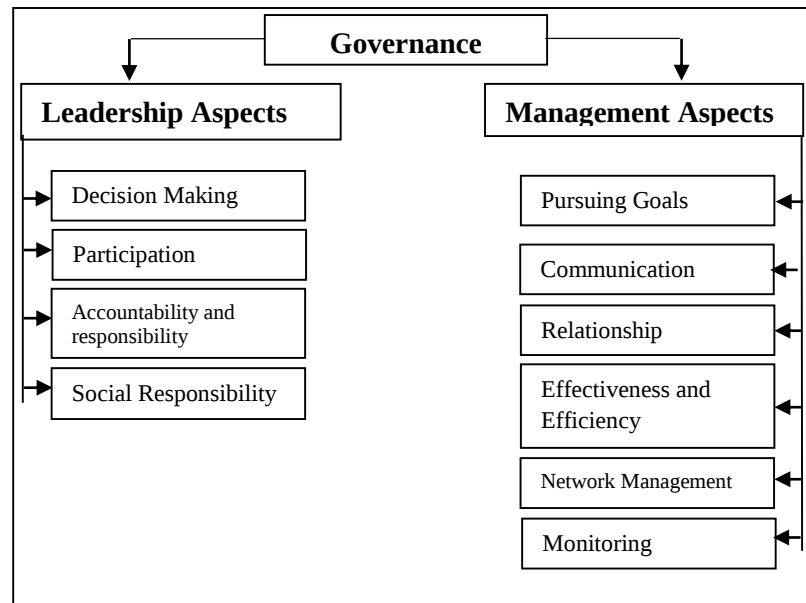


Figure 1. Summary of Governance and Its Leadership and Management Aspects

School Governance: A Confluence of Leadership and Management

“The term ‘governance’ primarily indicates that it ensures that school systems – and their reform - are not solely influenced by a single dominant actor, such as the government and its administrative staff” (Attrichter, 2015, p. 11). Multiple stakeholders are involved in shaping the school system. Educational objectives are more effectively realized when the governing entities and the system function effectively. Ozar and O’Neill (2013) assert, “The success of the [school] mission depends on the key components of governance, which provide direction or authority, and leadership, which ensures effective operations” (p. 17).

The primary responsibility of the governing body is to oversee schools, as Wahlquist in Singleton (2013) points out that school boards have the principal responsibility of ‘maintaining’ the school. Maintenance and management contribute to improved student achievement. According to Dervarics and O’Brien (2019), governing bodies commit to a vision of high expectations for students’ achievement

and their ability to learn, emphasizing policy formulation for students' success, and actively engaging in team development and training.

Governing bodies like school boards are responsible for “student achievement and well-being, safe and inclusive school climates, ensuring effective stewardship of the board's resources, and delivering effective and appropriate education programs for their students” (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018, p. 21).

“Governance is central to the achievement of full compliance with all the standards and, in turn, facilitates and sustains the successful school” (Ozar and O'Neill, 2013, p. 17). These pieces of literature emphasize that the school governance process carries both responsibility and accountability. Improved school management is the means to achieve this goal.

The concept of governance in education has arisen as a result of the decentralization process and public-private partnerships. According to Mncube (2009), school governance structures “provide an opportunity for all stakeholders (including community representatives) to develop a sense of ownership of the school and, therefore, take responsibility for what is happening at the school” (p. 85). Since education is considered a public asset, it must be evaluated from the perspectives of its stakeholders, such as students, parents, and the community. It is also a process that contributes to the enhancement of democracy. The term governance encompasses the notion of balancing the government's unilateral decision-making process with the meaningful and participatory involvement of the general public. Governance entails the inclusion of non-governmental institutions in the decision-making process.

Governance involves the management of public interests, where a selected body (and in some cases, an elected one, such as a School Management Committee) oversees affairs to achieve optimal output and outcomes. As Pillay (2019)

emphatically states, “Poor countries are poor because they have bad governance, and countries that grow or are wealthy are those that have improved their governance” (p. 59), in the context of school governance, it encompasses both national and local dimensions. Schools are integral to producing human resources for a nation's development while directly addressing the needs of the local community. As noted by Everatt (2019b), “Governance is a process, punctuated by many local ‘moments’” (p. 20), signifying that the school governance process involves addressing numerous local educational needs. Management is a crucial component of governance. Pillay (2019) explains that it involves “setting norms, strategic vision, direction, and formulating high-level goals and policies, while management carries out the organization's operations in alignment with the overarching goals and direction established by the governing body” (p. 67). In this context, the School Management Committee plays a dual role in governance and management. When it comes to governance, the SMC collaborates with government authorities, the school head teacher, teachers, and other local communities in the daily execution and oversight of school activities. These definitions clarify that the SMC is tasked with responsibilities encompassing both governance and management functions.

The School Management Committee serves as the governing body of the school, responsible for facilitating collective decision-making while ensuring maximum involvement of the relevant population, as Pillay (2019) emphasizes, “We cannot meaningfully discuss democratic governance and accountability if citizens cannot actively participate in policymaking and have confidence that their active engagement will shape public policy” (p. 16). Leading the key stakeholders in the school governance process towards informed decisions yields desirable outcomes, as “the term ‘governance’ encompasses these additional aspects of government and

governing, where a multitude of actors interact in both formal and informal ways” (Howlett et al., 2021, p. 204). In the process of collective decision-making, the role of non-governmental agencies in delivering public services and programs is a critical aspect from the governance perspective, as highlighted by Chhotray and Stoker (2009) when they state that “the role of non-governmental agencies in delivering public services and programs is an important part of the focus provided by the governance perspective” (p. 20). The School Management Committee is one such non-governmental agency responsible for delivering educational services within this framework.

Decision-making poses a formidable challenge for the SMC within the diverse landscape of actors involved in the school governance process. The SMC effectively manages this complexity, recognizing that decision-making is inherently a political endeavor that entails coordinating and making choices within the context of a multitude of perspectives and interests, as underscored by Chhotray and Stoker (2009) that “It is a political activity; it is about coordination and decision-making in the context of a plurality of views and interests” (p. 6). In this process, the SMC exhibits strong leadership qualities. As noted by Reid and Turbine (2014), the internal governance work of monitoring and coaching is closely intertwined with executive leadership and necessitates a deep understanding of the organization's mission, management practices, and financial structure.

The concept of school governance, as explored in the literature, initially emerged from the idea of decentralization with the primary objective of enhancing community involvement in school oversight and management. Over time, the role of school governance has evolved, transitioning from a mere caretaker function to a more comprehensive responsibility for managing and leading schools. Today, school

governance bodies are expected to actively manage schools to ensure the delivery of quality education and improved outcomes for students. Achieving these goals necessitates more than a passive caretaking role; it demands thoughtful and proactive leadership and management.

In the context of school governance, certain key characteristics have been identified in the literature as crucial for effective governance bodies. These characteristics include strategic leadership, transparency, and accountability, effective management structures, clear and open communication, coordination, cooperation, and collaboration among stakeholders, and a steadfast focus on students' achievement. Each of these attributes plays a critical role in shaping the governance landscape of schools and is discussed in greater detail within the literature.

Strategic leadership. Strategic leadership is a quality that involves articulating a compelling vision for the organization and mobilizing all stakeholders to actively pursue its achievement. It encompasses several strategic aspects, including a plan for realizing the organization's vision, mission, and goals; a strategic plan for managing human resources and structural elements; a strategic plan for ensuring the day-to-day operational efficiency of the organization; and a strategic plan for effective monitoring and evaluation. In the context of school governance, strategic leadership involves making and acting upon decisions related to the organization's mission, formulating policies, overseeing their implementation, establishing decision-making processes, and implementing mechanisms for the allocation and distribution of power and resources, as articulated by Keller-Flight (Galway and Weins, 2013). Strategic leadership plays a pivotal role in charting the course for the organization, shaping its culture, values, and ethos, and ensuring that it moves in a direction aligned with its long-term goals and objectives.

School governance bodies collaborate to develop a comprehensive “whole school development plan” (USAID, UKAID, 2016, p. 34). Governance, in this context, encompasses not only the ‘what’ but also, and perhaps more significantly, the ‘how’ the board operates and conducts itself. It establishes a framework and processes for decision-making while holding leaders accountable for modeling and practicing ethical leadership (Ontario Public School Boards’ Association, 2018-2022). The Department of Education and Skills in Ireland (2015) clarifies that the purpose of governance is to instill confidence and provide assurance regarding both educational and financial performance. It emphasizes the need for governance bodies to continually enhance their knowledge of the education sector and good governance practices, as well as develop their skills in ethical leadership and strategic thinking (Ontario Public School Boards’ Association, 2018 – 2022). Highlighting the crucial role of strong strategic leadership in school governance, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (2018) underscores the importance of a robust leadership team that sets a strategic vision for the organization, focusing on achieving results. While school board members may not individually wield authority, they have a duty to provide leadership and oversight (Galway and Weins, 2013).

Studies in the literature underscore the importance of strategic leadership in school governance. Strategic leadership within a school context aims to mobilize the collective strengths of all stakeholders to drive the school’s development. This type of leadership places a strong emphasis on actively involving the parent community in various school activities. Beyond just parental involvement, strategic leadership goes the extra mile by engaging with other critical stakeholders, including government bodies, the broader society, social reformers, and marginalized communities, in the

school's development plans and initiatives. This approach ensures a holistic and inclusive strategy for school improvement and growth.

Moreover, strategic leadership in school governance is not limited to decision-making within the school's walls. It also involves reaching out to external partners, forging alliances, and advocating for necessary resources and support to achieve the school's goals. This collaborative approach extends the school's impact and allows it to address a wide range of challenges effectively. In essence, strategic leadership in school governance aligns the efforts of multiple stakeholders toward a common vision of educational excellence and student success, making it a pivotal factor in fostering positive school outcomes.

Transparency and accountability. The concept of governance emerged as a means to counteract the one-way power distribution often seen in government institutions. School governance bodies are established to strike a balance between the rights and responsibilities of governments, with the ultimate aim of achieving better educational outcomes. Their level of responsibility is closely tied to their transparency and accountability. Shield (2007), as cited in Galway and Weins (2013), suggests that “for school board members to be credible, they must be perceived as accountable and committed to their mandate and... ensure a level of openness and transparency that allows people to trust in their work” (p. 5).

These school governance bodies derive their authority from the country's laws, signifying their commitment to the mandate they have been entrusted with, thus emphasizing their accountability and responsibility. At every juncture of decision-making, be it financial or educational, transparency should be a guiding principle. As Brewer and Smith (2006a) point out, “a good governance structure with strong accountability is one in which there are clear lines of authority between the various

parts of the system” (p. 4). These school governance bodies are vested with significant decision-making powers to enhance their accountability.

As the scope of responsibilities within educational governance widens, so does the demand for increased accountability and transparency. For instance, the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association (2018) states that the Ontario Public education system enhances public confidence through responsible, sustainable, accountable, and transparent governance practices. In the realm of educational governance, accountability is closely linked to driving up educational standards, as highlighted by the Department of Education (2020) in the UK, which notes that “one of the key features of governance is accountability that drives up educational standards” (p. 11). The new public management model of education governance, as depicted by Gurova et al. (2018), promotes accountability and transparency to inform consumers about the quality of services delivered by providers. Similarly, Balarin et al. (2008) assert that governance plays a pivotal role in school accountability, and transparency (Brewer and Smith, 2006b) facilitates the exchange of information among different levels of the governance system.

Transparency is a cornerstone of effective school governance, as it instills trust and confidence in the governance bodies. These entities are not only expected to operate transparently in their activities but also to ensure transparency in their decision-making processes. Transparency is further enhanced when there is broad participation of stakeholders, ensuring that decisions are made openly and with the input of those affected. Additionally, transparency should extend to the overall activities and the outcomes and results of school governance. Given that school education is a public good, governance bodies have a moral obligation to be

accountable to various stakeholders, including students, parents, and the broader society.

Accountability is a critical aspect of school governance, and governance bodies must be held accountable for the educational outcomes and achievements of students. This accountability extends to the parent community and society at large. The effectiveness of school governance is measured, in part, by its ability to deliver quality education and ensure that students receive the best possible educational experience. Therefore, accountability mechanisms are essential to maintain the integrity and performance of school governance bodies.

Managing structures. School governance is distinguished by the intricate task of structuring management amidst a multitude of actors, including government entities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society, parent communities, and social reformers. In the process of accommodating all these actors, it's essential to recognize that educational governance goes beyond mere administrative efficiency; it also encompasses the exercise of power and the development of substructures (CERID, 2009). When establishing, reorganizing, or restructuring management, governing bodies should strive for simplicity and efficiency. An effective structure ensures that decisions are made promptly and with minimal overlap, cost, or confusion among entities (Brewer and Smith, 2006a). In governance, the organizational structure is multi-dimensional, marked by bodies with overlapping powers and responsibilities across executive, legislative, and judicial jurisdictions (Brewer and Smith, 2006b). Therefore, managing the structure implies managing the overlapping powers and responsibilities, especially in situations involving numerous actors.

A governance structure defines roles, relationships, and behavioral patterns (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018). Managing relationships is a significant challenge in school governance, given the involvement of multiple actors. These relationships are managed through shared roles and responsibilities, with particular attention to areas where roles and responsibilities overlap, as conflicts may arise in such instances. To address potential conflicts, school governance structures aim to foster a sense of ownership among all stakeholders, including community representatives, regarding the school's affairs (MnCube, 2009). The separation of powers is considered one of the fundamental principles of good governance (Center for Civil Society, 2019). Managing structures is a critical aspect characterizing school governance because the governance of the school system entails complex and extensive interrelationships among interdependent groups and individuals (Balarin et al., 2008). Clarity of roles is vital for effective governance (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018).

Effective communication. The increasing focus on effective school governance places a significant emphasis on leadership and management aspects. To provide effective leadership and management in schools, effective communication is indispensable. As discussed earlier, strategic leadership plays a crucial role in managing the complex structures of school governance, especially when a wide range of actors are involved. The greater the number of actors involved, the more critical it becomes to ensure clarity in decision-making and implementation, as this is essential for achieving better outcomes. Effective management of these structures is vital, and this, in turn, depends on having a robust communication mechanism.

Williamson (2016) has highlighted the importance of communication as a significant term in educational governance, a recognition that dates back to the 19th

century. Communicative activities serve to inform all stakeholders about the ongoing and upcoming activities of the school, fostering transparency and engagement.

Dervarics and O'Brien (2019) underscore the importance of effective communication within school governing bodies, particularly between the board chair and superintendent and among board members. Effective communication is seen as a key factor in ensuring that decisions made by school governing bodies lead to effective outcomes.

Effective communication within school governance encompasses two critical aspects. The first dimension involves the communication mechanism, which addresses the systems and methods used to facilitate the flow of messages and information. It encompasses the infrastructure, tools, and processes that ensure the efficient transmission of communication within the school governance framework. The second dimension, effective communicative interaction, emphasizes the quality and effectiveness of interactions among the diverse stakeholders involved in school governance. It extends beyond mere information exchange, encompassing the manner in which stakeholders engage, collaborate, and convey their ideas and perspectives.

Given the complexity of educational governance, which involves a multitude of organizations and individuals interacting in intricate ways, as noted by Brewer and Smith (2006a), it is essential for school governance bodies to possess knowledge and proficiency in both aspects of effective communication. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of the diverse actors involved in governance also necessitates effective communication. Jan O'Sullivan (2015) underscores the importance of school boards having a clear understanding of their governance roles and responsibilities and emphasizes the significance of schools maintaining strong communication with their communities, particularly parents. Moreover, Gurova et al. (2018) view governance in

the context of school governance as a model of formal communication, underscoring the structured and organized nature of communication within the governance framework. This perspective emphasizes the significance of formalized communication processes in school governance.

Cooperation, coordination and collaboration. Certainly, school governance encompasses a diverse range of actors and institutions that operate cohesively within a framework of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration, often referred to as the ‘3C’ framework. This intricate interplay of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration is fundamental to ensuring that governance processes are transparent, accountable, and effective. These participating institutions are expected to work in harmony and cooperation, thereby facilitating a seamless exchange of ideas and actions. Moreover, effective governance extends beyond the boundaries of educational institutions, necessitating coordination with external entities that may not have direct involvement in the governance structure. It is important to emphasize that no single entity or actor can comprehensively steer the ship of organizational governance. Instead, the effectiveness of school governance is greatly enhanced when there is a collective effort involving collaboration with various stakeholders. This collaborative approach fosters a more robust and holistic approach to governance, resulting in more favorable outcomes and benefits for educational institutions.

In alignment with USAID and UKAID (2016), School Management Committees play a pivotal role in engaging the community with the school to foster trust and supportive relationships while actively supporting student learning. This reform approach holds particular significance for those concerned with improving school effectiveness through democratic, school-based governance that involves a wide range of community and staff participation (CERID, 2009). Mansfield-Barry and

Stwagi (2019) underscore the importance of different stakeholders in school governance working together in good faith, fostering mutual trust.

A fundamental understanding in school governance is that the various actors involved work toward common interests. Building supportive relationships among these actors nurtures trust, which, in turn, contributes to school development.

Collaboration in the work fosters meaningful engagement among the actors and is an integral part of cooperative governance (CERID, 2009). This collaboration extends not only among internal staff but also with external governance parties, as Goodman's review highlighted by Dervarics and O'Brien (2019) emphasizes the importance of a trusting and collaborative relationship between the board and the superintendent.

External collaboration is equally crucial, as indicated by Gravett et al. (2014) in Loock and Gravett (2014), who stress the need for close collaboration between teacher education institutions and schools concerning school governance. Auerbach (2010) in Hinz (2021) emphasizes the inclusion of parent/carer representatives on school boards and other governance committees to foster togetherness in working toward common goals. Indeed, the effectiveness of a board relies on the quality of its members and their ability to work harmoniously with executive leaders and governance professionals (Department of Education, 2020).

Furthermore, as Boer et al. (2007) in Attrichter (2015) state, the governance perspective offers a comprehensive analytical framework for addressing various coordination challenges among actors. Simons et al. (2009) highlight that governance primarily involves facilitation and the pursuit of collaboration with local authorities. Similarly, Raily (2017) emphasizes that governance requires policymakers to engage in intricate work to coordinate across various state and local agencies to provide goods, services, and support to diverse populations. Ultimately, the purpose of a

governance system is to translate societal wishes into policy and practice (Brewer and Smith, 2006b).

Monitoring and evaluation. The fundamental concept of governance originally emerged as a means to oversee and regulate the one-way development activities of government institutions. In the context of education, governance similarly encompasses a monitoring function, as articulated by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (2018), which defines governance as “the process of overseeing the operation of the institution, monitoring its performance” (p. 113). Dervarics and O'Brien (2019) further highlight that boards in high-achieving districts are more likely to engage in goal setting and monitoring their progress. The UK Department of Education (2020) explains that the purpose of school governance is to enhance accountability through a clear process of overseeing and monitoring school improvement. Likewise, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (2018-2022) mentions that the board of trustees holds its system accountable for student achievement by regulating and monitoring evidence of student performance. In light of these perspectives, governance, especially in the context of school governance, can be characterized as a supervisory role.

The overarching task of school governance is to supervise the comprehensive development of the school, with a specific focus on student achievement, while also managing stakeholders. The governance role, as described by Dervarics and O'Brien (2019), encompasses tasks ranging from goal setting to monitoring and self-monitoring. The UK Department of Education (2020) further asserts that the governance strategy should provide a robust framework for establishing priorities, creating accountability, and monitoring progress in realizing the organization's vision. In school governance, it is essential to have a dedicated team, led by an experienced

individual in student well-being, overseeing program selection, delivery, ethical considerations, monitoring, and communication of program effects (Vella-Brodrick and Chin, 2021). Monitoring, particularly in terms of quality assurance and evaluation, has become a strategic governance tool in educational policies (Gurova et al., 2018).

Monitoring serves as a fundamental tool for overseeing and directing work processes, ensuring that targeted goals are achieved within stipulated timelines. The concept of governance, which extends beyond school governance, is undergoing a significant expansion in its scope. According to Rinne et al. (2018), this shift in perspective involves reimagining governance to encompass regulatory and governance activities that traditionally align with concepts such as ‘steering,’ ‘governing,’ ‘control,’ and ‘interdependence’. In the context of Nepalese school governance, as outlined by CERID (2009), School Management Committees have been granted additional authority concerning administrative and development functions. This expanded authority includes responsibilities related to teacher recruitment and transfer, head teacher recruitment, school-level planning, and monitoring.

Focus on students’ achievement. Ultimately, the development of a school is intricately linked to the improvement of students' learning outcomes. Therefore, the entire process of school governance should be directed towards enhancing students' learning achievements. As stated by USAID and UKAID (2016), one of the essential duties of School Management Committees is to help parents and the community understand the significance of the school and why it plays a crucial role in students' lives. Galway and Weins (2013) emphasize that one of the primary responsibilities of school boards is to ensure that all students receive the services to which they are entitled, contributing to their holistic development.

Verger et al. (2019) emphasized on a characteristic of quality governance as the ability to prioritize student achievement while dedicating relatively less time to day-to-day operational matters. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association (2018) underscores that the governance role is fundamentally about creating the conditions for students to grow into successful, productive, and engaged citizens. Jan O'Sullivan (2015) notes that every board of management's primary objective is to manage the school in a way that offers all its students the best possible education.

MnCube (2009) highlights that "Democratic school governance implies that all the stakeholders, including parents, decide on school policies which affect the education of their children" (p. 86). This participatory approach is supported by compelling evidence indicating that school boards can better fulfill their role in maximizing student performance through improved governance. (Dellagrdelle, 2008 as cited in Ford, 2013).

The literature has emphasized that the school governance task force's major concern should be students' achievement while governing any aspect like infrastructure, organizational structure, or financial structure. The learning needs of the students of the particular community are addressed by including community members in governance.

Ranson et al. (2005) as cited in Wylie (2007) elucidate, "good governance that represents the diversity of its parent communities helps the school to understand the variety of learning needs" (p. 11), and "a true test of any board's governance structure is its effectiveness in continually working towards a high standard of student achievement and well-being" (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018, p. 35). The essence of a summative school governance structure is to prepare children for the nation's future, as educational governance arrangements contribute to the

overall effectiveness of the school system (Brewer and Smith, 2006a), and school governing bodies “from an oversight and governance perspective can and should play a key role in improving standards in school” (Department of Education and Skills, Ireland, 2015, p. 10). Vella-Brodrick and Chin (2021) claim that much of the existing literature suggests that school governance interventions can result in statistically significant improvements in student outcomes such as attendance and learning, leading to better academic achievement.

After a comprehensive study of school governance and its characteristics, a distinction can be made between educational leadership and educational management, as concluded by Shaturaev and Bekimbetova (2021). They explain that educational management entails taking responsibility for the proper functioning of a system, while educational leadership involves influencing others in educational settings to achieve goals and necessitates taking action in some form. Balam (1999) as cited in Bush (2008) defines “educational management as an executive function for carrying out agreed policy” and distinguishes it from educational leadership, which has “at its core the responsibility for policy formulation and, where appropriate, organizational transformation” (p. 1). Shaturaev and Bekimbetova (2021) argue that educational management and educational leadership are categorically different, not simply different configurations of a broadly similar form of activity.

In educational leadership, individuals are responsible for their own leadership and influencing actions, regardless of whether they carry the responsibility for the functioning of the system in which they are influencing (Shaturaev and Bekimbetova, 2021). Conversely, management involves a set of activities directed towards the efficient and effective utilization of organizational resources to achieve organizational goals (Spare 2002 as cited in Bush, 2008). Additionally, educational management is

centrally concerned with the purpose or aims of education, directed at the achievement of specific educational objectives (Bush, 2008).

The essence of school governance lies in the active participation of the community and local residents in the developmental processes of educational institutions. This fundamental principle is designed to involve individuals and groups beyond government authorities, providing a system of checks and balances for overseeing and regulating the progress and functioning of these institutions. Many research studies have been conducted to examine the advantages of community participation in school governance, whether through formal partnerships or more informal forms of engagement. These studies consistently highlight the positive impact of such involvement on the overall development of schools. Community participation in school governance not only enhances the sense of ownership and responsibility among local residents but also enriches the learning experiences of students. The proximity of the community allows students to benefit from the knowledge and resources of local people. As the primary beneficiaries of the school system, students have a rightful claim to be involved in the governance and decision-making processes. This collaborative approach between educational institutions and their surrounding communities has been shown, through extensive research, to yield numerous benefits for school development and, ultimately, student success.

Community Participation in School Governance

Research has consistently demonstrated the critical importance of community participation in school governance for the overall development of educational institutions. This active involvement of the community serves to enhance the sense of ownership and responsibility towards the schools within the local population. Additionally, community participation fosters valuable opportunities for students to

learn directly from community members and local residents, enriching their educational experiences. Given that students are the primary beneficiaries of the school system, they possess a legitimate right to be actively engaged in the processes of school governance. This collective participation of various stakeholders plays a pivotal role in shaping the educational landscape and ensuring the well-being and progress of schools.

Kladifko (2013) asserted that a school cannot exist independently of its local community, suggesting that there is an inherent partnership between the school and community that precedes any consideration of forming additional partnerships.

Alleman and Neal (2013) cited that one particular benefit of establishing school-community partnerships was the enhancement of the school's overall climate while Smith (2014) noted that school-community partnerships provided students with the opportunity to access resources beyond the regular school day. Casto (2016) further added that the interactions among students, schools, and the community can distribute social capital to students and their families, irrespective of the specific school attended by the students.

Tytler et al. (2018) stated that “programs investigating local environment and sustainability issues lend themselves well to community input and engagement” (p. 254). Ford et al. (2019) concluded that “school-community partnerships are (a) crucial to student outcomes and (b) should be broadened to include entities that respond to the needs of diverse populations of young children” (p. 102). Epstein and Sheldon (2019) claimed that “hundreds of studies confirm that students do better in school if their parents and others in the community are interested and involved in their education” (p. 31).

Bryan (2005) in Cook et al. (2020) stated that “collaborative family-school-community partnerships have been found to help maximize academic and social outcomes and are related to improved/more equitable student outcomes” (p. 146). Similarly, Sepanik and Brown (2021) concluded that “school-community partnerships are a popular evidence-based tool for bringing additional resources and services into school” (p. 8) and noted that “much has been written about the effectiveness of school-family-community partnerships on academic achievement, showing that students have better academic outcomes, such as increased attendance and achievement scores, and lower discipline referrals when schools, families, and the community work together” (Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Henry, 2014; Jeynes, 2011 in Griffin et al., 2021).

The scholars emphasize the significance of school-community partnership for the benefit of schools and students. Zuckerman (2022) discovered that “the mobilization of political capital directly or indirectly impacts child development” (p. 105). Ansell and Gach (2008), as cited in Zuckerman's study, noted that “the vision of political capital requires moving beyond traditional adversarial politics to develop collaborative governance of schools and other public agencies” (p. 106). Benavides (2022) highlights the importance of community involvement in public schools based on research by Casto (2016) and Green (2018), stating that “current research on school-community partnership clearly shows the importance of community involvement in public schools and corresponding positive outcomes for students, families, and academic performance” (p. 68).

In the context of Bhutanese schools, Tashi (2022) recommends “the establishment of strong school-community partnerships in which both the school and community contribute to providing meaningful learning for Bhutanese children” (p.

108). Tashi further suggests that “having acknowledged their importance, school-community partnerships should be supported through policy interventions, and sharing such policies with the community is likely to lead to greater engagement and attention from both schools and communities” (p. 109). Mkhize and Hungwe (2022) concluded that “while many partnerships were found by the school to form strategies for mobilizing resources, studies have claimed that partnerships, on their own, do not yield favorable outcomes unless an effort is made to sustain them” (p. 11).

In summary, community participation in school governance is essential for strengthening educational institutions and fostering a collaborative environment. By involving the local community in governance, a sense of ownership and responsibility is cultivated, leading to enriched educational experiences for students. This direct engagement not only improves the overall climate of schools but also extends resources and support to students beyond regular school hours. Research consistently demonstrates the positive effects of school-community partnerships on academic outcomes, attendance, and discipline. Effective governance requires the collaboration of schools, families, and communities, which is crucial for student success. Scholars emphasize the need for policies that support and sustain these partnerships, recognizing the significant impact that community involvement in school governance has on students, families, and academic performance. These insights highlight the importance of prioritizing school-community partnerships in governance and sharing relevant policies with the community to enhance engagement and mutual responsibility between schools and their communities.

School Governance Shift in Nepal

The history of education governance in Nepal reflects a gradual shift towards more inclusive, accountable, and decentralized leadership and management structures.

Initially, education was governed through traditional systems, such as the gurukul and Buddhist *Gumbas*, where decision-making was localized and participation was limited to higher castes and elites (Sharma, 2069 v.s.). Over time, particularly during the Shah Dynasty, formalized governance structures began to emerge with the establishment of the Directorate Office in 1859, marking the beginning of modern education governance (Sharma, 2069 v.s.).

Durbar High School, founded in 1858 under the initiative of Jung Bahadur Rana to impart English education to his own, his brothers', and courtiers' male offspring, marked Nepal's inaugural formal educational institution. The appointment of an "Education Director" served as a mechanism to "govern" the school, “with the first director being Rana, Babar Jung, succeeded subsequently by another Rana figure, Dhir Shamsher” (Swar 2037 v.s.; Gautam 2004 in Parajuli and Onta, 2021, p. 3). The structure and count of educational establishments remained static until 1901, when Dev Shamsher assumed the role of Prime Minister. However, the sole existing school didn't cater to the broader populace. Dev Shamsher's leadership saw transformative steps as he introduced "*Bhasa Pathsalas*" (Language Schools), which incorporated Nepali as the medium of instruction.

This modification also led to alterations in the governance structure. Preceding the establishment of the Education Director's office, the governance of education maintained an informal trajectory, given that “education for the most part remained informal for a very long time” (Niraula, 2007, p. 27). The school's management experienced a pivotal shift with the advent of *Bhasa Pathsalas*, signifying a transition from informal arrangements. The historical account unveils a sequential evolution in school governance, intertwined with the changing sociopolitical dynamics of Nepal's educational landscape. The transition to

democracy in 1951 further expanded access to education, leading to the formation of the Nepal National Education Planning Commission, which played a significant role in reforming the education system (Rappleye, 2021).

The introduction of the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) in 1971 aimed to create a unified public education system, reflecting a strategic approach to achieving educational goals (Onta, 2021). The governance structure became increasingly participatory with the introduction of School Management Committees, which included parents, teachers, and community members, thus ensuring greater representation and accountability in school management (Carney & Bista, 2021). The Constitution of Nepal 2015 further decentralized authority by placing school education under local government control, emphasizing the importance of social responsibility and local involvement in governance (Government of Nepal [GoN], 2021a). The Education Act of 1971 and its subsequent amendments introduced various governing bodies, such as the District Education Office and SMCs, to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and monitoring of school operations (GoN, 2021c). These developments illustrate Nepal's journey from a traditional, centralized system to a more networked and inclusive governance model, where leadership and management are focused on accountability, effective communication, and the continuous pursuit of educational quality.

The history of school governance in Nepal reflects the country's socio-political changes, evolving through several distinct stages. Initially, governance played a minimal role due to the limited number of schools, which primarily served the social elite. During the Rana period, education was tightly controlled by the ruling elite, using it as a tool to consolidate their power. After the Rana rule, efforts to democratize education began, though they were hindered by lingering influences from

the previous era. The Panchayat regime brought centralized control, imposing a top-down governance structure. In the post-Panchayat period, a shift towards decentralization emerged, empowering local communities and bodies in educational governance. The Federal period marked the most recent shift, where governance became a shared responsibility between federal and provincial entities, reflecting a collaborative approach. This historical overview highlights the evolution of school governance in Nepal, from elite domination to democratic empowerment, and from centralization to decentralization, mirroring the nation's broader socio-political development.

Researches and Reports of School Governance

The research and reports reviewed in this study underscore the vital role of community and family members in school governance, as they are the primary stakeholders who ultimately benefit from school education. As this study focuses on the roles of School Management Committees in school development, and since SMCs are a formal expression of community involvement in school governance, these reports and studies provide insight into the powerful impact of such participation. The findings emphasize not just the presence of community members but the necessity of their qualifications, skills, and informed engagement. The trend in educational governance has gradually shifted toward emphasizing the participation of educated, trained, and well-informed individuals. In this regard, even if these qualifications are not present at the time of appointment, members can and should acquire them through targeted training programs. As Morant Adams (2021) states, the board of trustees is responsible for both the short- and long-term goals, strategic planning, and fiduciary responsibilities of their respective institutions. Similarly, Twardowska-Case (2021)

found that effective boards play a pivotal role in transforming institutions from mere survival to genuine thriving.

International literature has widely highlighted the need for continuous training and capacity-building programs for school governance actors, e.g. Simpkins (2021) notes that school boards play a central role in shaping school policies, and when members are appropriately trained, their governance directly contributes to school development and student achievement. Ipe (2021) draws on Gaventa's (2004) argument that empowering local stakeholders through participatory governance leads not only to democracy-building but also to pro-poor development. Rindo (2010), in referencing Rice et al. (2000), reported that school board members themselves believed their actions directly influenced student achievement. Similarly, Wong et al. (2007) and Portz and Schwartz (2009), as cited in Black (2016), link governance effectiveness with school leadership and student outcomes. Studies conducted over the last decade consistently affirm that the active and informed participation of school governing bodies positively influences educational outcomes.

The case of Nepal mirrors many of these global observations. A growing body of research highlights the multifaceted roles and challenges of SMCs in the Nepali context. Neupane (2023), using a mixed-methods approach, found that SMC members often lack sufficient leadership and management competencies, emphasizing the need for robust training interventions. Similarly, Puri and Chhetri (2024) conducted a systematic review that established a strong correlation between SMC engagement and overall school performance. Khanal and Timilsena (2022), through qualitative inquiry, explored SMCs' roles in participatory decision-making, shedding light on both the possibilities and limits of decentralized governance. Bhattarai (2022) explored implementers' perceptions of school governance policies and found

persistent gaps in transparency and budgeting. Dhungel, Lamichhane, and Pokharel (2013) conducted a quantitative study revealing that the community takeover of SMCs positively influenced student enrollment and stakeholder participation.

Several studies have pointed to politicization and capacity constraints as persistent issues such as Paudel and Pokharel (2022), in their mixed-methods research, exposed how political bias and low technical capacity among SMC members compromise governance efficacy. Gairhe (2023), in a qualitative case study in Pokhara, emphasized the need for transparent practices and stakeholder engagement to promote good governance. In a comparative quantitative study, Khanal (2016) found that community-managed schools outperformed government-managed schools in several dimensions, further highlighting the potential of local governance when managed well. Khadka (2023) explored the influence of women's participation in SMCs, concluding that although their presence is increasing, their actual decision-making power remains limited. Similarly, Sehrawat and Roy (2020) offered a cross-national comparison between India and Nepal, revealing both shared challenges and unique contextual differences regarding role expectations from SMCs.

Multiple studies have also brought attention to the lived experiences of SMC chairs and members, who often navigate a complex terrain of policy ambiguities and community expectations like, Bhattarai (2022) used a phenomenological approach to delve into these experiences and highlighted the disconnect between policy design and ground-level implementation. Other studies like those of Neupane and Dhakal (2025) explored community participation through qualitative and mixed-method lenses respectively, both affirming that participatory governance improves enrollment and retention. Several authors (Jamil and Paudel (2022); Neupane, 2023; Gairhe, 2023) have repeatedly shown that when stakeholders are included meaningfully, there

is a marked improvement in governance quality, accountability, and even student outcomes.

The need for collaborative and inclusive governance also emerges as a central theme across both global and local studies. According to Ozar and Weitzel-O'Neill (2012), an excellent school depends on its governing body working in close collaboration with the leadership team to ensure academic excellence. Arseo (2021) reinforces this by citing longstanding sociological views that stress the importance of strong family and community ties to educational institutions. Deruiter Ouwinga (2021) also notes that leaders who fail to promote collaboration are unlikely to resolve conflicts or foster sustainable growth. Studies by Bryk and Schneider (2002), Bryk et al. (2010), and Cunningham (2002), as cited in Arseo (2021), argue that community trust and active stewardship of education reforms are essential for student success.

Collaboration is not only a matter of good practice but a structural necessity in governance. Morant Adams (2021), citing Chaudhary (2015), defines shared governance as a structured mechanism for participatory management and decision-making. Adams found that board members strongly believe in the centrality of shared governance for institutional progress. Hickerson (2021) also highlighted the role of relationship-building in improving student outcomes and teacher retention through collective efficacy. Simpkins (2021) found that boards with stability and continuity were significantly more effective in ensuring student achievement. Kenny (2018) echoes this by stating that stable governance is a prerequisite for long-term educational reforms.

The significance of training and technical knowledge among SMC members cannot be overstated. Studies in South Africa by Mashile (2000) parallel findings in Nepal, showing that governance bodies need appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes,

and values to be effective. Gogel (2013) and Silver (2010) argue that districts benefit greatly when board members are clear about their roles and receive ongoing training. Bloom (2010) found statistically significant correlations between governance practices and school performance, reinforcing the notion that professional capacity is not optional but foundational.

In conclusion, both international and Nepal-based literature strongly support the view that SMCs can serve as transformative agents in school governance when properly supported. The integration of these studies reveals key themes: the importance of informed stakeholder involvement, the necessity of training and skill development, the value of collaborative governance structures, and the persistent challenges posed by politicization and unclear policy mandates. The emerging picture affirms the potential of SMCs in Nepal not merely as policy instruments but as participatory bodies capable of driving real educational change—provided they are equipped, empowered, and engaged.

In summary, the research and reports on school governance underscore the importance of community and family involvement in educational leadership and governance. They emphasize the role of School Management Committees in representing parents and community members in school governance, particularly when these individuals are well-educated and well-informed. Training programs for SMC members are highlighted as a crucial factor in improving school governance, leading to positive school development and better student achievement. Collaborative approaches among governing members are also underlined, emphasizing the importance of addressing the needs of all stakeholders for successful educational outcomes. For example, when families and community members actively participate in school governance, local administrators can gain support for implementing reforms

that improve student outcomes. Moreover, the studies stress the importance of knowledge and training for school governing members, as well-trained and knowledgeable members are more likely to positively impact schools and student success.

Theorizing the Literature

School governance is depicted as seeking strategic leadership for sustainability in development, with an emphasis on transparency and accountability. This is described in the decision-making aspect of leadership. Pursuing goals, effectiveness, and efficiency, as well as network management, are highlighted as key components of the management aspects of governance within school governance. Structural management is emphasized, particularly in the relationship management aspect of governance.

Effective communication is portrayed as vital in school governance, linking it to the communication aspect of management and the participation aspect of leadership. Cooperation in school governance is described as involving both leadership and management aspects, including participation, social responsibility, relationship management, and communication. Monitoring and evaluation are depicted as integral to school governance, with connections to pursuing goals and monitoring within the management aspect. The central focus of school governance, which is student achievement, is highlighted as being interconnected with all the aspects studied within both the management and leadership aspects of governance.

The above mentioned literature under various topics and sub-topics concludes a visual framework for understanding the interconnectedness of leadership and management aspects within the context of school governance and their collective impact on student achievement.

Summary of the Literature Review

Within governance, leadership and management play distinct yet interrelated roles. Leadership involves influencing and driving change, fostering inclusivity, and promoting accountability and responsibility. Leadership in governance is not limited to a single individual; it encompasses a range of stakeholders with leadership qualities. Participation and social responsibility are essential components of effective governance, facilitating collaboration between society and the state.

Likewise, management in governance focuses on translating high-level directives into daily activities, ensuring efficiency and ethical standards. Effective communication, monitoring, and network orchestration are vital aspects of governance management. Governance is a multifaceted process that requires skillful interaction among various stakeholders to achieve desired goals and outcomes.

In the context of school governance, community participation is central to the developmental processes of educational institutions. Extensive research and reports emphasize the positive impact of involving local residents in school governance. This collaboration fosters a sense of ownership, enriches students' educational experiences, and provides access to community knowledge and resources. It enhances school climate, academic outcomes, attendance, and discipline. Community involvement in public schools is associated with improved student performance, underscoring the significance of policies that support and sustain such partnerships.

Nepal's school governance policy has evolved from traditional *gurukul* systems to modern education, with a focus on expanding access to education. Constitutional changes in 2015 devolved authority over schools to local governments, emphasizing local involvement and representation in educational leadership and management. The Education Act of 1971 and subsequent amendments introduced

governing bodies like School Management Committees, promoting representation and educational development. Effective governance in Nepal recognizes the importance of local participation and collaborative decision-making.

In the realm of research and reports on school governance, the importance of community and family involvement is a recurring theme. Well-educated and well-informed stakeholders contribute significantly to positive school development. Training programs for SMC members enhance governance effectiveness, leading to improved student achievement. Collaboration among governing members, addressing the needs of all stakeholders, and the importance of knowledge and training are central themes in achieving better educational outcomes.

Overall, the literature highlights the interconnectedness of governance, leadership, and management theory in shaping educational processes and outcomes. They underscore the dynamic nature of the importance of inclusivity, and the role of informed stakeholders in fostering effective governance and educational development.

Research Gap

This study aimed to address several critical gaps and areas of limited exploration in the existing literature on governance, particularly within the context of school governance in Nepal.

While there is an abundance of literature on governance in general, there is a lack of detailed exploration concerning the leadership and management aspects of governance. This study delved deeply into these aspects to provide a more comprehensive understanding of school governance.

Existing research in the Nepalese context has predominantly focused on the role perception of School Management Committee members. However, there is a noticeable gap in research that specifically explores their leadership and managerial

roles. At the meantime, the consumer of SMC activities are school education stakeholders like parents, teachers and students. How SMCs are functioning should be examined through the viewpoints of other stakeholders considering mixed method of research including large data set of quantitative questionnaire and qualitative interviews which has been explored less. This study addressed this issue by exploring the SMCs' role perception through the viewpoints of parents, teachers and head teachers.

While prior studies have collectively established the positive relationship between active SMC participation and school development (Dhungel et al., 2013; Khanal, 2016; Bloom, 2010), there is insufficient research that critically examines the lived experiences, internal dynamics, and political challenges faced by SMC members in Nepal, particularly within the context of federal restructuring. Most existing research is either macro-level and policy-driven quantitative studies (e.g., Sehrawat & Roy, 2020; Bloom, 2010; Mashile, 2000) or limited in contextual and experiential depth, as seen in a few small-scale qualitative inquiries (e.g., Bhattarai, 2022; Gairhe, 2023). While studies like Neupane (2023) and Paudel & Pokharel (2022) use mixed methods to highlight capacity gaps and political interference, there is a noticeable absence of deep, integrative investigations that uncover how governance is actually experienced, negotiated, and contested by local SMC actors on the ground. This study seeks to address that gap by exploring the roles, challenges, and experiences of SMC members in Nepal through a mixed-methods approach that combines the depth of qualitative insights with the breadth of quantitative analysis (Khanal & Timilsena, 2022; Khadka, 2023; Neupane & Dhakal, 2025).

The conceptual evolution of SMCs and their historical development in the Nepalese context have been extensively studied however, its impact on school

development has been studied less. This research sought to fill this gap by shedding light on how these committees have evolved over time and their contributions to school development.

Despite the existence of political and social tensions in SMC functioning, there is a dearth of research that examines these tensions in detail. As Nepal went through democracy and later federalism, the gap between community and institutional school has increased. This gap has led to the SMC functioning of these two types of schools too. There is a noticeable tension between SMCs in community schools and institutional schools. A comparative study of these two types of schools was necessary to understand the differences and similarities in SMC functioning. Moreover, the SMCs of both types of schools are facing internal and external tensions too which is explored in this research.

Lastly, there is a gap in the literature regarding how policies aim to guide SMCs toward school development and how these committees are actually functioning in practice. This research analyzed the division between policy intentions and the realities of SMCs' contributions to school development.

By addressing these gaps and conducting a comprehensive study, this research aimed to contribute valuable insights into the dynamics of school governance in Nepal, particularly focusing on the leadership and management roles of SMCs and their impact on school development.

Conceptual Framework

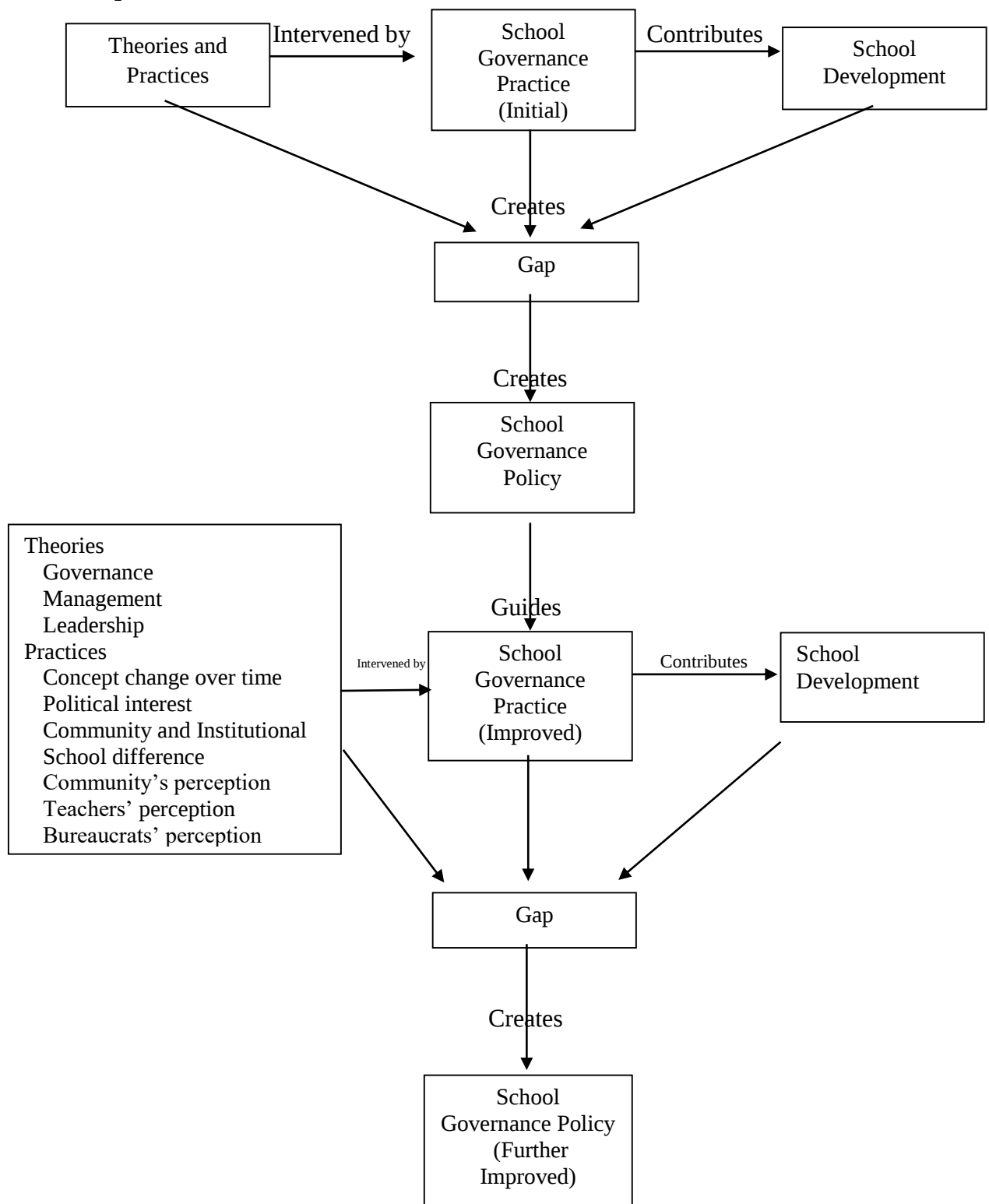


Figure 2. Conceptual framework

The historical context of educational governance reveals that the practice of school governance by SMCs predated the formulation of formal school governance policies. This pre-existing practice played a significant role in the development of schools. However, it's important to note that the interplay between practical experiences and theoretical concepts sometimes created discrepancies in the governance process, resulting in policy gaps. Consequently, formal policies were eventually developed to provide guidance and enhance the school governance process, leading to further advancements in school development.

This study delved into these intervening factors that influenced the educational governance landscape. The elements that were explored within the realm of theories include governance, management, and leadership. Additionally, within the domain of practical experiences, this research investigated aspects such as the evolution of concepts over time, political interests, disparities between community and institutional schools, the perceptions of parents, teachers, and school principals, as well as the views of bureaucrats involved in the governance process.

This research explored the pivotal role of School Management Committees in Nepal's educational governance. The objectives, that were derived from research questions, encompass a historical analysis of SMC evolution, an examination of their functions in community and institutional schools, an evaluation of leadership perceptions, an analysis of policy-driven responsibilities, and an investigation into practical roles. Influenced by factors like concept changes and policy amendments, and anchored in theories of governance, the study employed mixed methods.

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology

This section provides an overview of the research methodology, outlining the steps and procedures that followed in conducting the study. It begins by discussing the research paradigm, which served as the overarching framework guiding the entire research process. Within the paradigm, the philosophical orientation that informs the research approach is discussed. The section then delves into the specific research methods that was employed, as well as the tools and techniques that were used to collect data. It also addresses the sampling process, explaining how participants were selected for the study, and provides information about the research location. Next, the section details how the collected data were analyzed and interpreted. Given that this research followed a mixed-methods approach, it covers quantitative, qualitative, and mixed data analysis methods. Finally, the section touches on quality concerns in the research process and ethical considerations that were taken into account during the study. This structure outlines the comprehensive methodology that was used to conduct the research.

Research Paradigm

This research encompassed a range of elements, including research questions that require survey data, policy documents, literature reviews, and the input of participants. In seeking both types of data, the research avoided taking an exclusively objective or subjective approach. Instead, it aimed to blend both types of knowledge, resulting in a mixed approach. This approach aligned with pragmatism's core principles, emphasizing practicality and the utility of knowledge. Pragmatism values knowledge that serves practical purposes and can be revised and improved as needed

(Neupane, 2023). This research adopted a pragmatic stance, embracing the flexible and adaptable nature of knowledge in line with pragmatism's philosophy.

As Pragmatism believes that “human actions can never be separated from the past experiences and from the beliefs that have originated from those experiences” (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019, p. 3), this research explored the experiences of parents, teachers, SMC members, educational officers and educational experts. The focal point of pragmatism is human action. The world runs on the basis of the actions taken by human beings and human beings make the world view according to the experiences gathered. And that is why; pragmatism emphasizes strongly on “if-then” relationship. If one experiences the world in a certain way, then he/she acts in a certain way. This study strongly focused on if-then relationship of SMC members' perception about their managerial and leadership role for school governance.

Pragmatism is a research perspective that diverges from the theory-centered mainstream, aiming to bridge the gap between de-contextualized theoretical knowledge and real-life practices. According to Apunen-Rytovuori (2009), “pragmatist researchers have criticized the theory-centered mainstream. It reconnects the de-contextualized (theory-centered) knowledge with life practices” (p. 642). Its primary objective is to generate practical knowledge that can be applied to make purposeful differences in practice, as asserted by Goldkuhl (2012). Pragmatism rejects the notion of a single truth or reality and instead emphasizes the existence of multiple realities and truths. Yefimov (2004) highlights that “a major underpinning of pragmatist philosophy is that knowledge and reality are based on beliefs and habits that are socially constructed” (in Kaushik and Walsh, 2019, p. 3).

John Dewey, a prominent figure in pragmatist idea, argued that abstract principles cannot dictate actions because ends and means are inherently

interconnected. Ormerod (2006) captures Dewey's point by stating, “John Dewey’s point was that ‘abstract principles cannot determine actions because ends cannot be separated from means’” (p. 902). According to pragmatism, individuals actively participate in shaping their world, and the meaning we derive from life results from a complex interplay between received ideas and present experiences, as explained by (Maddux and Donnet, 2015). Pragmatism rejects the idea of knowledge as final, universal, or absolute. Instead, it views knowledge as an ongoing, revisable, and improvable process, as noted by (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

In research, pragmatism dismisses the conventional philosophical dualism of objectivity and subjectivity, enabling researchers to move away from the imposed dichotomies associated with post-positivism and constructivism (Creswell and Clark 2011). In fact, it is a paradigm that asserts to bridge the gap between the scientific method and the structuralist orientation of older approaches, and the naturalistic methods and freewheeling orientation of newer approaches (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, this research implemented both quantitative and qualitative approach to explore the knowledge.

Philosophical Standpoints

In this research, the ontological stance acknowledged the multiplicity of realities, as Denzin and Lincoln (2011) emphasized that ontology pertains to the nature of the world to be known and claimed as reality. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2018) defines ontology as the nature of reality or a phenomenon, aligning with the pragmatist belief in multiple, context-dependent realities. The reality sought in this study is defined by how School Management Committee members understood their roles in the specific context of school governance, emphasizing the nature of existence as understood by various stakeholders. Pragmatism asserts that reality is not

fixed but is constructed and reconstructed through experience and interaction.

Therefore, this research accepted that different stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and education officers construct their realities based on their lived experiences and practical involvement with SMCs.

The nature of human beings is, pragmatically, shaped and guided by their surroundings. They do not make free choices in isolation. External forces such as social context, cultural norms, and institutional expectations guide them. At the same time, each individual also acts based on what they perceive to be correct or beneficial in their context. Thus, their actions are both socially influenced and personally meaningful. Judging them from their own viewpoint alone is not sufficient. So, the consumers of SMCs' actions (such as parents and teachers) are also considered as valuable sources of reality. This multiplicity of perspectives reflects the pragmatic commitment to pluralism, where understanding is co-constructed by considering various voices.

Moving to epistemology, which concerns the process and study of knowledge, the research aimed to uncover knowledge with and among participants, rather than simply extracting it from them. Cohen et al. (2018) defined epistemology as how we come to know multiple realities, highlighting the dynamic and relational nature of knowledge building. This research placed trust in understanding various realities to generate knowledge, recognizing that knowledge is not static but continually evolves. It is guided by a framework that values rigorous thought and logical processes, as well as contextual sensitivity, in approaching the truth (Viega, 2016; McArdle, 2018).

The pragmatic standpoint in this research emphasized that some knowledge is out there waiting to be discovered such as observable behavior, institutional practices, or performance metrics and some is to be explored and interpreted such as stakeholder

beliefs, motivations, and lived experiences. For instance, how the SMCs were behaving could be documented and measured, while how they were constructing meaning around their leadership roles required interpretive exploration. This dual orientation toward both discovery and construction reflects the core of pragmatism in research.

In terms of axiology, the theory of value, this research placed a higher value on understanding the perspectives of multiple stakeholders in the educational system than strictly adhering to existing theories or policies. Cohen et al. (2018) defined axiology as involving the principles and meanings governing research and its ethical considerations. In this study, the perceptions of education officers, education experts, and other stakeholders were highly valued not just as data points but as sources of insight into real-world problems. This aligns with axiology's focus on a set of value assumptions that guide the research (Hesse-Biber, 2010; Viega, 2016). The researcher's values, too, were seen not as biases to be eliminated but as orientations that shaped the inquiry toward practical and context-sensitive understanding.

Research Design

The research design adopted a mixed-methods embedded approach within a pragmatist paradigm to comprehensively investigate school governance. Drawing on the thought of pragmatism, which emphasized practicality and the dynamic nature of knowledge, the study integrated qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the research questions from various perspectives. The embedded design usually is applied to complement or elaborate the knowledge in which some respondents are selected for additional in-depth interviewing (Small, 2011). Sampling strategies include multi-stage sampling for quantitative research and purposive sampling for qualitative research, ensuring representation of diverse stakeholders. Data collection methods

encompassed interviews, questionnaires, and analysis of policy documents and literature. Thematic analysis is employed for qualitative data to develop chapters, while quantitative data is analyzed using statistical techniques. Integration of findings enhanced the reliability and validity of the research, ensuring robust conclusions. This research design facilitates a nuanced understanding of school governance dynamics, aligning with the pragmatic knowledge generation for practical purposes.

Research Method

The nature of this research necessitates a mixed-method approach, aligning with the pragmatic knowledge claim. In this approach, the problem takes precedence over the choice of methods, and researchers employ various approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2003). This emphasis on the research problem as primary resonates with Maxcy's (2003) view that pragmatism supports methodological pluralism, allowing researchers to select methods best suited to addressing specific questions. Halcomb and Hickman (2015) note that mixed methods research leverages the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research by combining their data collection techniques. Furthermore, Creswell (2003) emphasizes that pragmatic researchers focus on the what and how of research based on its intended consequences and where they aim to go with it. This research sought to address both what and how questions in its exploration.

The interpretation of the findings relied on both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. In mixed methods research, the researcher collects data using quantitative instruments and gathers qualitative data through focused groups, aiming to observe if the two types of data yield similar results but from different perspectives (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). This aligns with Morgan's (2007) argument that pragmatism supports the use of multiple methods to capture different facets of social

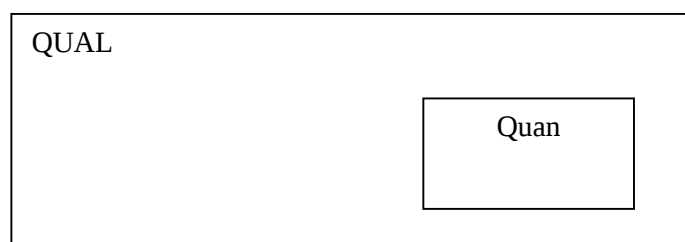
phenomena, thus enhancing the validity of the findings. This research aligned with Tashakkori and Creswell's (2007) definition of mixed methods research, where data were collected, analyzed, integrated, and inferences were drawn using both qualitative and quantitative approaches within a single study. According to Hanson et al. (2005), mixed methods research is guided by philosophical assumptions that enable the integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches throughout the research process. This research sought to combine elements of both approaches, such as viewpoints, data collection, analysis, and inference techniques, to enhance the breadth and depth of understanding (Almalki, 2016).

Given that this research aimed to address the interests and needs of various stakeholders, the mixed methods approach was particularly suited to respond to the diverse stakeholders' interests and needs (Doyle et al., 2009). This approach allows for the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods within a single study, providing a comprehensive account of the research problem (Pardede, 2019). As Feilzer (2010) asserts, pragmatism in mixed methods research allows the researcher to adopt whatever combination of methods best addresses the research question, emphasizing practical outcomes over methodological purity. Furthermore, this research employed an embedded design within the mixed methods approach, a design Schoonenboom (2019) highlights as useful for complementing broad quantitative data with detailed qualitative insights, thereby enriching the overall interpretation of the findings.

Finally, following Ghiara's (2020) conceptualization, this study views mixed methods not merely as a collection of separate methods but as a coherent paradigm that integrates different philosophical assumptions in a structured and purposeful way.

This perspective supports the embedded design's aim to produce practical knowledge while maintaining philosophical and methodological rigor.

The embedded design. In Embedded design the purpose is “to collect quantitative and qualitative simultaneously or sequentially, but to have one form of data play a supportive role to the other form of data” (Creswell, 2012, p. 544). This research began from exploring qualitative data from literatures and interviewing the experts like education officers, SMC members, head teachers and the experts to analyze the evolution of SMC in school governance and its functioning in school's development. The research continued with qualitative data collection and interpretation to understand the community and institutional school SMC difference in functioning triangulating with policy documents and experts' views. Quantitative data from the survey of teachers and parents embedded with qualitative interview in the next phase which played complementary role (Parade, 2018). Quantitative analysis on how the community and teachers are perceiving the functioning of SMC was mixed as “one database could help explain the other database” (Creswell and Creswell, 2018, p. 51). After quantitative analysis, again the qualitative analysis on policy documents and experts' viewpoints were explored. Finally, the gaps between policy and practices of SMC in their leadership and management qualities was analyzed. In conclusion, the research followed the model in which quantitative study was embedded in qualitative study as in figure:



Source: Hesse-Biber, (2010), p. 115

Figure 3. The Embedded Design

Creswell (2014) supports this design saying that the embedded mixed method design nests one or more forms of data within a larger design. The voice of a big number of parents and teachers is necessary for the analysis of school system which was better included embedding their views quantitatively. In this research qualitative data covered a larger design in which quantitative data was nested to complement.

Sampling

Sampling is critical process in research, involving the selection of a subset from the larger population. Creswell (2012) defines a sample as “a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generating information about” (p. 142). Given that this research adopted a mixed-method approach, the sampling strategy was also mixed, tailored to the specific needs of each method. The research encompassed five distinct populations: teachers, parents, SMC members, educational bureaucrats, and experts. For the quantitative data collection phase, teachers and parents represent the target population. Conversely, for qualitative data collection, the target population comprises SMC members, educational bureaucrats, and experts who worked in school educational setting more than 20 years.

The research was conducted in Godawari Municipality, situated in Lalitpur District of Nepal. This municipality comprises of 14 wards and hosts a total of 86 schools, divided into 35 community schools and 48 institutional schools. Good distribution of community and institutional schools was the main reason to select this location since this research needs both types of schools. The community schools have an enrollment of approximately 6,480 students, with a teaching staff of 720 teachers, while the institutional cater around 15,000 students, with a teaching workforce of 1,200 teachers according to the record of then Godawari Municipality office.

The quantitative analysis employed the multi-staged samplings as proposed by Rahman et al. (2022) that included:

Stage 1 – Ward wise school list was collected from the Municipality office database. From the database, it was observed that ward 7 and 8 do not have institutional schools. So, a community school from each ward and an institutional school from 12 wards, excluding ward 7 and 8, were selected using simple random sampling.

Stage 2 – The parents were clustered according to the grade level their child studies: grade 1-5 (primary level); grade 6-8 (basic level); and grade 9-12 (secondary level). To maintain gender inclusion, gender equality was maintained from each level.

Stage 3 – From the list of parents from each school, after clustering, were selected using simple random method as proposed by Rahman et al. (2022).

The teachers were selected using simple random sampling method from the list provided by the head teachers.

Sample size. To determine sample size Cochran's formula was applied as proposed in Nanjundeswaraswamy and Divakar (2021):

$$n_o = \frac{z^2 (pq)}{e^2}$$

where,

n = sample size

z = standard error associated with the chosen level of confidence (that is

calculated at 95% confidence level which typically gives 1.96 from z table value)

p = standard deviation calculated from pilot study

q = 1-p

e = acceptable sample error (that is generally calculated at 5%)

applying formula, the value came 231 for teachers and 347 for parents.

then adjusting the formula for small population,

$$n = \frac{n_o}{[1 + \{\frac{n_o - 1}{N}\}]}$$

The final values of n are; 206 for teachers and 341 for parents. As the sample error decreases when sample size increases, to maintain school wise uniformity in number 468 parents (18 parents multiplied by 26 schools) and 208 teachers (8 teachers multiplied by 26 schools) were the quantitative sample size of this research which is presented in the table below:

Table 1. *Sample Population (Quantitative)*

Schools Population	Community (14)	Institutional (12)	Total (26)
Parent	252	216	468
Teacher	112	96	208

The qualitative part of this research employed purposive sampling, a method of selecting units based on personal judgment rather than randomization (Elder, 2009). This approach allows for the selection of samples that are specifically chosen to meet the research's goals and requirements, ensuring that they are well-suited to address the research questions and objectives (Cohen et al., 2018). The purposive sampling included the participants from the same schools where quantitative survey was done in case of SMC members, and head teachers. While purposefully selecting head teachers, the number of year of service were taken into consideration to grab rich information. Similarly, in case of SMC members, their social influence and political neutrality were taken into consideration.

Similarly, the education officers were also from the same area whose jobs are or were in same schools' area. In case of experts, the persons who served for more

than 20 years in Nepalese school education sector were chosen. For the qualitative study, the population of interest was the members of School Management Committees, head teachers, education officers, and educational experts. To build the sample, one SMC member was selected from two community and institutional schools each. Additionally, a head teacher from the same schools were chosen for the further inputs. For expert's views, three education officers (educational bureaucrats) and two experts were purposefully selected to provide valuable insights and perspectives. This purposive sampling strategy ensured that the chosen participants were highly relevant to the research's focus and goals.

Data Collection Tools and Techniques

Since this research followed mixed-method research design, the data collection tools and techniques applied were also carefully chosen to address the need of both qualitative and quantitative data. This research covers large qualitative data and few quantitative data embedded. For quantitative portion questionnaire was developed and for the qualitative one literature, policy documents were explored and interview guidelines were developed. The research began with the qualitative thought with the existing literature as data source followed by the quantitative survey and then again interviews to receive participants' views.

Literature and policy documents. Authoritative literature sources that provide information on SMC was used as data sources for this aspect of the research. The literature search employed the key terms 'governance', 'school governance', 'leadership', 'school leadership', 'management', and 'school management'. During the first phase of literature search all the browsed literature were collected. The second phase followed by the delineation of the collected literature. In the third phase, still after literature review the unnecessary citations were cleared. To identify the

discrepancies between policy and actual practices, this research required access to policy documents related to School Management Committees. These documents were sourced from central and local governments.

Questionnaire. Questionnaires are a valuable data collection tool that enable researchers to gather information by directly requesting questions from participants. This approach allows individuals to provide self-reported responses reflecting their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward specific subjects. As Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) observe, “the researcher is employing a strategy in which participants use self-report to express their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward a topic of interest” (p. 232). In this study, questionnaires were primarily employed to obtain precise quantitative data on stakeholders’ perceptions of School Management Committees (SMCs) and their roles in school governance and development.

Structured questionnaires are particularly well suited for large-scale quantitative surveys aimed at collecting both factual and perceptual data. As Guthrie (2010) notes, “structured questionnaires lend themselves to large quantitative surveys that collect factual data” (p. 130). To capture the different perspectives of key stakeholder groups, two separate questionnaires were developed, one for parents and another for teachers. The items were carefully formulated based on a thorough review of relevant literature, policy documents, and the conceptual framework derived from the research questions. These items were contextualized to represent the realities of educational governance within the Nepali context.

To ensure accessibility and comprehension, both sets of questionnaires were translated into Nepali, the respondents’ native language, thereby facilitating accurate and culturally relevant responses. Questionnaires were completed in the presence of the researcher to provide clarifications when needed. Head teachers at each selected

school were tasked with ensuring balanced representation across gender and grade levels for both parent and teacher respondents. Adequate time was allocated for participants to thoughtfully complete the questionnaires, and demographic data were systematically recorded, as detailed in the Data Presentation section.

Scale Construct and item development. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale, grounded in Likert's bipolar original attitudinal measurement model, which allows respondents to indicate varying degrees of agreement or disagreement with a series of statements. The response options included: 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Neutral', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree', numerically coded from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). This positive-to-negative coding direction (Kameon et al., 2013; Saris and Gallhofer, 2014) was selected to maintain consistency in interpretation and to enable straightforward computation of mean scores. Prior research supports that "criterion related validity is not affected even when the items' directions for Likert's type differ" (Ali and Qasem, 2014; Gul et al., 2015). Higher mean scores indicated dissatisfaction or disagreement, while lower mean scores indicated more favorable perceptions. Including the neutral midpoint allowed respondents to express ambivalence or lack of opinion, enhancing nuanced and inclusive data interpretation.

The Likert scale items were constructed to reflect the two main governance dimensions: leadership and management. The leadership dimension included decision-making, participation, accountability, and social responsibility that were derived from literature review. Decision-making constructs examined whether SMCs engage effectively in policy and strategic planning at the school level. Participation items gauged the level of inclusive involvement from parents, teachers, and community members. Accountability measures assessed whether SMC actions are

transparent and whether they respond to community concerns. Social responsibility items focused on the extent to which SMCs pursue equitable and community-responsive educational practices, addressing social needs beyond administrative roles.

The management dimension encompassed goal orientation, communication, relationship building, efficiency, network management, and monitoring, extracted from literature review. Goal orientation items evaluated whether SMCs established and pursued clear objectives in school development. Communication items assessed the clarity and effectiveness of SMC communication with stakeholders. Relationship building reflected how well SMCs foster trust and collaboration among staff and community. Efficiency gauged judicious use of school resources and timely action. Network management explored SMCs' ability to engage external stakeholders, including government bodies and NGOs. Monitoring items assess oversight of teaching quality, student progress, and resource use, ensuring sustained governance integrity.

Additional literature supports the effective use and construction of Likert scales in social research. For instance, Boone and Boone (2012) emphasize the importance of scale reliability and validity in measuring attitudes accurately. Likewise, DeVellis (2021) provides comprehensive guidance on constructing and evaluating Likert-type scales to ensure psychometric soundness. Furthermore, Jamieson (2004) discusses how Likert scales allow for meaningful quantitative analysis of ordinal data, reinforcing their utility in governance research.

Interview. Interviews are a valuable data collection strategy in mixed methods research, as they facilitate one-on-one interactions between researchers and participants, allowing for in-depth conversations focused on the research problem (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). In this research, interviews served as a means of

collecting qualitative data. To conduct effective interviews, a semi-structured interview guideline was developed in consultation with the research supervisor. The conclusion of literature review was the base for interview guideline. This interview guideline was designed to address the specific qualitative aspects of the study.

The participants for the interviews included two School Management Committee members from two institutional and community schools each, three education officers, two head teachers from two institutional and community schools each, and two education experts. Each participant was interviewed separately, following their respective interview guidelines. These interviews provided valuable insights and perspectives related to the research problem. The interviews were conducted in their mother tongue (Nepali language). They were transcribed taking care of the inclusion of whole meaning of their views. Then the transcriptions were translated in English taking care of the whole meaning of their views.

The participants were assured that the interviews would be conducted at their convenience, and all interactions were carried out in person. Ethical considerations were paramount, and participants were transparently informed about the interview's purpose. To maintain a respectful and comfortable environment, the interviews commenced with casual conversations before delving into more in-depth, probing questions. Participants were given the freedom to skip or decline any questions that they found inconvenient or preferred not to answer.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Data analysis involves the process of organizing and processing collected data to derive meaningful insights and facilitate informed decision-making. Once raw data was gathered from respondents and participants, I categorized and grouped it based on the nature of the information. Each type of information collected through various

tools and methods were organized differently. Given that this research adopted an Embedded design in Mixed Methods, the analysis was begun with the qualitative data in the initial phase. Subsequently, the quantitative data was analyzed in the second phase, followed by another round of qualitative data analysis in the third phase. This sequential approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research findings.

Qualitative analysis. To analyze the qualitative data, I systematically organized the collected information into relevant themes as necessary. This process involved transcribing and translating the interview data, ensuring that the meaning was accurately conveyed in relation to the research question. I employed thematic analysis, which allowed for the identification and interpretation of patterns within the data. The themes designed under five research questions were base for the themes. Additionally, I maintained an ongoing dialogue with the participants, providing them with summaries of their interviews to validate the interpretations. Ultimately, I integrated the interpretations from both the qualitative and quantitative components of the study. This integration, as described by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), entailed combining statistical and thematic data analysis techniques to derive meaningful inferences. This comprehensive approach allowed for a more robust understanding of the research findings.

Quantitative analysis. Upon collecting data from both teachers and parents separately, the data was input into SPSS software for analysis. Statistical tools – Means and Standard Deviation were employed to process and evaluate the gathered data. These statistical techniques were instrumental in assessing the internal characteristics and values within the dataset.

Mixed data analysis. Quantitative data was embedded while interpreting and analyzing the stakeholder's perspectives. For the similar theme, the result of quantitative data gathered from the parents and teachers were triangulated with the qualitative interviews gathered from the SMC members and head teachers from the same school. Then the overall analysis was done triangulated with the perspectives of other educational stakeholders; education officers and experts.

Reliability, Validity and Trustworthiness

The quality of research is ascertained through its reliability, validity and trustworthiness. Reliability concerns the consistency and replicability of measurements, ensuring similar results are obtained under similar conditions. Similarly, validity involves comparing research objectives with the achieved results. A research study that exhibits both reliability and validity is better equipped to provide valuable insights to the practical world in case of quantitative data. Since this research employed mixed data, trustworthiness of qualitative data is also necessary. In this section, we will discuss the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of this research.

Reliability. Nunan (1999), as cited in Zohrabi (2013), defines reliability as “dealing with the consistency, dependability, and replicability of the results obtained from a piece of research” (p. 259). The internal and external consistency and replicability of this research have been confirmed through the Cronbach Alpha values for the questionnaires which were calculated to be 0.990 for the questionnaire from the parents and 0.993 from the teachers (Cronbach Alpha values range from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating higher reliability). These results assured internal consistency in the data. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using SPSS software.

The inclusion of various stakeholders in the population, such as SMC members, head teachers, educational bureaucrats, and experts, for qualitative data collection ensured representation from different perspectives within the educational realm. The combination of data collection methods including questionnaires, interviews, and literature review facilitated the incorporation of ideas from various sources. The extensive inclusion of informants, such as parents, teachers, head teachers, SMC members, educational bureaucrats, and experts, contributed to the overall reliability of this research.

Validity. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005), as cited in Taherdoost (2016), define validity as “how well the collected data covers the actual area of investigation” (p. 28). In this mixed methods study, validity was ensured through a combination of quantitative rigor and qualitative trustworthiness, aligning with both traditional criteria and interpretive perspectives outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011).

Construct validity was addressed by ensuring coherence between research instruments, theoretical constructs, and interpretation. In the quantitative phase, carefully designed questionnaires targeted specific constructs aligned with the research objectives. In the qualitative phase, construct validity was enhanced through deep engagement with participants’ perspectives, ensuring that their lived experiences were accurately captured and interpreted. I maintained reflexivity throughout, acknowledging their positionality as a member of school system while upholding impartiality during data collection and analysis. This reflexive awareness aligns with Denzin and Lincoln’s emphasis on the researcher’s interpretive responsibility in constructing meaning.

Content validity was strengthened through methodological triangulation. Data were systematically collected from multiple sources—including structured

questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and literature reviews—to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The inclusion of expert reviews and feedback during progress presentations contributed to refining data collection tools, enhancing the conceptual alignment of both quantitative items and qualitative protocols. This approach ensured that all dimensions of the research constructs were adequately covered, in line with content validity standards in both quantitative and qualitative traditions.

External validity, or transferability in the qualitative component, was supported through thick description and contextual grounding. By presenting detailed accounts of the research setting and participant experiences, the study enabled readers and stakeholders to assess the relevance of findings to similar educational contexts. Non-participant experts reviewed the study on two separate occasions, offering feedback that was incorporated to further improve clarity, accuracy, and applicability. This practice reflects Denzin and Lincoln's notion of enhancing qualitative credibility through collaborative scrutiny, while also responding to the quantitative tradition of external review.

In terms of integration validity, the study adhered to best practices in merging data sets by comparing and interpreting quantitative trends alongside qualitative insights, thus ensuring a coherent and comprehensive understanding of the issues (Fetters and Tajima, 2022). This alignment between data types strengthens the trustworthiness of findings and reinforces the study's contribution to understanding SMC roles in the context of Nepali school governance. Overall, the study integrated principles of construct, content, and external validity across both methodological strands. The integration of multiple data sources, careful instrument design, and ongoing reflexive practice ensures that the research findings are both empirically

grounded and meaningfully interpreted, serving the dual purpose of generalizability and contextual insight.

Trustworthiness. In this study, a detailed narrative approach was employed to ensure richness of content, aiming for descriptions that render the depicted events or objects vivid and tangible (Stahl and King, 2020). To enhance the credibility of findings, data triangulation was utilized, combining qualitative insights derived from interviews, policy documents, and literature. Furthermore, triangulation extended to both quantitative and qualitative data. Continuous interaction with participants, involving repeated visits to clarify their intended messages, preceded the inclusion of their contributions in the report, which was transcribed, in some cases, translated. This sustained engagement fostered the trustworthiness of the research. Additionally, the incorporation of peer review prior to draft submission bolstered the overall quality of the study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are of utmost importance when conducting research which involves direct interactions and communication with participants in real-world circumstances. It is essential to establish clear boundaries and adhere to ethical principles throughout the research process.

As Cohen et al. (2018) emphasize, ethical research entails several key principles, and I was committed to upholding these principles in my work. I ensured that my literature review and methodological review were free from plagiarism and properly cited all sources. I consulted with relevant individuals, committees, and authorities to ensure that the research principles are accepted and align with ethical standards. I respected the autonomy of all participants, allowing them to influence the research, and I honored the wishes of those who chose not to participate. I maintained

transparency throughout the research process, making the development of the work visible and open to suggestions and feedback from others. I upheld strict confidentiality and privacy standards to protect the identity and personal information of participants. By adhering to these ethical principles, I conducted my research with integrity and ensured that the rights and well-being of all participants are respected and protected.

Methodological Framework

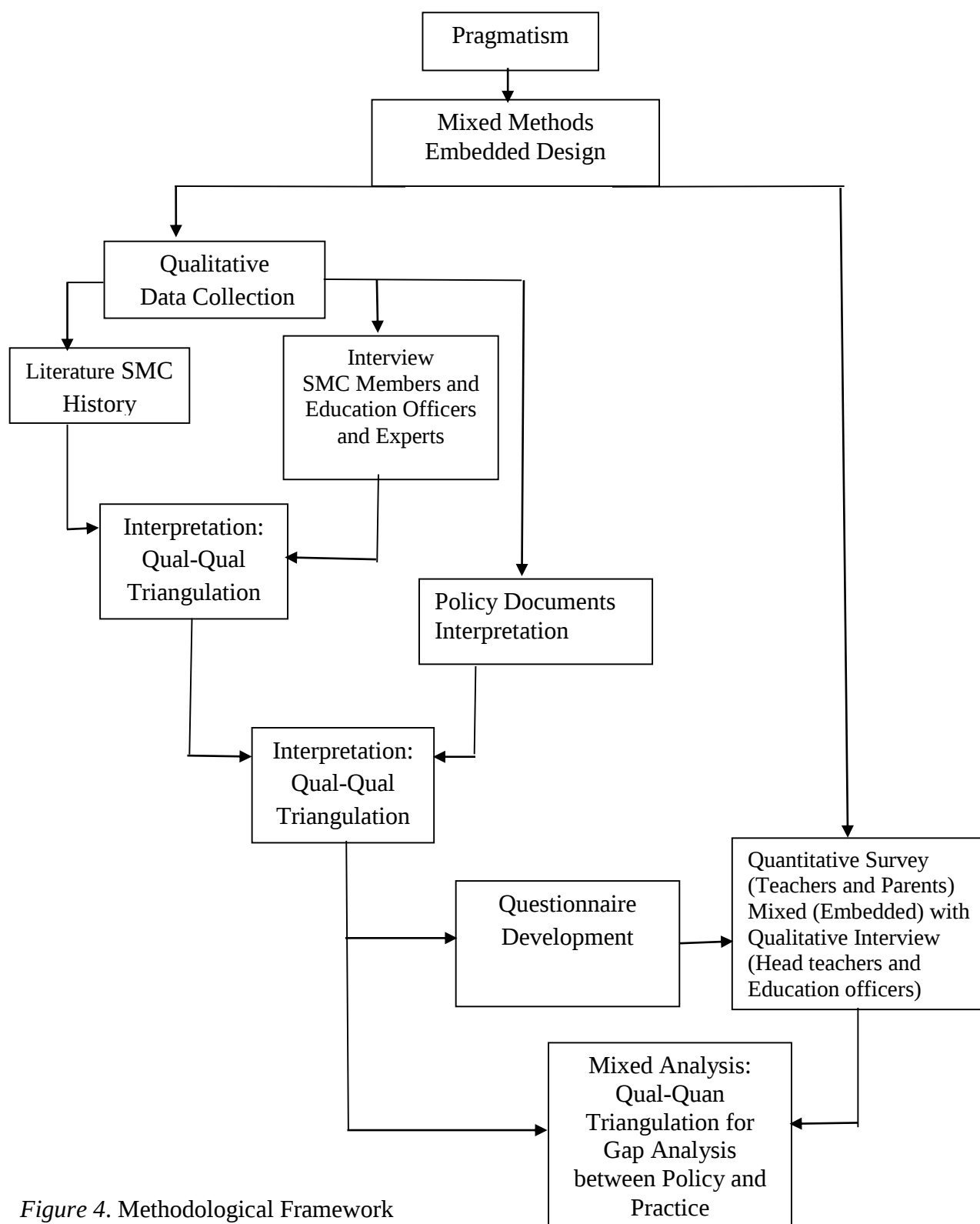


Figure 4. Methodological Framework

In summary, this research was grounded in the pragmatic paradigm and adopted an embedded mixed methods approach, with a predominant emphasis on qualitative methods. The research commenced with an extensive literature review on the historical evolution of SMCs, triangulated with insights gathered from SMC members, head teachers and Education Officers and experts. The outcomes of this initial phase was again triangulated with the roles and responsibilities of SMC mentioned in policy documents.

Following this, questionnaires were developed for parents and teachers to gauge their perceptions of the SMC's role as a leader and manager in school development. A total of 468 parents and 208 teachers were included in the sample. Quantitative data was embedded to complement the qualitative result in this phase. The subsequent analysis of the collected data provided insights into the SMC's effectiveness in school development, drawing from both qualitative and quantitative findings.

Moving forward, the research transitioned to the examination of SMC practices in school development. This phase was followed by qualitative analysis of policy documents and insights from experts concerning the SMC's role in school development. Finally, the research culminated in an analysis of discrepancies between policies and actual practices, leading to the formulation of conclusions.

CHAPTER IV

Evolution of SMCs: Shaping School Development Over Time

This chapter is formulated based on the central research inquiry: “How has the evolution of SMC over time influenced their contribution to the development of schools?” Information was collected through a comprehensive review of existing literature, interviews conducted with the head teachers and SMC Chairs of two community schools and two institutional schools, and insights obtained from two educational experts. Throughout the presentation of data, participants are identified as follows: SMC members (designated as P3 and P4 for community schools, and P7 and P8 for institutional schools), head teachers (represented by P1 and P2 for community schools and P5 and P6 for institutional schools), and education experts (referred to as P9 and P10).

When referencing dates, the precise dates discovered are typically mentioned in A.D. (Anno Domini). However, historical data is often found in v.s. (Vikram Sambat - Nepali dates), which are then converted into corresponding A.D. dates, indicated in parentheses. In cases where conversion is not feasible, v.s. is employed, with the understanding that there is a difference of 56 years, 8 months, and 14 days between v.s. and A.D. dates.

School Governance in Nepal: Then and Now

This section of this chapter describes the evolution of SMC in Nepal in the process of school governance.

Early years’ school governance. Preceding the establishment of formal education, a foundation rooted in familial and societal structures, beliefs, moral values, traditions, and religious precepts characterized ancient Nepal. “This era also witnessed the continuity of vocational learning, an intergenerational pursuit embedded

within family vocations” (Sharma, 2068 v.s., p. 14) and “education in ancient time remained a family and community business rather than nationally organized and structured initiative” (Niraula, 2007, p. 127). Though formal management committees were not there in existence, this education system was also managed and governed by the individual or group. While the presence of formal management committees remained absent, individual or collective entities undertook the management and governance of this education system.

The rulers of the time allocated land and funds for daily deity worship, laying the groundwork for the inception of trusts known as *guthis*. This practice dates back as far as the 7th century A.D., and these trusts played a pivotal role in overseeing and administering the land assets. Notably, they also extended their support to education during this epoch (Shah, 2020) and “in those periods, education was primarily a local concern, and some benevolent people, philanthropic organizations and religious institutions such as *gurukul* (Hindu), *Gumba* and *bihar* (Buddhist) with their trusts, alms and other savings funded schools or learning centers” (CERID, 2008, p. 23).

Indeed, historical accounts unveil a systematic process for formulating curricula in alignment with prevailing social norms and values. Governance, in this context, was intricately intertwined with societal responsibilities, where the community as a whole undertook the task of accepting the imparted knowledge. Alongside the transmission of knowledge within families and vocations across generations, the educational landscape encompassed Sanskrit education and Buddhist education. These streams were supervised by scholars (*pundits*) and Buddhist monasteries (*Gumbas*), each guided by its distinctive governance framework.

Sanskrit education found its custodian in the revered *gurukul* system. The responsibility of overseeing *gurukuls* rested squarely on the Guru or teacher within a

specific ashram. The Guru played a multifaceted role, overseeing not only the educational aspects but also ensuring the provision of sustenance and accommodation for the students. The certification of students was subject to a rigorous process, requiring the endorsement of an assembly of Gurus, thus legitimizing the student's credentials within the *gurukul* tradition (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). This system's governance was firmly rooted in the Guru's authority, orchestrating an educationally rich environment while tending to the holistic needs of the students under their tutelage.

Likewise, the propagation of Buddhism introduced Buddhist education as a prominent avenue of learning. Individuals seeking Buddhist education would frequent *Gumbas* and *bihars*, embracing the teachings of Buddhism. The *Tamang* community established *ghyangs*, educational centers for Buddhist learning. Notably, the absence of formal examinations post-education was a distinguishing aspect of this system (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). “Educational practices based upon social values were prevalent in the entire Indian Sub-continent, and Nepal was no exception” (Niraula, 2007, p. 128).

The realm of Buddhist education extended beyond Nepal's borders, drawing scholars from afar. Notably, Chinese and Tibetan monks ventured to Nepal to partake in the pursuit of knowledge (Sharma, 2068 v.s., p. 17). While the *gurukul* system prevailed, more structured institutions such as “*Man Bihar*, *Gung Bihar*, and *Raj Bihar*” (Adhikari, 2076 v.s., p. 104) as well as “*Bhringi Bihar*, *Kharjurika Bihar*, and *Ghum Bihar*” (Sharma, 2068 v.s., p. 17) took center stage. These institutions embraced more organized approaches than *gurukuls* and were governed by the respective communities responsible for the operation of *Gumbas*, *bihars*, and *ghyangs*.

Nepal's historical dynasties reveal varying degrees of documentation regarding their educational systems. Gopal, Mahispal, and Kirat, representing the first, second, and third dynasties, left scant records of their education systems. However, the Lichhavi dynasty, the fourth in line, offers relatively more insight into the educational landscape of that era. While the documentation might be limited, the patterns of education and governance persisted, influenced by societal and cultural paradigms prevalent during each dynasty's reign.

Although detailed records of Nepal's educational progress are absent, historical indicators strongly suggest the presence of an advanced civilization within its territory even three millennia ago (Niraula, 2007). Notably, Sharma (2068 v.s.) highlights that even during the Lichhavi period (4th century), higher-level subjects such as *Ved*, *Vyakaran* (grammar), law, philosophy, literature, and astronomy were being taught, implying a well-rounded educational environment. During this era, educational centers received support from charitable donors and education enthusiasts, with kings establishing *guthis* (trusts) to sustain these centers through their harvests (Sharma, 2068 v.s.).

Lichhavi Kings played a pivotal role in education, exemplified by their establishment of the "*Agrahar* office, a dedicated commission responsible for overseeing education" (Sharma, 2068 v.s., p. 19). This commission not only underscores the importance of education but also signifies the inception of a national governing body entrusted with managing educational institutions. The presence of such a governing body reflects the growing recognition of education as a societal and cultural cornerstone, solidifying its role in shaping Nepal's intellectual landscape.

While historical records might be fragmentary, these glimpses into the Lichhavi period elucidate the multifaceted approach to education governance and

development. The establishment of dedicated educational centers, financial sustenance through *guthis*, and the creation of the *Agrahar* office collectively attest to an evolving educational infrastructure driven by societal values, royal patronage, and the collective aspiration for intellectual advancement.

During ancient times, education in Nepal was profoundly intertwined with religious practices, fostering a unique approach to knowledge acquisition. Distinct educational institutions emerged to cater to different aspects of societal development. *Devkul*, for instance, was dedicated to the study of the cosmos, while *gurukul* served as a hub for general education, *rhishikul* focused on meditation, and *rajkul* aimed at providing political education (CERID, 1997; Sharma, 2005 in Shah, 2020). Notably, *gurukul* persisted even during the establishment of the modern education system in Nepal, reflecting its enduring significance.

Amshuverma further classified educational institutions based on religious affiliations, highlighting separate schools for *Shaiva*, *Vaishnava*, and Buddhist teachings, as evidenced by the *Hadigaun* inscription (Adhikari, 2076 v.s.). Evidence of educational development during this era emerges from the accounts of Chinese travelers, who noted that Nepalese excelled in fields such as medicine and astronomy, displaying a keen interest in human physiology research (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). Similarly, at the beginning of the eleventh century, Kathmandu, Patan, and Pharping served as prominent education centers, offering instruction in scriptures, meditation, metalwork, and sculpture (Sharma, 2068 v.s.).

However, despite these significant strides in education, access and awareness remained limited for the general public during the Lichhavi period, a trend that continued into the Malla period. While educational institutions flourished in various domains, a gap persisted between the opportunities available to the broader populace

and the intellectual advancements witnessed within specialized institutions. This historical context underscores the complex interplay between education, social structure, and accessibility, shaping the evolution of education in Nepal.

In 14th century, King Jayasthiti Malla introduced a pioneering approach by organizing his people into various vocational groups, equipping them with specialized training for their respective trades (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). This strategic move elevated education to a foundation for livelihood, reflecting the king's progressive vision. Temples and *Gumbas* continued to serve as educational hubs during this era. Notably, both Sanskrit and Newari languages underwent significant development, fostering linguistic diversity and cultural enrichment.

Educational development was not confined to Kathmandu valley; hilly settlements in eastern Nepal also experienced growth. Brahmin scholars settled in areas such as Bhojpur, Dingla, Sankhuwasabha, Dhankuta, Okhaldhunga, Terathum, Panchthar, and Ilam, contributing to the spread of learning (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). The reign of King Siddhinarayan Shah during the *Baisi-Chaubisi Rajya* period saw the establishment of a school in Pokhara, supported by *guthi* funds (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). Eastern Terai and certain Sanskrit education centers, particularly in Dhanusha and Mahotari, contributed to the educational landscape. Mithila Pradesh, renowned for its civilization, culture, astronomy, and philosophy since ancient times, added to the region's educational significance (Sharma, 2068 v.s.).

During this phase, the governance of education remained under the purview of *guthiyars* (members of the trust), who were responsible for overseeing temples, *Gumbas*, *bihars*, and *ghyangs*. King Prithvi Narayan Shah's unification of Nepal brought about a significant development—the declaration of *Khas Bhasa* (modern Nepali language) as the national language. This decision would have far-reaching

implications for education in the future. Notably, the establishment of a language policy in 1905 marked a milestone, designating Nepali as the official language of law and government. It stipulated that legal documents must be written in Nepali language to be admissible in courts (Eagle, 1999 in Weingberg, 2013). This linguistic shift reflected a deliberate effort to streamline communication and governance within the newly unified Nepal, impacting education and societal cohesion.

Following Nepal's political stabilization under the unifying leadership of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the focus on education during the process of national consolidation was limited. While King Prithvi Narayan Shah's *Divya Upadesh* (Divine Advice) encompassed diverse aspects of statecraft, education did not receive significant attention during the unification process (Shah, 2020). Amid this context, gurus who had pursued education in renowned centers such as Mathura, Kaashi, and Prayag assumed the role of educators, imparting knowledge to children within the confines of their courtyards, often under the shade of large trees. This informal instructional approach, known as "*pidhi shiksha*", was prevalent in various urban settings across Nepal.

The *guthi* system played a crucial role in the administration of schools during this period. Schools affiliated with *guthis* were overseen by their respective chiefs, and historical records indicate that institutions like *Matihani Pathsala* in Mahotari district were under the management and administration of the local *Mahanta*, or chief of the *Guthi* (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). In Kathmandu, gurus imparted education to children at prominent locations like *Tudikhel* and the banks of the Bagmati River. During this era, religious texts constituted the primary source of teaching and learning, reflecting the prevailing educational landscape (Alexander, 2000 in Shah, 2020).

The educational framework of this period mirrored the broader societal focus on religion, spirituality, and traditional practices. As Nepal transitioned from a fragmented collection of regions into a unified nation under King Prithvi Narayan Shah's reign, education found itself interwoven with these larger cultural currents. The gurus' role as custodians of knowledge and the reliance on religious texts underscored the emphasis on holistic development through spiritual and practical learning.

The educational journey for the students pursuing subjects related to Sanskrit led them to destinations such as *Varanasi* and other Indian cities, where they could obtain certificates required for participation in formal examinations. Conversely, other education streams, like Buddhist studies, lacked a well-defined system of certification for a considerable duration. In the realm of religious education, the existence of formal examination systems was notably absent. Monastic education typically witnessed an automatic promotion of students each year, devoid of a recognized examination mechanism (College of Education, 1956 in Shah, 2020).

The absence of formal textbooks marked the educational landscape until the reign of Rajendra Bikram Shah. Informal educational settings, overseen by *gurus*, temples, *Gumbas*, *bihars*, and *ghyangs*, played a pivotal role during this period. According to Sharma (2068 v.s.), a significant development occurred in 1841 v.s. (corresponding to 1784/85 A.D.) when a comprehensive textbook was compiled. This text covered diverse topics, including “the nation's income and expenditure, the genealogy of kings, honors and titles bestowed by the United Kingdom, the political system, and administration” (Sharma, 2068 v.s., p. 38).

The establishment of formal education system in Nepal saw its inception during the reign of King Surendra Vikram Shah. This marked a departure from the

prior absence of a structured educational framework. The transformative moment came with the founding of Durbar High School, initiated by Rana Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana. This pivotal establishment signaled a new chapter in Nepal's educational evolution, providing a formalized structure to an educational landscape previously characterized by informal settings and the absence of standardized materials.

The history of education in ancient Nepal reflects a dynamic interplay between governance theories across different eras. The evolution of educational governance is deeply rooted in the prevailing sociopolitical context, shaping both the structure and content of education.

Before formal education, education was family and community-driven, reflecting practicality within the cultural and societal context. Vocational education and religious practices were integral components, demonstrating how education aligned with societal needs. Governance was localized, managed by individuals and groups within communities.

Religious education, exemplified by *gurukuls* and *Gumbas*, showcased the influence of governance theories in shaping educational systems. *Gurukuls* were governed by gurus, emphasizing authority and mentorship. Similarly, Buddhist education relied on community-driven governance, adapting to the unique needs of different religious groups.

The pragmatic integration of language, such as *Khas Bhasa*, as the national language by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, underscored governance's role in cultural unity and communication. This decision reflected governance theories in establishing a common framework for education and administration.

Educational developments during the Lichhavi and Malla periods showcased governance's influence on specialization and localization. King Jayasthiti malla's vocational education grouping of people demonstrated a pragmatic response to economic needs, linking education and livelihood. Temples and *Gumbas* continued to serve as educational centers, illustrating governance's reliance on religious and cultural institutions.

The gradual transition to more formalized governance is evident during King Rajendra Bikram Shah's time, where the introduction of textbooks and increased documentation reflects a structured approach to education. The establishment of Durbar High School under Jung Bahadur Rana signifies a pivotal shift, formalizing governance and education.

Educational governance during Rana period. Education policy in Nepal underwent significant shifts, particularly after Jung Bahadur Rana's influential call for English education: "*Aruka kura chhoda aafna chhoralai angreji padhau* (Leave others, teach your sons English)." This marked a pivotal turn in education policy, even though documented policies were absent until 1996 v.s. (corresponding to 1939/40 A.D.). The Rana regime from 1846 to 1950 exemplified a policy of exclusion, denying education beyond the palace elite (Shields and Rappleye, 2008).

Jung Bahadur Rana's establishment of the Education Director's Office in 1858 marked a systematic approach to education governance, focusing on Durbar School, the sole formal educational institution. The first Director, Babarjung, elevated the school from primary to middle level, shaping its curriculum and structure. However, this governance framework did not extend to the Sanskrit school founded by *Bala Bramhachari* Shadananda Adhikari in 1975 v.s. (corresponding to 1918/19 A.D.) at Bhojpur, where Shadananda personally managed the responsibilities.

An era of localized governance flourished within Nepal's local governance system, engaging parents and communities in comprehensive school management (Adhikari, 2022). Amidst this context, Durbar School exclusively admitted Rana descendants until 1875, creating a perception that schooling was a privilege only for the elite. A British resident surgeon's observation in 1877, 'the subject of schools in Nepal may be dismissed as briefly as that of snakes in Ireland. There are none,' underscores the severe dearth of educational institutions during this period (Weingberg, 2013).

In essence, Jung Bahadur Rana's call for English education marked a turning point in Nepal's education policy, even though formal policies were lacking until 1939. The Rana rule witnessed exclusionary policies, limiting education to the palace elite. The establishment of the Education Director's Office introduced a rudimentary governance structure, impacting the development of Durbar School. Meanwhile, localized governance practices emphasized community involvement in school management. The restricted admissions policy of Durbar School further highlighted the stark disparity in educational opportunities. This historical trajectory reveals the complex relationship between policy, governance, and access to education in Nepal's past.

Durbar School experienced a significant shift in admissions policies under the leadership of Dhir Shamsher, who assumed the role of Director in 1875. Admission expanded to include the children of other officials, broadening access beyond the Rana lineage. General public access was established later, in 1885, during the tenure of Prime Minister Vir Shamsher. During Vir Shamsher's rule, an important milestone was achieved with the establishment of the first girls' education center in Nepal.

Ganga Bai, an Indian woman, initiated Basic Primary Education for girls, pioneering female education in the country.

The transformation of Durbar School into a High School brought a significant change in curriculum and affiliation. The school became affiliated with Calcutta University, aligning its curriculum with the university's standards. The curriculum adopted English as the medium of instruction, significantly emphasizing English language education (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). The establishment of the School College *Goswara* (Office of Documentation) in 1975 v.s. (corresponding to 1918/19 A.D.) marked an important administrative development, further contributing to the formalization of the educational landscape.

Notably, the assessment system witnessed an evolution during this period. Until 1982 v.s. (corresponding to 1925/26 A.D.), oral exams were conducted only up to the primary level, followed by a transition to a written examination system beyond primary education. Students were required to pass all subjects in order to progress to the next grade. This systematic approach to assessment played a crucial role in shaping the educational journey of students.

While Durbar High School was the pioneering institution for educating Rana children, it is noteworthy that *Rani Pokhari Pathsala*, established in 1934 v.s. (corresponding to 1877/78 A.D.), holds the distinction of being the first state-established school in Nepal (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). However, the absence of a certification program posed a challenge for students. The lack of authenticating institutions within Nepal led students of such *pathsalas* to seek certification from institutions in Benares, highlighting the dearth of official certification mechanisms in Nepal (Chudal, 2020).

This phase of Nepal's educational history showcases an expansion of educational access beyond the Rana elite, with admissions policies evolving to include a broader spectrum of society. The establishment of the first girls' education center marked a step toward gender inclusivity in education. Furthermore, the alignment of Durbar School's curriculum with an established university and the establishment of administrative documentation mechanisms underscore the nation's strides toward a more structured and standardized educational framework. Despite these advancements, the challenge of certification illustrated the broader need for accreditation institutions within Nepal's education system.

The subsequent phase witnessed the establishment of schools and the development of their governing mechanisms. Dhir Shamsher played a significant role in this regard by creating infrastructure through the establishment of *Guthis* (trusts) in various regions. These *guthis* were set up in places like Kathmandu, Patan (Lalitpur), and Bhaktapur within the valley, as well as in locations like Bara, Rautahat, and Mahottari in the outskirts. These *guthis* served as instrumental entities for operating schools, contributing to the expansion of educational opportunities (Sharma, 2068 v.s.).

Interestingly, the governance of schools during this period exhibited a blend of approaches. Up until the reign of Dev Shamsher, there were 16 schools located within the Kathmandu Valley that were under the purview of *Badagurujyu* (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). This diverse arrangement indicated that a systematic and unified governing system for schools had not yet been fully established. The existence of both an Education Director's Office and schools run by individuals highlighted the transitional nature of education governance during this era.

Parallel to these developments, traditional institutions like temples, *Gumbas*, *bihars*, and *ghyangs* continued to be operational. These institutions retained their own self-governing mechanisms, reflecting their significance in imparting education within their specific cultural and religious domains. This coexistence of various governing entities demonstrated the dynamic and evolving nature of Nepal's educational landscape, characterized by a mixture of formal and traditional educational structures.

Dev Shamsher played a pivotal role in reshaping Nepal's education system. He expanded the number of schools and gave priority to the Nepali language, leading to the establishment of *Bhasa Pathsala*, or Language Schools. He even distributed slates for writing and provided the *Aksharank* reading book for free. This move prompted some teachers to convert their basic schools into *Bhasa Pathsala*, a significant step in education reform (Parajuli and Onta, 2021).

A remarkable achievement was the creation of the book *Asharank* authored by Jay Prithvi Bahadur Singh, known as *Bajhange Raja* "the chief architect of the education program" (Parajuli and Onta, 2021, p. 6). This book was produced under the guidance of the *Ketaketī Padhaune Kitāb Tarjuma Shakha* (Children's Textbook Management Office), established in 1902. *Asharank* covered essential topics like Nepali alphabets, basic math rules, multiplication tables, weights, measurements, dates, seasons, English and Muslim months, Vedic dates, and constellations (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). This comprehensive curriculum laid the foundation for education during Dev Shamsher's era.

The momentum of educational reforms led to the formation of the *Gorkha Bhasa Prakashini Samiti* (Gorkha Language Publication Committee) in 1912, which later transformed into the Nepal *Bhasha Prakashini Samiti* (Nepali Language

Publication Committee) in 1944 under Prime Minister Juddha Shamsheer. This committee played a vital role in advancing Nepali language and literature, reflecting the shifting linguistic and political landscape of Nepal (Sharma, 2068 v.s.).

Dev Shamsheer's contributions marked a turning point in Nepal's education history. His focus on school expansion, the promotion of the Nepali language, and the provision of essential learning materials laid the groundwork for a more inclusive and accessible education system. These efforts mirror the evolving trends in educational governance and policy during that era.

During the reign of Chandra Shamsheer, the governance of the education system underwent notable changes. "Teachers received salaries upon submitting reports to the relevant *Goswara*, or Record Keeping Office, with the Education Director overseeing their annual appointments" (Sharma, 2068 v.s., p. 103). Chandra Shamsheer, although not a reformer, took steps to control the public education system, imposing stricter measures under the guise of management reformation. He introduced *Shresta Pathshala*, a new type of school aimed at producing clerks to serve the growing bureaucracy. This institution fell under the supervision of the royal *purohit*, or priest (Parajuli, 2021).

To bolster governance, the Exam Office, known as *Jaanch Pass Adda*, was established in 1909 to conduct exams for *Shresta Pathshala* and provide certificates to successful candidates. Subsequently, the *Pathshala Bandobasta Inspector Office* (School Inspector Office) was founded in 1918 to oversee *Bhasha Pathshala* and later expanded its purview to include Sanskrit *Pathshala* and *Boudhha Pathshala* (Sharma, 2060 v.s.). The governance structure was further solidified with the introduction of *Shresta Pathshala Niyamawali* (Shresta School Regulation) in 1937, providing a regulatory framework.

By the conclusion of Chandra Shamsher's rule, the education landscape comprised 58 *Bhasha Pathsalas*, 9 Sanskrit *Pathsalas*, 1 Ayurved *Pathsala*, and 108 English and other *Pathsalas*. Juddha Shamsher initiated *Adhar Shiksha*, a foundational education system, leading to the establishment of the *Adhar Shiksha Goshwara* (Foundation Education Office) within the Public Instruction Department. Additional departments, such as *Adhar Shiksha Tahabil Phant* and *Adhar Shiksha Niksari Phant*, were introduced to manage this new educational approach (Parajuli and Onta, 2021).

In 1928, the Education Director's Office underwent division into two entities: the Director General of Public Instruction and the Director General of Sanskrit Education. These changes in governance structures during Chandra Shamsher's reign reflected the evolving nature of education policy and administration during that period (Sharma, 2068v.s.).

Judda Shamsher's influence extended to education governance through the establishment of *Adhar Sahitya Samiti* (Basic Literary Council), tasked with creating textbooks for *Adhar* schools under the *Adhar Shiksha Kendra* (Basic Education Center). In response to the scarcity of textbooks in the Nepali language, the *Bhashanubad Parisad* (Language Translation Council) was founded in 1940 to address the deficiency. Prior to 1933, Nepali students seeking School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exams would travel to India. However, this practice ceased with the establishment of the SLC Board in 1933. The formation of the Education Board followed in 1936, which subsequently introduced curriculum amendments.

The pioneering Education Regulation of Nepal was introduced in 1939 under the title "*Shiksha Istihar*". This regulation outlined guidelines for school management, particularly in cases of school operation. According to Article 25, a

school managing committee comprising twelve members would be formed. The committee consisted of the *badahakim* (Administrative Officer) for out-of-valley locations and the Assistant Director for the central Kathmandu region, along with the headmaster, the main donor, five donors, two parents, one government officer, and one teacher (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). This committee was referred to as the School *Sanchalak Samiti* (School Conduction Committee – SCC). Judda Shemsher’s contributions marked significant milestones in Nepal’s education governance, laying the foundation for structured management and oversight within the educational sector (Sharma, 2068 v.s.).

Article 29 of the education regulation outlined the duties of the School Conduction Committee (SCC), including: overseeing the school’s activities; maintaining confidentiality while observing people’s work and reporting any misconduct by teachers; reporting on the health and sanitation of both teachers and students; and ensuring that teachers are teaching appropriate content, particularly in private schools.

During the Rana Period, schools that initially relied on the School Conduction Committee for financing but later received government assistance were termed “public schools”. On the other hand, schools without government support were considered private schools. These private schools were often managed by religious or social organizations, as well as individuals like pundits, *boudhacharyas*, *lamas*, and *maulabis* associated with temples, *Gumbas*, *bihars*, *ghyangs*, and mosques.

Article 30 empowered the SCC to appoint and dismiss teachers, with the obligation to report to the *badahakim*. Article 31 mandated the committee to present school financial records during general committee meetings, ultimately submitting them to the Director General. Article 37 stipulated that teachers must obtain SCC

permission before conducting private tutoring. Article 9(1) required all documents to be available for government inspector inspection, leading to the establishment of the Inspector of Schools in 1941 to enforce this aspect.

The “*Istihar*” categorized school levels as *prathamik khanda* (primary level) up to grade 3, *madhyam khanda* (middle level) up to grade 7, and *uchcha khanda* (higher level) up to grade 10. During Padma Shamsheer's rule, the formal educational landscape comprised 13 high schools, 21 middle schools, 10 primary schools, and 45 basic schools. The educational administration model of the time was characterized by these regulations and structures.

Nepal's education landscape witnessed transformative shifts with implications for formal governance. The call for English education during the Rana era marked a critical turning point, even in the absence of documented policies until later. The Rana regime's exclusionary stance, limiting education to a privileged few, can be understood through governance theory, which emphasizes the need of practicality and adapting to societal needs. This policy served the Rana regime's governance strategy by maintaining control over knowledge dissemination.

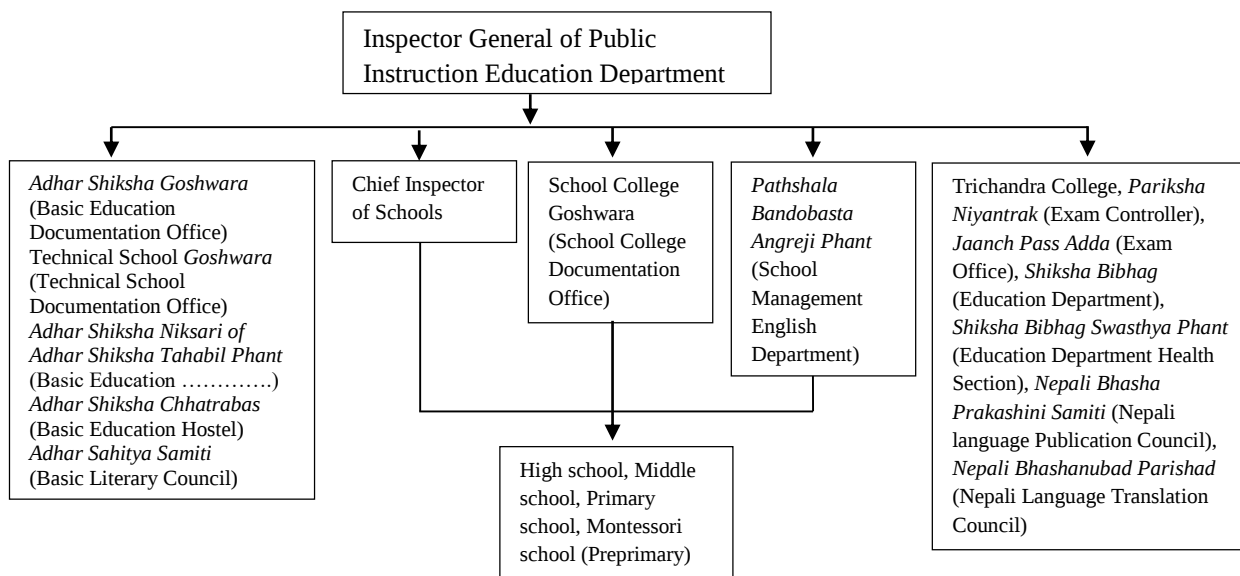
The establishment of the Education Director's Office brought systematic governance to education, affecting Durbar School's development. This reflects governance theory, which highlights the organization and management of institutions. The localized governance practices involving parents and communities signify practicality in action, responding to local contexts and needs. Durbar School's restricted admissions, also, demonstrated a disparity in access, revealing governance's impact on educational equity.

Dhir Shamsheer's expansion of Durbar School's admissions policy aligned with practical approach by opening access to a broader population. Vir Shamsheer's

initiatives for girls' education and curriculum changes embodied governance theory's role in shaping educational content and opportunities. The affiliation of Durbar School with Calcutta University showcases governance's role in aligning education with external standards.

The governance transition via *guthis* during the establishment of school signifies the interplay of governance, management and leadership theories. The localized governance within Nepal's local governance system aligns with adaptability. Dev Shamsher's emphasis on Nepali language and free materials exhibits leadership in meeting cultural and societal needs. The creation of *Asharank* and the Nepal *Bhasha Prakashini Samiti* echoes focus on practical solutions, while governance structures ensured systematic implementation.

Chandra Shamsher's control measures and establishments of *Shresta Pathsala* exemplify governance theory's role in shaping educational institutions. The regulations introduced under Juddha Shamsher's era reflect governance's evolving nature in response to educational challenges. The School Conduction Committee's duties align with leadership and management aspects of governance, as they adapt to local contexts while structuring administrative functions. Policies, governance structures, and localized approaches illustrate how these theories influence education's evolution. The shifts in policy and governance mirror the dynamic interplay between practical adaptation and organized management in shaping Nepal's education landscape with the following structure:



Source: Sharma, 2068 v.s. p. 202

School governance in post Rana period. The concluding decades of Rana rule witnessed a gradual relaxation of restrictions on private tutoring and “the establishment of some rural educational institutions (often by Gurkha soldiers returning from overseas), and a limited plan to ‘borrow’ Gandhi’s Basic Education Program that lead to the establishment of 50 public schools” (National Education Planning Commission, 1956; Wood, 1965 in Shields and Rappleye, 2008, p. 268). Until the year 2007 v.s. (corresponding to 1949/50), the highest educational administrative body was Education Department. Following the advent of Democracy in 2007 v.s. (corresponding to 1950/51), the Education Ministry was established. In the Rana era, local school governance was conducted through School Conduction Committee; however, due to centralization, there were no local administrative entities.

In the post-democratic period, the Education Ministry took charge of administration, introducing a system where schools were managed by Head teachers and SCCs, complemented by regular inspections by an education inspector (Sharma 2069 v.s.). The Nepali *Shiksha Parisad* (Nepali Education Council) came into

existence in 2008 v.s. (corresponding to 1951/52 A.D.). The education Ministry granted approval to *Parisad* in 2009 v.s. (corresponding to 1952/53 A.D.), along with the SLC curriculum it had developed. Furthermore, the Ministry sanctioned the equivalence of the *Parisad*'s SLC to the English education SLC. On Magh 16, 2010 v.s. (corresponding to 1954 A.D.), the Chief Inspector of Schools released the Primary and Middle School curriculum, encompassing:

Primary School	Middle School
Nepali/Hindi	Nepali/Hindi
Arithmetic	English (texts, grammar and translation)
English (texts, grammar and translation) from grade 2	Math
History from grade 2	Geography
Geography from grade 3	History (Nepal and India)
Health and hygiene from grade 3	Sanskrit
Drawing from grade 3	Music
Music from grade 3	Art
Sanskrit from grade 4	Physiology and hygiene in grade 6 and hygiene in grade 7 and 8
	General science in grade 8

Source: Sharma, 2069 v.s., pp. 79-80

In 1954, a significant milestone was achieved with the promulgation of *Shiksha Bidhan Nepal* (Education Act). This landmark Act introduced a framework featuring 7 Divisions, each equipped with a Divisional Inspector of Schools' Office, aimed at overseeing the education sector. This particular year held paramount importance in the evolution of Nepali education. Leading up to 1954, Nepal's educational landscape consisted of "21 colleges, 83 high schools, 83 middle schools, and 921 primary schools" (Sharma, 2069 v.s., p. 94).

A pivotal turning point arrived with the arrival of Dr. Hugh B. Wood in 2010 v.s. (corresponding to 1952/53), catalyzed by The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), previously known as the United States Operations Mission (USOM). The initiation of this collaboration began with the signing of the General Agreement for Technical Cooperation on 23rd January 1951,

“as part of Truman's Point Four Programme” (Regmi, 2021, p.25). Simultaneously, in Chaitra (March 1954), the Nepal *Rastriya Shiksha Yojana Aayog* (Nepal National Education Planning Commission) was established, as advised by Dr. Wood. The commission's report underscored the imperative of decentralizing Educational Administration (Governance) by devolving authority to district and village levels through regulatory measures. The report also advocated for the establishment of *Vidyalaya Prabandha Samiti* (School Provisional Committee – SPC) at the local level. Article 14(*kha*) of the report emphasized that schools should be managed in alignment with the overarching local values determined by capable administrators.

Efforts to enhance primary education led to the establishment of the National Teacher Training Center in 1957. This center subsequently evolved into the *Prathamik School Shiksha Kendra* (Primary School Education Center) starting from 2023 v.s. (corresponding to 1966/67 A.D.) Notably, the same center also hosted training programs for Basic School education, which largely concluded in 2012 v.s. (corresponding to 1955/56 A.D.) These strategic initiatives marked an active phase of transformation and innovation in Nepal's education sector.

In the evolving landscape of education governance during 2010 v.s. (corresponding to 1953/54 A.D.), significant institutional changes were introduced to enhance the oversight of schools. The *Gram tatha Jilla Bikash Bibhag* (Village and District Development Department) was established at the central level, while the *Gram Bikash Kendra* (Village Development Center) was instituted at the district level. The *Gram Bikash Kendra* played a crucial role in the grassroots by assuming responsibilities such as initiating school establishment in rural areas, constructing school infrastructure, fundraising for construction projects, facilitating maintenance efforts, participating in teacher appointments, providing guidance for effective

teaching and learning, offering adult education programs, and conducting supervisory assessments. Furthermore, the administration of primary schools fell under the purview of the District Officer.

Notably, in the context of the Rapti Valley, Sharma in 2069 v.s. highlights the empowerment of School Management (Conduction) Committees with “the authority for teacher appointments, transfers, and terminations” (p. 102). This underscores the influential role of the SMCs as the governing entities of schools during that period. The SMCs exhibited robust functionality where needed, yet their effectiveness could be compromised in areas influenced by political dynamics and external pressures. This phase of education governance signifies a blend of central and decentralized efforts to enhance the management and supervision of schools, reflecting a comprehensive strategy to address educational needs and challenges.

Undergoing significant structural changes, the central state administration saw the emergence of 11 distinct departments. Among these, the *Shiksha, Swasthya, ra Swayattya Shashan Bibhag* (Education, Health, and Autonomous Administration Department) was entrusted with the responsibility of education governance during 2009 and 2012 v.s. (corresponding to between 1952/53 and 1955/56 A.D.), reflecting a key national administrative reform. The inception of the first five-year plan in 2012 v.s. (1955), following King Mahendra's ascension, marked a pivotal milestone as the allocated budget of 19 million rupees, out of a total of 330 million, was earmarked for education. This strategic plan aimed to implement a standardized education system nationwide, envisioning the establishment of 630 primary, 126 lower-secondary, and 10 secondary schools. Consequently, this would entail the preparation of 1890 primary, 504 lower-secondary, and 100 secondary level teachers, “embodying a

vision of progress despite prevailing challenges and complexities” (Rappleye, 2021, p. 76).

In the line with these educational reforms, the establishment of the College of Education in 2013 v.s. (1956) further underscored Nepal's commitment to educational advancement. This institution's primary role was to equip individuals for roles as secondary school teachers, education inspectors, and education administrators, reflecting a concerted effort to cultivate skilled professionals capable of driving educational progress and governance in the evolving landscape.

In 2014 v.s. (corresponding to 1959/60 A.D.) the government made the decision to implement 100 full marks of compulsory Nepali subject from 2016 v.s. (corresponding to 1961/62 A.D.) in SLC exam and an amendment in School Provisional Committee (SPC) for the schools who were getting government subsidy as following; having District Magistrate (*badahakim*) or the person appointed by him in SPC with other members:

Members	High school	Middle school	Primary school
Among the donors	4	3	2
Parents/Guardians	3	2	2
Government official	1	1	1
School headmaster	1	1	1
Representative from municipality or village panchayat	1	1	1
Selected government official (in case Education Department wants)	1	1	1

The required number of members for a meeting was five including the chairman. It

was also mentioned that non-Nepali citizen could not be the member of SPC. To replace *Shiksha Istihar* 1996 v.s. (corresponding to 1939/40 A.D.), Education Act 2019 v.s (corresponding to 1962/63 A.D.) was promulgated which directed almost all the field of education administration which mentioned (Parajuli, 2021b):

The school managing committee will have 11-13 members including a chair, deputy chair, secretary, principal etc. One member will be from among the teachers. A member of municipality or village committee and a representative from the education office will be ex-officio members. District magistrate (*badahakim*) will be the chairperson of the school managing committee. (p. 124)

Following the inaugural public election of 2015 v.s. (corresponding to 1959/60 A.D.), the Education Department underwent expansion through the establishment of specialized sections. This transformation brought about a shift in the curriculum structure: instead of the traditional arrangement of grade 1-3 for primary education and grade 4-7 for middle school, a new paradigm emerged with grade 1-5 designated for primary school and grade 6-8 for lower-secondary school. This revamped curriculum was introduced in 2016 v.s. (corresponding to 1960/61 A.D.) and effectively implemented from 2021 v.s. (corresponding to 1966/67 A.D.) onward. Concurrently, the reigning His Majesty Government took steps to enhance the administrative capacity of the Education Department by establishing School Inspector Offices across 28 Education Districts.

Within these newly established roles, inspectors were entrusted with 12 distinct duties and responsibilities, ranging from designing the annual education program and supervising school activities to advanced planning for educational materials and equipment. However, this framework omitted any mention of coordination with School Provisional Committees (SPCs), possibly implying a lack of integration in the governance system. The formation of the *Sarwangin Rastriya Shiksha Samiti* (Holistic National Education Council) in 2018 v.s. (corresponding to 1961/62 A.D.) marked an ambitious initiative, aiming to bring all educational

institutions under His Majesty's jurisdiction. This proposal highlighted the existing diversity in the governance system, suggesting a need for greater standardization. The committee's endeavors also extended to the proposal of a comprehensive curriculum and a primary and secondary education code, encompassing 36 distinct articles, as mentioned by Sharma (2069 v.s.).

In the post-democratic era, the focus shifted to enhancing local control and administration of schools. The School Conduction Committees (SCCs) played a significant role in school governance, and the establishment of the Nepali *Shiksha Parisad* marked a step towards national educational coordination. Dr. Hugh B. Wood's collaboration through USAID brought transformative changes, emphasizing decentralization and local empowerment. The establishment of the National Teacher Training Center and the evolution of the *Prathamik School Shiksha Kendra* demonstrated a commitment to professionalizing education.

The promulgation of *Shiksha Bidhan Nepal* (Education Act) in 2010 v.s. marked a milestone, introducing a framework with Divisional Inspector of Schools Offices aimed at overseeing education. The Act aimed to standardize education across the country, focusing on primary, lower-secondary, and secondary school levels. Dr. Wood's influence was notable in advocating for decentralization, leading to the establishment of the Nepal *Rastriya Shiksha Yojana Aayog* and the proposal for School Provisional Committees at the local level.

However, challenges persisted. The *Gram Bikash Kendra* played a crucial role in grassroots education, yet the effectiveness of School Management Committees varied due to political influences. The central administration evolved to accommodate specialized sections within the Education Department, reflecting a pragmatic response

to the need for focused oversight. Despite these changes, the importance of SPC coordination was occasionally overlooked, revealing governance gaps.

The evolution of education continued, culminating in the Education Act of 2019 v.s. (corresponding to 1962/63 A.D.), which outlined comprehensive roles for school managing committees. The shift from grade-based to primary and lower-secondary school curriculum in 2016 v.s. (corresponding to 1960/61 A.D.) aimed to align education with evolving needs. School Inspector Offices were established to ensure educational quality, yet challenges in coordination persisted. The proposal for the *Sarwangin Rastriya Shiksha Samiti* highlighted the desire for standardized governance.

Nepal's education history, after Rana period, reflects the practical adaptation of governance structures to the changing educational landscape. From centralized control to decentralization, a series of reforms sought to improve educational access and quality. The interplay between practical adjustments and governance structures underscores the complexity of creating a responsive and effective education system.

School governance during Panchayat system. King Mahendra exerted substantial efforts to bring national education under the purview of the nation, encapsulated by the tenet '*ek bhasha, ek bhash, ek dharma, ek desh*' (one language, one way of dress, one religion, one nation) "summarized the goals of the Panchayat government, which attempted to spread Nepali, Hinduism, and other symbols of nation" (Rai et al., 2011; Whelpton, 2005 in Weingberg, 2013, p. 64). The pursuit of this objective led to the establishment of various committees and councils. Ultimately, in 2022 v.s. (corresponding to 1965/66 A.D.), a decentralization of educational administration occurred, giving rise to the formation of the District Education Inspectorate Office within the ambit of the District Panchayat. This office would

assume the role of inspecting middle and high schools upon orders from the Zonal Educational Officer (Sharma, 2069 v.s.). Sharma (2069 v.s.) further notes:

The process of education decentralization commenced in 2003 v.s. [corresponding to 1946/47 A.D.] following the establishment of Deputy Inspector Offices – *Purba Phant* (east branch) and *Paschhim Phant* (west branch). The subsequent year saw the division of the kingdom into seven Divisional Inspectors of Schools in 2010 v.s. [corresponding to 1953/54 A.D.] These officials undertook pivotal responsibilities during that era. The year 2019 v.s. [1962 A.D.] witnessed the establishment of seventy-five District Education Offices, only to be dissolved in *Kartik* 2022 v.s. [1965 A.D.] Subsequently, the *Vikash Jilla Shiksha* Office (District Development Education Office) assumed comprehensive authority over secondary schools, encompassing their management, inspection, and operation (p. 170).

The Education Inspector Offices underwent transformation into District Panchayat Education Department Offices in 2024 v.s. (corresponding to 1969/70 A.D.). This transition paved the way for the introduction of the Education Act 2025 v.s. (corresponding to 1969/70 A.D.), a pivotal legislation aimed at bolstering education administration. As part of this act, the Education Regulation 2027 v.s. (corresponding to 1970/71 A.D.) was also promulgated. This legislative framework introduced the concept of a 7-member school management committee responsible for overseeing school operations. This committee consists of the Village Head (Chair), Principal (Secretary), treasurer, and four additional members.

One of the prominent initiatives undertaken by King Mahendra was the establishment of the National Education Advisory Board in 1967. This advisory body proposed several critical recommendations, including the elevation of the Ministry of Education as the primary institution responsible for policy-making. Additionally, it advocated for the formation of District Education Committees tasked with policy and planning formulation, while confining the School Management Committees to financial management roles exclusively (Sharma, 2069 v.s.). Subsequently, the *Rastriya Shikshya Samiti* (National Education Council) was instituted in 2028 v.s. (corresponding to 1971/72 A.D.). This council played a pivotal role in crafting the National Education System Plan (NESP) for the period spanning 1971 to 1976, marking a significant milestone in the nation's educational trajectory. As characterized by Sharma (2069 v.s.), “this plan represented a transformative juncture for the education sector” (p. 238). However, as noted by Pherali (2021), this shift gradually detached communities from the educational process and systematically centralized educational authority.

The NESP introduced a tiered structure comprising primary education from grades 1 to 3, lower-secondary education from grades 4 to 7, and secondary education from grades 8 to 10. To facilitate the realization of this plan, the Education Act 1971 (2028 v.s.) was enacted. Point no. 14 of the NESP emphasized the centralization of planning and evaluation tasks, while concurrently advocating for decentralized implementation processes in the realm of education administration. This strategic approach aimed to strike a balance between centralized oversight and localized execution, reflecting a comprehensive strategy for educational enhancement and governance.

There would be three Regional Directorate Offices; Eastern, Mid and Western for the swift implementation. District Education Officers would be there in each district who would have direct relation with the schools. And regarding inspection, article 15 said that center would decide resources and learning level and district offices would inspect the sufficiency of resources and learning level twice a year. School's evaluation would be based on the inspection report and decision would be made for the subsidy. This way, 113 years old Education Department was decentralized to Regional Education Inspector's Offices. Education Act 1971 did not mention anything about School Management Committee which was centralized to district level as Parajuli (2021b) mentioned:

The plan (NESP) also centralized the school managing committees into the district education committee, comprising the chairman of District Panchayat, chief development officer, district education officer, headmaster of a high school, and three private citizens appointed by the *anchaladhis*, the zonal commissioner. (p. 133).

Educational governance in school extended its wings after the promulgation of the Act. In the same year, 2028 v.s. (corresponding to 1971/72 A.D.), Curriculum Development Center was established for the continuous development of curriculum to support the new education system. The levels of grades were regraded in 2038 v.s. (corresponding to 1981/82 A.D.) by making grade 1-5 primary, 6-7 lower-secondary and 8-10 secondary which again was reformed in 2041 v.s. (corresponding to 1984/85 A.D.) by making grade 1-5 primary and 6-10 secondary level. The Act managed District Education Office, District Education Council and District Education Service Office in district level to govern the schools. In 2039 v.s. (corresponding to 1982/83

A.D.) instead of School Management Committee, *School Vyawasthapan Sahayog Samiti* (School Management Support Council) was formed in schools “which was stripped of any real power whatsoever, and was simply left to play advisory role” (Parajuli, 2021, p. 133).

After the people’s movement of 3037 v.s. (corresponding to 1980/81 A.D.) King Birendra formed *Shahi Uchcha Shiksha Aayog* (Royal Higher Education Council) in 2039 v.s. (corresponding to 1982/83 A.D.). In 2042 v.s. (corresponding to 1985/86 A.D.). His Majesty Government published *Rastriya Mul Niti* (National Main Policy) in which “it was mentioned to promote people’s participation in education sector by inviting them to conduct and manage schools and promote them to open private schools” (Sharma, 2069 v.s., pp. 334-335). Privatization in education, though was started before, was promoted after Education Ministry declared that in case any person wanted to open school they could conduct it under the company act in 2044 v.s. (corresponding to 1987/88 A.D.) which “The National Education System Plan (NESP), an educational plan devised to strengthen Panchayat regime (1962–1990), had nationalized all schools in Nepal hence operation of private schools was highly discouraged” (Caddell 2007 in Regmi, 2017, p. 194), And after the revival of democracy in 1990 (2046 v.s.) people were attracted to conduct private schools which has now reached to more than 8 thousand throughout the country. Regarding school inspection in governance “the center was District Office Education Department from where the schools were inspected on the basis of available inspector and number of school ratio” (Sharma 2069, p. 345) which was mentioned in Education Act 1971 that inspection would be of two types; 1. school’s physical infrastructure, teachers’ availability and utility inspection, and 2. school’s teaching learning inspection and evaluation. Bennike, 2015 comments “In short, the governmental technique of

national schooling, as introduced during Panchayat rule (1960–90), provided a major impetus to the production of an integrated Nepali national space” (p. 54).

Though the foreign donation in education was begun with the entry of Hugh B. Wood in 1954 which “thus, was also the beginning of the direct involvement of foreigners/foreign countries in planning Nepal’s education system” (Parajuli and Onta, 2021, p. 13), it started branching by permitting World Bank, UNICEF and DANIDA to implement Primary Education Project in 2041 v.s. (corresponding to 1984/85 A.D.). Population Education Project was implemented in financial support of UNFPA and technical support of UNESCO. Shields and Rappleye (2008) adds:

The international donor community became a powerful force in shaping educational policy in the post-panchayat years, contributing resources for printing mother-tongue instruction materials, providing scholarships for girls and lower-caste groups, and actively promoting the recruitment of female teachers, as well as funding and advising on much more ambitious projects such as the Basic Primary Education Project (1992 –99), Nepal’s primary response to the World Conference on Education for All (1990). (p. 269).

In summary, King Mahendra’s National Education Advisory Board in 1967 emphasized elevating the Ministry of Education for policy formulation. The *Rastriya Shikshya Samiti*’s inception in 2028 v.s. (corresponding to 1971/72 A.D.) marked a transformative era, albeit with concerns about centralization. Governance principles were interwoven into these reforms, with a focus on striking a balance between centralized planning and decentralized implementation.

Education inspection, guided by the Education Act 1971 underlined quality through physical infrastructure evaluation, teacher availability, and teaching

standards. The resurgence of democracy in 1990 fostered the growth of private schools, indicative of a more diverse educational landscape. Foreign influence, such as the World Bank and UNICEF, contributed to shaping educational policy, reflecting global governance dynamics.

School governance after the restoration of democracy. After the restoration of democracy in 1990 *Rastriya Shiksha Aayog* (National Education Council) was formed to reform the education. The report produced by this council suggested to reform education by managing primary school from grade 1-5, lower-secondary school from 6-8, secondary school from 9-10 and higher secondary 11-12 (after the promulgation of Higher Secondary Education Act 2046). The elected government in 1992 mentioned in its commitment that “on the one hand we should reform the rate of drop out of public schools and the private schools should be brought under reach of society” (Sharma, 2074 v.s., p. 283) and realized “the inspection system had to be rebuilt from the bottom up if it was to play its proper role in the qualitative improvement of national education”(Nepal National Education Commission, 1992 in Adhikari et. al, 2021, p. 2). His Majesty’s Government established *Shaishik Janashakti Vikash Kendra* (Educational Human Resource Development Center) in 2050 v.s. (corresponding to 1993/94 A.D.) and in 2056 v.s. (corresponding to 1999/2000 A.D.).

Education Department again was established which was dissolved in 2028 v.s. (corresponding to 1971/72 A.D.). Another council, *Uchcha Rastriya Shiksha Aayog* (Higher Level National Education Council) was formed in 1997 (2054 v.s.). The council reported that the school management committee should be strengthened with rights to bring development in school education and it should include local government representative, parents, teacher and educationist. The report added that

the head teacher's role should be strengthened in school management. In the meantime, there was a big change in school curriculum by making secondary course of 700+100 full marks from 2057 v.s. (corresponding to 2000/01 A.D.) which was of 700 full marks before.

In 2001 (2058 v.s.) *Shiksha Sambandhi Uchchastariya Karyasamiti* (Education-related Higher Level Committee) was formed which focused on private and government school difference. After that the government owned schools were named community schools and privately owned institutional schools. The community schools would also be divided into two categories; the one which take government subsidy and the one which do not take. The report said that the schools which would get subsidy would respectively be turned into the one which do not take. The same report encouraged to keep English as compulsory from grade 1 (which was from grade 4 before). Teaching license system was started then.

The Management Committee of the school was given authority to appoint teacher from the competition among the license holders since “the democratic government after 1990 A.D. realized a need for parental and community engagement in school governance; and created a conducive environment for the engagement and mobilization of the parents and communities in school governance” (Adhikari, 2022, p. 2). Each community and institutional school would have a management Committee which must have parents' representative. The same committee would form a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to promote community's involvement in educational development.

Education Act 5th amendment 2049 v.s. (corresponding to 1992/93 A.D.) made grade 6-8 lower secondary level. It turned Regional Education Inspector's Office to Regional Directorate Office and District Education Inspector's Office to

District Education Office. The same amendment named *Vidyalaya Vyawasthapan Samiti* (School Management Committee) instead of *Vidyalaya Vyawasthapan Sahayog Samiti* (School Management Support Council). The seventh amendment 2058 v.s. (corresponding to 2001/02 A.D.) provisioned *Nagar/Gaun Shiksha Samiti* (Rural/Municipal Education Council) in school governance. The 8th amendment 2061 v.s. (corresponding to 2004/05 A.D.) directed privately owned schools to register either to company registrar office or to *guthi* (Trust).

The same amendment delegated the right of appointing and upgrading teachers to the School Management Committee as “the state enacted a process of decentralization whereby the management of public schools was transferred back to the communities in which they were located” (Bhatta, 2009 in Parajuli and Onta, 2021, p. 18). After the promulgation of Education Regulation 2059 v.s. (corresponding to 2002/03 A.D.) again the government decided to handover the schools to the community forming School Management Committee to govern the school.

In summary, in Nepal’s post-democracy era (1990 onwards) educational reform aligned with governance theory and its leadership and management aspect. The National Education Council's restructuring proposal and commitment to reduce dropout rates reflected pragmatic adaptation. Governance theory’s influence was evident through empowered School Management Committees, integrating local government, parents, and teachers. Curriculum and inspection reforms underscored practicality. The 2001 Education-related Higher Level Committee emphasized governance by categorizing schools and introducing teaching licenses, involving local stakeholders. Subsequent amendments embedded governance principles, such as the 7th amendment introducing Rural/Municipal Education Councils and the 8th

empowering SMCs in teacher management. Overall, these measures exemplify the practical application of governance theory, empowering local entities for educational enhancement.

School governance in federal Nepal. “The seventh amendment of the 1971 Education Act in 2002 recognized local governance as an important stakeholder in school governance” (Nepal Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs 2017 in Adhikari et. al, 2021, p. 2). The government began expansion process of SMC in 2003. The SMC the seventh amendment amended comprised was of nine members where parents, founders/donors, local intellectuals, elected ward representatives, teacher representative, and the head teacher including three women representatives would be. This volunteer committee was “created to fulfill government legal formalities only, and they play an advisory role” (Nepal Ministry of Law 2017 in Adhikari et. al, 2021, p. 2) and “even though SMC was entrusted power and authority to execute different roles, these roles of SMC were regarded as functions rather than authority” (CERID, 2008, p. 128).

Education for All program (2001-2015) in Nepal targeted to “improve good governance and management by empowering community to take ownership and involve parents through school management committee and parent teacher association” (GoN MoE and UNESCO, 2015, p. 45) to improve quality in education. To address the challenges of EFA one of the major focuses of School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2015) is/was “improving school management with emphasis on capacity development of head teachers, teachers and members of SMC” (GoN MoE and UNESCO, 2015, p. 60) in the context of the report of CERID (2008) that “SMC(s) (are) mostly involved in management of facility and teachers, and consequently in

fund-raising, even if they were expected to perform a role directed to improve the quality of education” (p. 128).

In between the program EFA, School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) played a significant role “for Nepal in recognizing the extensive roles of communities in managing public schools” (Nepal Ministry of Education 2009 in Adhikari et. al, 2021, p. 3). The seventh amendment in Education Act added District Education Council and Rural/Municipal Education Council which “manage(d) and regulate(d) community and private (institutional) schools; adjust(ed)/redeploy(ed) teachers and other community schools; and manage(d) grants and budget of community schools” (GoN 2074 v.s.; Karki and Bhatta 2018 in Uprety 2021, p. 329).

Likewise, while transition period before the federal government released the Local Government Act 2017 according to Karki and Bhatta (2018) in Uprety (2021):

With the handover of most responsibilities concerning basic and secondary education to local governments, the Ministry of Education (MoE) scrapped the District Education Offices (DEOs) in each district that were responsible for the bulk of planning and implementation projects at the district and local levels. They were temporarily replaced by the Education Development and Coordination Units (EDCUs) under the District Administration Offices (pp. 329-330).

The centralized governance system was delegated to seven provincial and 7 hundred fifty-three local governments after the promulgation of 2015 constitution. Then public education became the responsibility of three levels of government; federal, provincial and local among which “the governance and management of Basic and Secondary levels of education fall under the jurisdiction of local level” (Regmi,

2021, p.40). Resource Persons who “were the temporary appointments from the state” (Upreti, 2021, p. 335) from 1992 and removed from eighth amendment of the Education Act and School Inspector represented SMC of both community and institutional schools after the promulgation of some amendment in Education Act regarding education and sports in 2063 v.s. (corresponding to 2006/07 A.D.) which was “being recognized as having an important state of school governance” (Adhikari et. al, 2023 p. 6). The Resource Person who had a thick representation in SMC had no role described in Local Government Operation Act 2017 which “provided enormous authority to local government in basic and secondary schools” (Adhikari et. al, 2021, p. 3) and thus “in late February 2019, the federal government asked RPs to ‘retire’ from their roles in local government and re-enter the teaching force” (Pandey 2075 v.s. in Upreti, 2021, p. 342). They were the temporary appointments from the states at the municipal offices in absence of Education Officers.

Between 2015 and 2020 many documents mentioned about school governance system. 2015 Constitution of Nepal devolved rights to local government to manage schools; and School Sector Development Plan (SSDP 2016-2023) described the importance of local government in school education. Similarly, the 2017 Local Government Act transferred the responsibility of Basic (grade 1-8) and secondary (grade 8-12) – which was primary (grade 1-5), lower-secondary (grade 6-8), secondary (grade 9-10), and higher secondary (grade 11-12) before – to local government. The Education Act amended the same year described the procedure of forming SMC and the selection of SMC Chair. Likewise, the 2019 national education policy acknowledged the authority of local government and legitimized them in school governance. Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030) mentioned about capacitating the team (including locals and local government) for quality education

and the 2020 Nepal Fifteenth Plan acknowledged the strength of localism in school governance. Finally, the Local Education Acts of each local government are securing the seat of locally elected representatives in SMC; which is summarized as:

Government Bylaws	School Governance through Local Government
The 2015 constitution of Nepal	Rights of local governments in managing school education
School sector development plan, 2016–2023	Importance of local governments in school education
The 2017 local government operation Act	Roles and responsibilities of local governments
The 1971 education Act (amended in 2017)	Procedures to form SMC and the selection of SMC chair
The 2019 national education policy	Acknowledgment of local governments and legitimization of their authority in school governance
Sustainable development goals 2016–2030	Quality education through a capacitated team
The 2020 Nepal fifteenth plan	Acknowledgment of the strength of localism in school governance
Local education acts [of each local government]	Locally elected representatives, on chairing the SMCs: The 2020 local education Act of Lalitpur metropolitan city

Source: Adhikari et. al, 2023, p. 4

And as of now, the formation of SMC in community schools and institutional schools according to Education Act 1971 amendment 2017 are as below:

SMC in Community Schools	SMC in Institutional Schools
a. Four parents including two women among the selected by the parents' community -Member	a. One person nominated by the District Education Officer on the recommendation of concerned school from amongst the Founder or the Investor of the school. - Chairperson
b. The Ward President of the concerned Ward of the Village Development Committee or Municipality or the member selected by ward committee where the school is located– Member	b. Two persons including a woman nominated by School Management Committee from amongst the parents. – Member
c. Two persons including one woman nominated by School Management Committee from amongst local intellectuals, educationists, founders of the school, donors who have provided amount more than one million rupees or the person who has been supporting school for more than ten years – Member	c. One person from amongst the local intellectuals or educationists nominated by the Village Development Community or Municipality – Member
d. One person selected by the concerned school teachers from amongst themselves -Member	d. School supervisor of the concerned area – Member
e. Headmaster of the school – Member secretary	e. One person selected by the concerned school teachers from amongst themselves – Member
	f. The Headmaster of the school – Member Secretary

In summary, the evolution of school governance in Nepal has been characterized by shifts towards decentralization, community involvement, and local empowerment. The seventh amendment of the 1971 Education Act in 2001 marked a significant step in recognizing local governance as a pivotal stakeholder in school administration. The subsequent expansion of School Management Committees in 2003 introduced a volunteer committee composed of nine members, representing parents, donors, intellectuals, elected ward representatives, teachers, and the head teacher, with a focus on advisory rather than authoritative roles.

The Education for All program (2001-2015) in Nepal aimed to enhance governance and parental involvement through SMCs and PTAs to elevate education quality. The School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2015) sought to improve school management and capacity development of SMC members and head teachers, acknowledging the need for SMCs to contribute to educational quality. Amidst these initiatives, the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) recognized the pivotal role of communities in managing public schools. The seventh amendment in Education Act introduced District Education Councils and Rural/Municipal Education Councils, regulating community and private schools and managing their resources. Amidst the transition period, the Local Government Act 2017 shifted responsibilities to local governments, eliminating District Education Offices (DEOs) and establishing Education Development and Coordination Units (EDCUs).

The post-2015 constitutional shift decentralized governance to provincial and local governments, with public education responsibilities distributed among federal, provincial, and local levels, emphasizing local government authority in basic and secondary education management. The Resource Persons (RPs), representing school governance, were phased out from their roles with the advent of the Local

Government Operation Act 2017, granting extensive authority to local governments in school management. A multitude of policy documents, including the Constitution, School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), Local Government Act, Education Act, national education policy, Sustainable Development Goals, and Nepal Fifteenth Plan, underscored the critical role of local governance in education. The emphasis on SMCs, local councils, and local government highlights a shift towards a more localized and community-driven approach to school management, aligning with pragmatic governance principals to enhance education quality and outcomes.

SMC: Governance, Leadership, and Educational Management

The development of school governance in Nepal reflects the shifting socio-political landscape, transitioning from informal, community-based governance to formalized systems. Early educational structures were largely elite-focused and shaped by familial and religious institutions, such as *gurukuls* and *Gumbas*. These systems were governed by religious or community leaders, exemplifying localized, community-driven governance (Niraula, 2007; Sharma, 2068 v.s.). During the Lichhavi period, *guthis* played a significant role in sustaining educational centers, embedding governance in religious and cultural practices (Shah, 2020).

Leadership and governance in religious education saw distinct management structures emerge. *Gurukuls*, led by Gurus, adopted a governance model that emphasized the teacher's authority, overseeing not only instruction but also students' welfare (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). Similarly, Buddhist education centers, such as *ghyangs*, relied on community leaders for their governance, integrating religious, cultural, and educational responsibilities (Adhikari, 2076 v.s.; CERID, 2008).

The Lichhavi and Malla periods also demonstrated governance aligned with economic and cultural needs. For example, King Jayasthiti Malla's vocational

grouping of the population created specialized educational opportunities linked to specific trades (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). This period illustrates the interplay between education, livelihood, and governance, highlighting how education systems evolved to meet economic demands.

The Rana Era marked a shift toward centralized governance. With the establishment of Durbar High School in 1858, education became a tool for consolidating elite power (Swar, 2037 v.s.; Parajuli & Onta, 2019). The appointment of an Education Director, drawn from the ruling elite, reflected a top-down management model that limited educational access to the privileged (Parajuli & Onta, 2019).

The progression of educational governance in Nepal post-Rana reflects a complex interplay between centralization and decentralization. The transition from the centralized control of the Rana era to a more decentralized, locally focused system illustrates efforts to adapt governance structures to emerging educational needs. The series of reforms—from the establishment of the Education Ministry and the Nepali Shiksha Parisad to the introduction of new curricula and administrative bodies—demonstrate Nepal’s commitment to evolving its education system while grappling with the inherent challenges of governance and administration.

Under the Panchayat regime, governance became more authoritarian, with strict state control over education (Niraula, 2007). However, in the Late-Panchayat period, decentralization reforms empowered local bodies to influence educational governance, signifying a move towards shared leadership and management (Sharma, 2068 v.s.). Educational governance was heavily influenced by the ideological goal of unifying the nation through a centralized system. The principle of ‘*ek bhasha, ek bhash, ek dharma, ek desh*’ (one language, one way of dress, one religion, one nation)

guided the regime's policies, aiming to propagate Nepali language, and national symbols (Rai et al., 2011; Whelpton, 2005 in Weingberg, 2013, p. 64). This period marked a significant shift towards centralized educational governance, with various committees and councils established to oversee the educational sector.

During the Panchayat period, educational governance in Nepal was characterized by a strong centralization drive aimed at unifying and nationalizing the education system. While decentralization efforts were introduced, they often faced challenges related to centralization and limited community engagement. The influence of foreign donors and the resurgence of democratic ideals in the 1990s further transformed the educational landscape, reflecting a complex interplay of governance, leadership, and management dynamics.

By 2017, the Education Act and subsequent amendments outlined the structure and roles of SMCs in both community and institutional schools. Local representatives were integrated into SMCs, which were responsible for various management functions. The 2019 National Education Policy and 2020 Nepal Fifteenth Plan reinforced the role of local governments and SMCs in educational governance, acknowledging the strength of localism (Adhikari et al., 2023). These reforms illustrate a shift towards decentralized educational governance, with a focus on local involvement and management, aligning with broader governance and leadership principles.

The evolution of school governance in Nepal has been characterized by shifts towards decentralization, community involvement, and local empowerment. The seventh amendment of the 1971 Education Act in 2002 marked a significant step in recognizing local governance as a pivotal stakeholder in school administration. The subsequent expansion of School Management Committees in 2003 introduced a

volunteer committee composed of nine members, representing parents, donors, intellectuals, elected ward representatives, teachers, and the head teacher, with a focus on advisory rather than authoritative roles.

The Education for All program (2001-2015) in Nepal aimed to enhance governance and parental involvement through SMCs to elevate education quality. The School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2015) sought to improve school management and capacity development of SMC members and head teachers, acknowledging the need for SMCs to contribute to educational quality. Amidst these initiatives, the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) recognized the pivotal role of communities in managing public schools. The seventh amendment in Education Act introduced District Education Councils and Rural/Municipal Education Councils, regulating community and private schools and managing their resources. Amidst the transition period, the Local Government Act 2017 shifted responsibilities to local governments. It granted extensive authority to local governments in school management. A multitude of policy documents, including the Constitution, School Sector Development Plan (SSDP), Local Government Act, Education Act, national education policy, Sustainable Development Goals, and Nepal Fifteenth Plan, underscored the critical role of local governance in education. The emphasis on SMCs, local councils, and local government highlights a shift towards a more localized and community-driven approach to school management.

The nomenclatural shift carried political undertones. The term “*Sanchalan*” implying conduction, suggests more comprehensive authority compared to “*Prabandha*,” signifying management. “*Sanchalak*” denotes a leader involved in creation and management, whereas “*Prabandhak*” alludes to a manager tasked with overseeing creations made by others. This terminological transformation likely

reflects the state's deepening involvement in education post-1951, culminating in the adoption of the name “*Prabandha Samiti*”.

The Education Act of 1971 conspicuously omitted any reference to the committee, possibly indicating King Mahendra's belief in its ineffectiveness. Acknowledging the pivotal role of education in societal transformation, he likely aimed to consolidate control over the educational domain. This legislative shift reconstituted SMCs into District Education Councils. Following the people's movement of 2037 v.s. (corresponding to 1980/81 A.D.), King Birendra reintroduced the *Vidyalaya Vyawasthapan Sahayog Samiti* (School Management Support Committee) to engender community participation. Subsequently, with the restoration of democracy in 1990, this committee underwent a semantic change, evolving into the *Vidyalaya Vyawasthapan Samiti* (School Management Committee) and enduring numerous amendments spurred by political considerations.

Nepal's shift towards federalism conceptualize municipal entry in school education, introduced by the Rastriya Shikshya Niti 2076 v.s. (National Education Policy 2019 A.D.), following the Constitution of the Republic of Nepal 2072 v.s. (2015 A.D.), marks a significant development in the landscape of global educational governance. This policy change has placed school education under municipal control, particularly integrating ward chairmen into School Management Committees. While this move aims to decentralize educational administration and enhance local accountability, it has also led to significant tension and debate within Nepal's educational community (Edwards et al., 2012; Ansell & Torfing, 2016).

One of the most contentious outcomes of this governance shift is the inclusion of ward chairmen in SMCs, with some even assuming the role of chairpersons. This approach was intended to bring governance closer to the local populace, yet it has not

been uniformly welcomed by educators. Teachers and head teachers often express dissatisfaction and skepticism towards the municipal control of their schools, primarily due to concerns about the qualifications and governance capacities of municipal representatives, who frequently lack formal training in educational management. This skepticism has generated persistent tension within the school environment, raising critical questions about the future direction of school education in Nepal amidst such governance challenges (Sadiki, 2003; Edwards et al., 2012).

The core of the tension lies in the perceived and actual competencies of ward chairperson in managing school affairs. Traditionally, educational leadership within schools has been the domain of individuals with specific training and experience in education. The transition to municipal control disrupts this norm, leading to friction between educational professionals and municipal representatives. Teachers and head teachers argue that ward chairmen, despite their local governance experience, may lack the requisite understanding of pedagogical principles, curriculum development, and school administration, potentially undermining the quality of education (Boon et al., 2021). Additionally, evaluating the policy's alignment with broader goals of educational equity and quality improvement is necessary (Abdullah & Valentine, 2009; Atzori, 2015).

Effective governance necessitates the integration of management and leadership. Management focuses on organizing goals, optimizing efficiency, and monitoring for evaluation, while leadership emphasizes vision, collaboration, and adaptability. These components are essential for ensuring that an organization operates efficiently and ethically and aligns with its goals. Governance, as defined by various scholars, involves the processes and structures through which societies, governments, and organizations are managed, making it critical to evaluate how well

these processes are functioning (Sadiki, 2003; Edwards et al., 2012; Atzori, 2015) within the context of Nepalese school education.

In the complex landscape of school governance, the integration of management and leadership is crucial for ensuring that schools operate efficiently and ethically. Strategic planning, resource allocation, performance measurement, vision, consensus-building, and adaptability are key aspects that contribute to effective school governance. These elements ensure that schools can deliver quality education and support student learning while fostering a positive school culture that promotes achievement (Ontario Public School Boards' Association, 2018-2022; Dervarics & O'Brien, 2019).

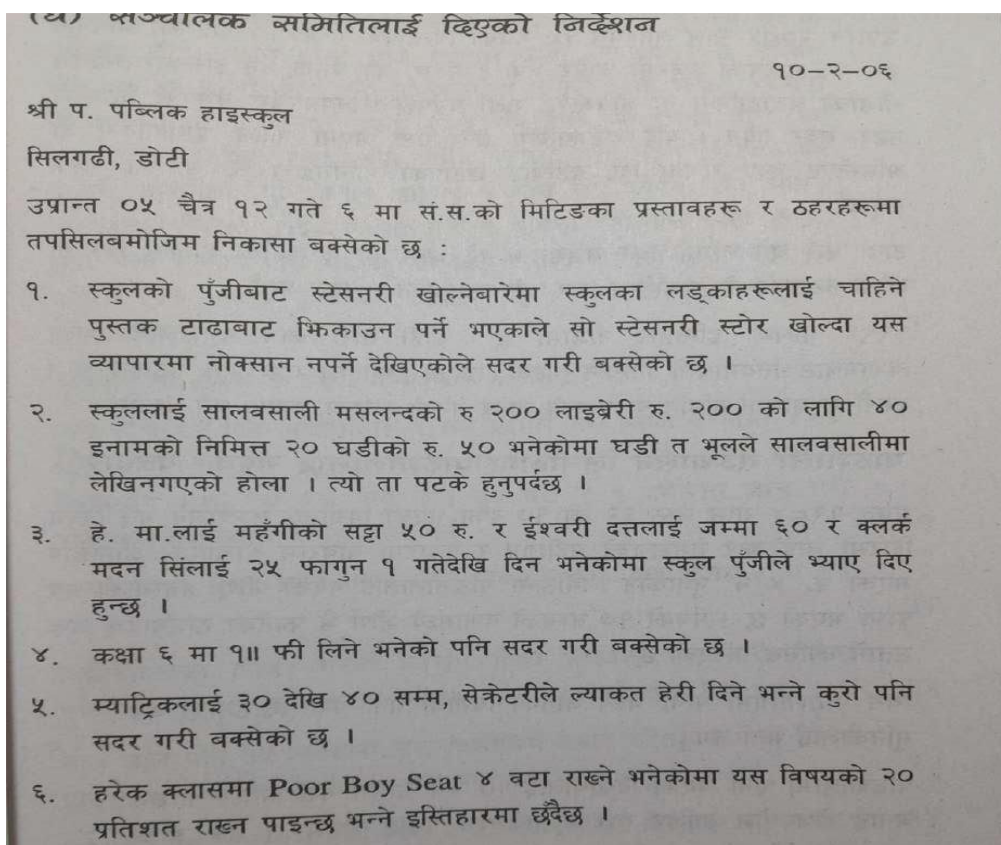
The introduction of municipal control in Nepalese school education (Timalisina, 2023), under the Rastriya Shikshya Niti 2076 v.s., represents a significant governance innovation with far-reaching implications. While it aims to enhance local accountability and improve educational outcomes, the ensuing tensions and challenges call for a careful and comprehensive analysis. Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach, including policy refinement, capacity-building initiatives, and robust stakeholder engagement. By examining the experiences and outcomes of this governance shift, policymakers and educational leaders can identify best practices and potential pitfalls, paving the way for a more effective and equitable educational system (Everatt, 2019b; Geeraert, 2022) in Nepal.

SMC's Impact on School Development: A Governance Framework

During the era of Rana rule, a significant juncture in the historical trajectory of the School Management Committee unfolded with the promulgation of the *Shiksha Istihar* 1996 v.s. (Corresponding to 1941/42). This marked a pivotal moment as the committee of initiators assumed the appellation of the "School Conduction

Committee" (*School Sanchalak Samiti*). It is noteworthy that the government's involvement in school administration was limited, and only a sparse number of schools fell within its purview. The responsibilities of the conduction committee encompassed a diverse spectrum, including the management of infrastructure, teachers' salaries, curriculum development, provision of educational materials, and the enhancement of the schooling system. Importantly, up until this juncture, the committee members, aside from their positional appointments, continued to function as voluntary initiators of educational establishments. The voluntary nature of their efforts endowed them a resolute determination that propelled their mission to loftier heights.

The conduction committee undertook a weighty obligation in steering the development of schools. The committee's multifaceted roles were underscored by nine key functions, encompassing comprehensive care of the school environment, the selection and appointment of educators, and meticulous financial record-keeping (Sharma, 2074 v.s.) which aligned to the leadership and management facets of governance. An illuminating perspective on the SMC's contributions to school development surfaces through a correspondence addressed to the SMC of Doti, a district situated in the far-western region of Nepal.



Source: Sharma (2074. P. 63)

This official communication, penned by the central government in 2006 v.s.

(Corresponding to 1949/50 A.D.), emphasized a remarkable initiative wherein the SMC was entrusted with the operation of a stationery shop. This novel venture aimed to facilitate students' access to essential learning materials such as books and copies, thereby fostering a conducive educational environment (Sharma, 2074 v.s.).

Similarly, the Nepal *Rastriya Shiksha Yojana Aayog's* report of 2010 v.s. (corresponding to 1953/54 A.D.) underscored the imperative of a school provisional committee (*Vidyalaya Prabandha Samiti*) as an essential facet of local-level governance in the educational landscape. Emphasizing the vital role of community representation, the report mandated that these committees comprise individuals drawn from the local populace, thereby fostering accountability in alignment with the framework of national educational laws (Rapple, 2021). Although this report

utilized the nomenclature "*Vidyalaya Prabandha Samiti*" instead of "*School Sanchalak Samiti*," it is noteworthy that official documentation required the endorsement of the school's principal or the secretary of the school conduction committee. This endorsement affirmed the school's operation under the auspices of the school conduction committee, which was established pursuant to the *Shiksha Istihar* 1996 v.s. (corresponding to 1939/40 A.D.), particularly when seeking financial grants from the education department (Sharma, 2074 v.s.).

Furthermore, the *Sarwangin Rastriya Shiksha Samitiko Report* 2018 v.s. (corresponding to 1961/62 A.D.) reiterated the prominence of the "school conduction committee", emphasizing its pivotal role in mobilizing essential financial resources for the institution's operations. This designation is an extension of the overarching trajectory that emphasizes the committee's role in the execution of critical educational functions (Parajuli, 2021). The discerning perspective of the then-government encompassed a comprehensive evaluation of the SMC's contribution to the holistic development of schools. This evaluation culminated in the delegation of a robust set of 19 rights to the committee, thereby endowing it with a wide array of prerogatives. These rights spanned a spectrum from the pivotal task of appointing educators and the head teacher to pivotal responsibilities such as overseeing infrastructure development and meticulous financial record-keeping. This multifaceted empowerment was emblematic of the SMC's indispensable role in steering the course of school development.

In the year of 2042 v.s, (corresponding to 1985/86 A.D.) His Majesty Government further solidified the significance of public representation within the educational sphere through the promulgation of the *Rastriya Mulniti*. This crucial directive expounded on the principle of community participation by articulating that

schools would be overseen and managed by a community-engaged managing committee. This stipulation underscored the intrinsic value of engaging local stakeholders in the process of educational governance (Sharma, 2074 v.s.).

Likewise, the comprehensive report issued by the *Rastriya Shiksha Aayog* in the year 2049 v.s. (corresponding to 1992/03 A.D.) reiterated the paramount importance of instituting school management committees across all educational institutions. This directive was rooted in the belief that such committees would engender an environment of efficient and systematic school management (Sharma, 2071 v.s.). Building upon this trajectory, the *Uchchastariya Rastriya Shiksha Aayog's* report of 2055 v.s. (corresponding to 1998/99 A.D.) emphatically advocated for an amplified role for the management committee as a means to reform the landscape of school management. This resonated with the conviction that enhancing the authority and responsibilities of the community participation in school education would culminate in a more streamlined educational management framework (Carney and Bista, 2021).

The evolution of thought and policy persisted, as evident in the concept paper of the *Vidyalaya Shishako Prastabit Karyaniti ra Karyayojana* in the year 2058 v.s. (corresponding to 2001/02 A.D.). This visionary blueprint reaffirmed the commitment to parent engagement and representation within the educational landscape. Specifically, the concept paper articulated the formation of a management committee that would feature the participation of parents. “This pivotal approach was poised to bridge the gap between educational institutions and the parents they serve, thus fostering a holistic educational ecosystem” (Sharma, 2071 v.s., p. 1085).

Furthermore, the School Sector Development Program (SSDP) spanning the years 2016 to 2023 prominently articulates the imperativeness of community

engagement in the realm of school management. This pivotal perspective culminated in a momentous transformation marked by the integration of parent and local representatives into the committees overseeing school affairs. This trend reverberated through the corridors of governmental policies and reports, amplifying the resounding significance of School Management Committees in nurturing an education system that is not only effective but deeply rooted in community participation (SSDP, 2016-2023).

Delving deeper into this dynamic evolution, the SSDP document accentuates the monumental shift witnessed during the period of the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP). This era bore witness to the fortification of the role of School Management Committees, signifying a deliberate commitment to empowering these committees as vital conduits of effective educational governance (SSDP, 2016-2023). This resolute emphasis on the fortification of the SMC's role within the educational landscape underscores a concerted effort to synergize community engagement and educational leadership, thereby fostering a harmonious and community-driven educational milieu.

The historical evolution of the SMC in Nepal highlights its pivotal role in educational institution development. Initiated by devoted volunteers and reformers, these informal committees played a crucial part in shaping the early education system. As participant P9 noted, *“SMCs in the early days were more active. They had some aim to take their institution to a higher level”*, reflecting a leadership-driven approach.

However, participant P10's observation that SMCs faced reduced effectiveness after policy changes underscores governance and management theories. P10 remarked, *“I don't know about SMCs in the early days but the history says that they*

functioned well before the policy tied them. But after the policy tied them, my analysis is they are performing less". This reveals the influence of external regulations on SMC performance and echoes concepts of governance and management theories. The comparison drawn between SMC-driven initiatives and government-led efforts further illustrates the comprehensive management role undertaken by SMCs, connecting with management theories.

During the Rana era, the committees were designated as School Conduction Committees, reflecting the practical approach of involving local communities in governance and educational leadership. Despite limited government involvement, they played a significant role in managing schools, embodying principles from governance and management theories. P9's account illuminates the governance spirit, stating, *"During Rana rule people had a thirst for education... My father was one of them who was a member of a Sanchalak Samiti... I worked as a school inspector but I didn't find any of the SMC members working like the team of my father"*. This underscores the leadership displayed within these committees. Their dedication to education aligns with governance theories emphasizing community participation.

These committees exemplify the intertwining leadership, and management. P9's narrative signifies effective governance by showcasing adaptive, community-driven efforts, echoing the notions of process and experience. The committees' responsibilities encompassed infrastructural management, curriculum development, and financial oversight, embodying principles of effective educational management. Furthermore, the historical context echoes governance theories emphasizing decentralized decision-making and community involvement. The committees' proactive approach to education underscores the leadership-oriented, and

management-driven facets of their contributions, weaving a rich tapestry of educational development.

As time progressed, the recognition of local representation gained traction, aligning with governance theories advocating decentralized decision-making. Reports and policies highlighted the imperative of community engagement, resulting in the integration of parents and local representatives into SMCs. This transition reflects a pragmatic shift, resonating with the concept of process-oriented problem-solving. P9's perspective encapsulates this change, stating, *"Now the SMC has been compulsory... But the problem is the well-functioning of it... Political issues are there... In private schools they are showcase only"*. This underscores the intricate balance between governance structures and practical implementation.

Within this context, SMCs epitomize the fusion of leadership and management theories. P9's observation, *"The SMC where its members are active and well informed... are assisting well in school development"*, exemplifies effective leadership and management in action. Leadership theories emphasizing active participation and informed decision-making find resonance in such SMCs. Concurrently, P10's inquiry *"Are they really meant for developing school?, Is it their will to represent SMC?, Are they fit for leading and managing school? in the scenario of big question about the understanding level of SMC members"* probes the core of leadership and management, questioning the alignment of SMC members' intentions and capabilities with their roles. This intertwining of theory and practice underscores the intricate fabric of SMCs, where practical governance, astute leadership, and proficient management congregate to shape educational trajectories.

The government's allocation of rights to SMCs reflects a governance approach rooted in shared decision-making. SMCs' authority over teacher appointments,

financial management, infrastructure development, and curriculum design embodies principles of decentralized governance. P9's perspective, *"The rights give good result when they are properly and wisely used. In case they are misused, overused or underused they don't give good result. This is happening in most of the schools"*, underscores a practical orientation where optimal utilization of bestowed rights is pivotal for effective governance.

This confluence of theories becomes palpable in P10's observation, revealing the dynamics of leadership and management within SMCs. The juxtaposition of "misusing" and "under knowledge" resonates with leadership theories emphasizing ethical stewardship and informed decision-making as he said *"Rights given to the SMCs are not properly used. Rather most of them are misusing like I have witnessed*

SMCs forcing head teachers to appoint the teacher on political pressure and teachers' groupism because of SMCs' under-knowledge".

Management theories come to the fore as well, reflecting the challenges of navigating complex administrative landscapes. Thus, SMCs emerge as a microcosm of governance in action, where the application of rights intertwines

A situation observed while visiting a school for interview

A lady teacher was recently transferred to a school within the research area. Despite being there for a month and a half, she hasn't been assigned any teaching periods, nor has she been allowed to mark her attendance. Frustrated by the situation, she expressed her concerns:

"The SMC chair and the head teacher are from the opposition party, and they are deliberately not accepting me. They refuse to acknowledge my presence at the school, but I will not back down. I will show them my power, my political power."

Her words revealed a tense standoff, where her political affiliation had led to her being sidelined in her professional role. Despite the resistance, she was determined to assert her authority and influence within the school, intending to leverage her political connections to overcome the challenges she faced.

This situation highlighted the deep-seated political tensions within the school's governance, where personal and political conflicts overshadowed the educational mission, affecting the school's functioning and the teacher's ability to perform her duties.

with the nuances of leadership and management theories to shape educational trajectories.

The amplified role of School Management Committees in community schools is an embodiment of governance and leadership theories in action. P1's perspective illuminates the transformative impact of SMCs on decision-making accountability, echoing principles of distributed leadership. The transition from individual head teacher accountability to collective SMC responsibility exemplifies a shift toward participatory governance. Moreover, P1's insight "*Because of the SMC making decision has been the accountability of all. It has good role in school development, especially in infrastructure development. SMC means many members and many possibilities*" resonates with the democratic governance tenets, where diverse perspectives fuel innovation.

P2's viewpoint further reinforces the symbolic relationship between SMCs, leadership, and school management. He viewed "*SMC is helping in looking after the school. Many members mean many hands, eyes and mind. Many mind means many ideas. In the scenario of losing the number of students because of private schools, SMC has been a good support to regain it*". The notion that "*Many members mean many hands, eyes and mind*" encapsulates management theories emphasizing collaborative and multifaceted approaches. P2's pragmatic assessment of SMCs as a strategic tool in student retention highlights leadership's pivotal role in devising adaptive solutions to emerging challenges. In this context, SMCs emerge as an embodiment of governance and leadership theories converging to shape responsive educational systems.

The dynamic influence of SMCs in community schools exemplifies governance and leadership principles intertwined with practical actions. P3's

assertion, *“Our presence has helped head teacher to turn from traditional school to techno-friendly school,”* mirrors leadership theories promoting transformational leadership. The SMC’s role in fostering an environment conducive to modern education reflects its alignment with innovative educational leadership practices.

P4’s testimony provides a practical demonstration of governance and leadership theories in action within the educational context. The SMC’s continuous presence, proactive engagement with students and teachers, and establishment of a student support fund resonate with participatory governance principles. His statement, *“We observe classes, talk to the students about their problem, talk to teachers and frequently meet the principal. We have managed ‘Akshaya Kosh’ for the students’ support. We have forced the head teacher to make teaching process in English medium,”* embodies leadership’s impact in steering educational reforms by instigating change and advancing the school’s progress. Together, these accounts illustrate how SMCs encapsulate governance and leadership ideals, materializing them into tangible enhancements within community schools.

Contrary to the community schools, the institutional schools do not feel SMCs’ important role for school’s development. P5 said, *“It is helpful but we cannot activate the SMC. They are not much interested in school’s matters. They say they trust on us. We meet only two times a year, one for fee proposal and the next for scholarship approval. And it is a formality to maintain documents for government offices. School development part does not have big support of the SMC”*. The limited engagement of the SMC underscores the importance of effective leadership. Leadership theories, such as transformational leadership, suggest that leaders should inspire and motivate stakeholders, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and commitment. The challenges found in this saying highlight the need for proactive

leadership that can engage the SMC more effectively, building trust and promoting a stronger partnership with the school community.

P6 added, *“Academic development is not the part of SMC. They are not much interested too. However; for some social problems and problem from government side, SMC is helpful. Otherwise, they come and sign when we call meeting but they don’t initiate. But we have another steering committee which is always active for the school’s development. In our case SMC does not play that big role for school’s development”*. The management aspect of the SMC’s role comes into focus here.

Effective management involves organizing resources, coordinating efforts, and ensuring accountability. The text suggests that the SMC’s involvement is currently limited to certain formal activities, indicating a potential gap in the management of school development efforts. Adopting management principles, such as participative management, could enhance the SMC’s active engagement in shaping the school’s growth. Governance theories emphasize the distribution of power and decision-making in organizations. The SMC’s infrequent meetings and minimal involvement highlight governance challenges. Democratic governance principles could guide the SMC in playing a more active role, encouraging transparent communication, and involving stakeholders in decisions beyond formalities. This aligns with the notion of shared governance, where responsibilities and decisions are distributed among various stakeholders.

The experiences shared by SMC members of institutional schools highlight the interplay between governance principles and the context of school development. P7 accounted, *“Because our school is under trust, I have taken the responsibility of SMC chair being a trustee but our head teacher is active enough. So, we present very less in school and we trust the team of our head teacher. When needed we go and sign”*.

His account “*we trust the team of our head teacher,*” reflects the delegation of authority aligned with governance theories, where effective leadership empowers and delegates responsibilities. The SMC’s practical approach acknowledges the head teacher’s role in school management, while their sporadic involvement echoes adaptive leadership practices.

P8, an SMC member of an institutional school, narrated, “*We know very less about what is happening in school. They call for signing and I go to sign. Though I am interested in involving and observing day to day activities of school, I don’t feel welcomed and I don’t go. I thought different while being the member and now I found different. I will not continue the next session*”. Her narrative underscores the complex interaction between practicality and leadership. The SMC member’s aspiration to engage actively while encountering barriers depicts the practical challenges in translating governance ideals into tangible actions. The decision to discontinue SMC participation reveals the tension between practical expectations and governance principles, emphasizing the need for collaborative leadership and inclusive practices.

The journey of school management committee encapsulates its evolution from grassroots volunteerism to an empowered entity with pivotal responsibilities in advancing education. This progression highlights the crucial role of local communities and parent representatives in shaping and enriching educational institutions in Nepal. However, Wagle (2023.08.02) in the Kantipur Daily writes:

When the schools, in history, were not getting any financial support from the state and the whole school management was the responsibility of the locals, school management committee was essential. But in the scenario, when all the community schools are getting sufficient financial support from the state and the local

government has the mechanism of managing schools, SMC is not necessary. The government rather should strengthen the local education department and the school head teacher. (p. 8).

In summary, the trajectory of SMCs mirrors practical adaptation to changing circumstances. While early SMCs were driven by grassroots enthusiasm, state intervention altered their landscape. Emphasizing practical solutions, we need to rethink SMCs' roles within modernized educational frameworks. Leadership, exhibited through proactive committee members, managerial responsibilities, and transformational influence, speaks to the dynamic impact of SMCs. Concurrently, management theories resonate in their multifaceted tasks, from financial oversight to curricular design.

While the evolving nature of SMCs might raise questions about their contemporary relevance, the discourse underscores call for adaptability. Balancing tradition and progress empowering school governing members might be pragmatic pathways towards effective education governance. In essence, the historical evolution of SMCs weaves together governance's decentralization, leadership's influence, and management's coordination to shape Nepal's educational landscape. The challenges faced highlight the intricate interplay of these theories in real-world educational governance.

Discussion on the Historical Evolution of SMCs Over Time

Nepal's educational governance history offers a captivating narrative of the dynamic connection between education governance, leadership, and management theories across different historical epochs. To understand this dynamic relationship, we delved into the evolution of educational governance in Nepal, starting with its roots in familial structures. The discussion progresses through various periods,

including the Rana regime who thought about not “giving education to the common people, lest they should be awakened and be conscious of their rights” (Shakya 1977 in Caddell, 2007, p. 254) but later began “to spread basic education as it had been practiced in India” (Sharma, 1990, p. 6), political transformations, and the shifts in governance structures. Throughout this journey, the roles of leadership and management are highlighted, reflecting the adaptability and evolution of governance models in response to changing societal needs and political contexts.

Historical roots in education governance. Governance, during early years, was exemplified by Gurus and religious leaders. These figures played essential roles in guiding and mentoring students within *Gurukuls* and Buddhist education centers. Their leadership transcended education, encompassing the holistic development of students. As noted by Dewey, leadership extends beyond mere education to influence “the immature through their participation in the life of the group to which they belong” (The Pennsylvania State University, 2001, p. 85).

The influence of kings like Jayasthiti Malla and Surendra Vikram Shah showcased leadership in introducing vocational education and formal educational institutions, leaving a lasting impact on education governance. The leadership during this era aligns with the visionary leadership style, where leaders guide and mentor individuals toward a shared vision (Goleman et al., 2013). Gurus and religious leaders exemplified this by influencing students’ holistic development within Gurukuls and Buddhist education centers. As John Dewey aptly noted, “the knowledge of the past and its heritage is of great significance when it enters into the present, but not otherwise” (The Pennsylvania State University, 2001, p. 80) which highlights the critical connection between history and the contemporary educational landscape, emphasizing the value of past experiences in shaping the present, this research

connects historical development of SMC and its link with the present behavior in the later chapters.

The evolution of management in education governance. As Nepal's educational journey progressed, the management aspect of governance evolved. The introduction of textbooks and increased documentation during King Rajendra Bikram Shah's reign marked a transition towards a more structured approach to education management. Nevertheless, a significant turning point was observed with the establishment of Durbar High School. This institution represented a formalized system of education governance, with an appointed Education Director overseeing its operations. This evolution highlighted the transition from informal familial and community-based structures to more centralized management.

During the Rana period, education governance witnessed significant transformations deeply intertwined with the political landscape of the time. Jung Bahadur Rana's call for English education marked a pivotal moment, despite the absence of formal policies. This marked a shift towards restricting education to the palace elite, creating a perception that schooling was a privilege reserved for the elite class. The establishment of the Education Director's Office in 1858 introduced rudimentary governance with a focus on Durbar School, which was the sole educational institution at the time. Localized governance practices also flourished during this period, emphasizing community involvement in school management. Despite these localized efforts, there was a severe dearth of educational institutions, as highlighted by a British resident surgeon's observation in 1877. The restriction of education to the elite was a prevailing theme.

Under the leadership of Dhir Shamsher, admissions policies expanded, broadening access beyond the Rana lineage. In 1885, Prime Minister Vir Shamsher

established the first girls' education center in Nepal, marking a step toward gender inclusivity in education. Durbar School's transformation into a High School brought significant changes in curriculum and affiliation, aligning it with Calcutta University and emphasizing English language education. The management of education evolved, aligning with changing societal needs.

The evolution in management practices, from the localized approach during the early period to more centralized models during specific regimes, reflects a shift akin to the transition from distributed to centralized management theories in educational governance (Bush, 1995; Bush, 2008).

The changing roles and structures of committees in governance. The historical development of educational governance in Nepal offers valuable insights into the shifting roles and structures of committees tasked with overseeing schools and educational institutions. In the early days when formal schools were lacking, educational institutions were overseen by various entities, possibly informal committees or individuals responsible for *Guthis*, *Temples*, *Ghumbas*, *Bihars*, and *Ghyangs*. This period was marked by a lack of structured governance. During the Rana period, the *Vidyalaya Sanchalak Samiti* (School Conduction Committee) emerged, wielding substantial authority to establish schools, hire and dismiss teachers (subject to District Magistrate approval), and manage school finances, particularly in the Kathmandu valley. The introduction of centralized leadership became evident during this period, emphasizing the role of the committee in educational management.

Following the political changes in 1951, this committee was rebranded as the *Vidyalaya Prabandha Samiti* (School Provisional Committee), focusing primarily on school management. However, its influence waned with the establishment of new administrative offices. The Education Act of 1971, enacted under King Mahendra's

rule, resulted in the reconstitution of SMCs into District Education Councils, as they were seen as ineffective under this new legal framework. This transition emphasized centralized management. With the People's Movement of 2037 V.S., King Birendra sought to reinvigorate community participation in education. This led to the formation of the *Vidyalaya Vyawasthapan Sahayog Samiti* (School Management Support Committee). The emphasis on community involvement was evident, marking a shift towards decentralized, community-based management. Following the restoration of democracy in 1990, this committee underwent semantic changes, evolving into the *Vidyalaya Vyawasthapan Samiti* (School Management Committee) and undergoing numerous amendments driven by political considerations. This transformation represented a shift towards community-based management.

The introduction of municipal entry into school governance in Nepal represents a significant shift in how educational governance is conceived and practiced. It reflects a broader trend towards decentralization and local empowerment, which, while promising in theory, must be carefully managed to ensure that it translates into tangible improvements in educational outcomes.

One of the primary objectives of this governance shift is to enhance local accountability. By placing school governance under the control of municipal authorities, the policy aims to make schools more responsive to the needs and priorities of local communities. Municipal representatives, particularly ward chairperson, are expected to bring local knowledge and a deep understanding of community issues to their role in school governance. This local perspective is seen as a valuable asset in identifying and addressing the specific challenges faced by schools in different regions of Nepal.

However, the integration of municipal representatives into SMCs has also led to significant challenges and tensions. Teachers and head teachers have raised concerns about the qualifications and governance capacities of these representatives. Many municipal officials, including ward chairperson, do not have formal training in educational management, and their expertise in areas such as pedagogy, curriculum development, and school administration is often limited. This lack of specialized knowledge is seen as a major barrier to effective school governance.

The involvement of municipal representatives in SMCs has also led to concerns about the potential politicization of school governance. In many cases, ward chairperson and other municipal officials are elected political figures, whose actions may be influenced by political considerations rather than the best interests of the school. This has raised fears that decisions about school management, including the appointment of teachers and the allocation of resources, could be subject to political interference. Such interference could undermine the professionalism and integrity of the education system, leading to a decline in educational standards.

Furthermore, the entry of municipal representatives into school governance has disrupted the traditional balance of power within schools. Teachers and head teachers, who have traditionally played a leading role in school management, now find themselves sharing power with municipal officials. This has created tensions and conflicts, as the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders are redefined. In some cases, teachers and head teachers have expressed frustration at what they perceive as a lack of respect for their professional expertise and authority.

The evolution of committees and their roles aligns with governance theories, transitioning from centralized models during specific regimes to community-based

approaches. This shift reflects an inclination toward democratic and participative governance styles.

Adaptability in governance. Throughout these transformations, a practical approach to governance was discernible, with committees adapting to evolving societal needs and changing political contexts. As Dewey noted, “practical factors affect epistemic rationality” (Mudry, 2021, p. 155), indicating that educational governance must be responsive to the evolving practical needs of society. The renaming of these committees reflected the government’s increasing role in education and its responsiveness to societal dynamics. These changes underscore the dynamic nature of educational governance in Nepal and highlight adjustments in authority and roles as the country’s education system evolved in response to shifting political landscapes and societal requirements.

The shifts in the structure and roles of School Management Committees reflect the broader concept of school governance. During the Rana period, the *Vidyalaya Sanchalak Samiti* held substantial authority in school governance, emphasizing the role of centralized leadership in educational management. However, post-1951, as the state's involvement in education deepened, the focus shifted more towards centralized management, as seen in the rebranding of the committee to *Vidyalaya Prabandha Samiti*. This highlighted the influence of centralization in school governance during certain periods. The transformation of these committees over time demonstrates a practical approach to governance. The government’s decisions regarding the roles and structures of SMCs were adaptive responses to changing societal needs and political contexts. For instance, the shift towards community participation through the *Vidyalaya Vyawasthapan Sahayog Samiti* during the decade of 2030 v.s. (Corresponding to 1973 to 1982 A.D.) responded to the growing importance of

involving local communities in school management. This adaptation aligns with the need of governance principles that prioritize practicality, flexibility, and responsiveness to achieve effective governance.

Accountability and transparency are key principles of good governance, and they are particularly important in the context of school governance. The entry of municipal representatives into school governance has raised concerns about the potential for corruption and misuse of resources. To address these concerns, it is essential to establish clear mechanisms for accountability and transparency.

One approach to enhancing accountability is to establish clear roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders in school governance. This includes defining the specific responsibilities of municipal representatives, teachers, head teachers, and parents in the management of schools. By clarifying these roles, it is possible to ensure that all stakeholders are held accountable for their actions and decisions.

Transparency can be enhanced by ensuring that decisions about school management are made in an open and inclusive manner. This includes involving all stakeholders in decision-making processes and providing opportunities for them to contribute their views and perspectives. It also involves ensuring that information about school governance, including financial reports and performance evaluations, is readily accessible to all stakeholders.

Another important aspect of accountability is the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. Regular monitoring and evaluation of school performance can help to identify areas where improvements are needed and hold stakeholders accountable for achieving educational outcomes. This can include the use of performance indicators, such as student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and school infrastructure, to assess the effectiveness of school governance.

Impact of governance, leadership and management on SMCs. Leadership in educational governance serves as the linchpin that shapes the direction and efficacy of educational institutions. The evolution of SMCs in Nepal serves as a mirror reflecting the dynamic shifts in leadership production. In their nascent stages, SMC members assumed dual roles as leaders and managers, actively engaging in the development of schools and participating in decision-making processes. Nevertheless, the burgeoning governmental involvement triggered an evolution in the leadership style within these committees. The transition from “*Sanchalak*” (conductor) to “*Prabandhak*” (manager) signaled a shift from actively creating educational structures to managing pre-existing ones. This change resonates with leadership theories that underscore the value of adaptive leadership styles that respond to the evolving milieu.

Management theories in education have undergone a metamorphosis over time, mirroring changes in governance models and leadership paradigms. Nepal’s engagement with SMCs serves as a crucible for these evolutionary trends in management theory. The post-1951 period ushered in a movement toward centralized management, with the state asserting its dominance in the realm of education. This transition dovetailed with management theories that championed hierarchical control and centralized decision-making. The advent of the Education Act of 1971 marked a pivotal inflection point by further centralizing management, curbing local autonomy, and reformulating SMCs as District Education Councils.

Nonetheless, with the reinstatement of democracy in Nepal in 1990, the role of SMCs experienced a resurgence, aligning with contemporary management theories that espouse decentralization and community-based management. This shift underscores the adaptability and responsiveness. The historical evolution of SMCs in Nepal illustrates their pivotal role in educational development, though it is important

to note that recent voices have begun to question their relevance. The enhanced state funding and government mechanisms for school management have spurred debates about the ongoing necessity of SMCs.

Wagle's perspective, as cited above, suggests that SMCs might need to adapt to the evolving educational landscape. Governance champions the search for practical solutions that are in harmony with contemporary needs. Balancing tradition and progress while reinforcing local education departments and empowering school head teachers could potentially serve as pragmatic avenues toward effective education governance.

The historical odyssey of School Management Committees in Nepal proffers an exhaustive case study of how school governance, leadership, and management theories intersect within the sphere of educational development. The evolution of SMCs encapsulates Nepal's adaptive responses to ever-changing educational and political dynamics, thereby underscoring the significance of governance models that are inherently context-sensitive in the realm of education.

Balancing tradition in educational governance. The participants contributing to this analysis have brought forth a spectrum of viewpoints concerning the role of SMCs in Nepal's educational milieu. One participant's standpoint sheds light on how external policy modifications have influenced the effectiveness of SMCs, implying that these committees may have operated more effectively prior to policy interventions. This perspective underscores the profound influence that governance and management theories have on the performance of SMCs. Another participant's perspective harks back to the historical backdrop of SMCs during the Rana era, emphasizing grassroots, community-driven efforts and the pivotal leadership roles that SMC members played within these committees. This perspective

aligns with governance theories that champion the importance of community participation in education.

Furthermore, one participant underscores the practical benefits of having a multitude of members in SMCs, emphasizing collaborative and multifaceted approaches. This view resonates with management theories that recognize the multifaceted nature of effective leadership and its ability to adapt to emerging challenges. Additionally, they underscore the role of SMCs in student retention, underscoring leadership's aptitude for offering adaptive solutions to address emergent challenges. Conversely, a segment of participants expresses apprehensions about the limited engagement of SMCs in institutional schools and raises questions about their contemporary relevance. These perspectives align with the emphasis on practicality and its inclination to adapt strategies to specific contexts. Another participant's perspective underscores that academic development isn't the primary responsibility of SMCs in their context, underscoring management principles associated with the efficient organization of resources and the coordination of efforts.

Trust in the school's head teacher wields a substantial influence on another participant's active participation in the SMC, highlighting governance principles linked to the delegation of authority and the far-reaching impact of leadership in empowering and entrusting responsibilities. Finally, one participant's narrative underscores the tension between pragmatic expectations and governance principles. Their aspiration for active involvement stands in contrast to the practical obstacles they encounter. This divergence accentuates the complexities in translating governance ideals into actionable strategies, further underscoring the need for collaborative leadership.

Collectively, these participant viewpoints cast a spotlight on the intricate interplay between governance, leadership, and management theories within the context of SMCs. They provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities confronting these committees as they continue to chart educational trajectories in Nepal. The School Management Committee in Nepal has made momentous contributions to school development across its historical evolution. In its nascent stages, driven by the commitment of social reformers and volunteers, SMCs assumed a pivotal role in establishing the bedrock of Nepal's education system. These early committees shouldered comprehensive responsibilities, including infrastructure development, curriculum design, and instructional guidance, thereby exemplifying their proactive approach to school development. As governance structures evolved, SMCs exhibited their adaptability by embracing their role as "School Management Committees", prioritizing shared decision-making and community engagement. This transition aligns harmoniously with contemporary governance theories that champion local involvement in educational management.

The introduction of federalism in Nepal has had a significant impact on school governance. Federalism has devolved power to local governments, including in the area of education, which has led to the entry of municipal representatives into school governance. While this shift towards local governance has the potential to enhance accountability and responsiveness, it has also created challenges, particularly in terms of coordination and capacity.

One of the key challenges of federalism is ensuring that local governments have the capacity to effectively manage schools. In many cases, local governments, including municipalities, lack the resources and expertise to oversee educational institutions. This has led to concerns that the quality of education could decline under

municipal control, particularly in areas where local governments are weak or under-resourced.

Another challenge is the coordination between different levels of government. Under federalism, the central government retains responsibility for key aspects of education, such as curriculum development and teacher training, while local governments are responsible for school management. This division of responsibilities can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings, particularly if there is a lack of communication and coordination between different levels of government.

To address these challenges, it is essential to strengthen the capacity of local governments to manage schools effectively. This includes providing training and resources to municipal representatives, as well as establishing clear mechanisms for coordination and communication between different levels of government. By enhancing the capacity of local governments and improving coordination, it is possible to ensure that the shift towards federalism and municipal entry into school governance leads to positive outcomes for education.

Chapter Summary

The historical analysis of School Management Committees in Nepal underscores their indispensable role in school development, yet highlights persistent challenges due to political interference. From their inception, SMCs have faced tensions both internally and externally, which have only intensified over time. Initially, state political forces disrupted their functioning, and after the restoration of democracy, interference from party politics further weakened SMC effectiveness. Despite ongoing recognition of their importance, with numerous reports since 2007 v.s. emphasizing the need to strengthen SMCs, meaningful reforms have not materialized on the ground due to which the SMC members are not enhanced with

governance literacy. The rise of private schools, driven by political needs, further complicated the governance landscape, leading to a divergence in the effectiveness of SMCs between community and institutional schools.

These tensions have continued to escalate, even as Nepal transitioned to federalism. The entry of ward chairpersons from municipalities into SMCs has created new conflicts, with some ward chairpersons asserting themselves as SMC chairpersons in community schools. This has exacerbated the already fragile dynamics within SMCs, undermining their intended role as collaborative governance bodies. The overlap of political and educational roles within SMCs has diluted their focus on school development and accountability. As a result, the tensions that began with the inception of SMCs have not only persisted but have grown more complex, threatening the effectiveness and integrity of school governance.

CHAPTER V

The Role of SMCs in Community and Institutional School Context

This chapter is formulated based on the central research inquiry: “How do SMCs function within the contexts of community and institutional schools?” Information was collected through interviews conducted with the head teachers and SMC Chairs of two community schools and two institutional schools, and insights obtained from two educational experts and two in-service educational bureaucrats. Throughout the presentation of data, participants are identified as follows: SMC members (designated as P3 and P4 for community schools, and P7 and P8 for institutional schools), head teachers (represented by P1 and P2 for community schools and P5 and P6 for institutional schools), education experts (referred to as P9 and P10), and officers of Municipal Education Department (marked as P11 and P12).

In Nepal, the educational landscape comprises two distinct categories of schools: community-owned and institutionally owned. The latter category, institutionally owned schools (which are commonly said private schools), can be further subdivided into two classifications: those operating under Company Act and those operating under the *Guthi* Act. A defining aspect of these schools’ operations lies in the role and functionality of the School Management Committee. The intricate dynamics within these schools are shaped by this key element.

SMC in Community Schools

Community owned schools receive government subsidies and adhere to education acts and regulations. These educational institutions established School Management Committees upon the government’s introduction of this system. Schools founded prior to 2028 v.s. (1971/72 A.D.) had a School Conduction Committee, which evolved into SMC when Education Act was amended in 2049 v.s. (1992/93

A.D.) SMC chairs are selected from among parents, sometimes through elections in the absence of consensus. In certain municipalities, the ward chair may serve as the SMC chair. Other committee members include donors, local intellectuals, teachers' representative, parents' representative and municipality representatives.

The participants' reflections reveal a confluence of governance, leadership, and management theories. They emphasize that "*this type of schools is public property*", highlighting the community's ownership and shared governance role. This sentiment resonates with governance, stressing practical implications. The participants acknowledge the importance of leadership, as exemplified by the head teachers. They suggest that parents' education levels impact development, indicating leadership's role in guiding stakeholders. P1's view was "*Parents' participation helps in developing school. but the education and understanding level of parents matter more*" and P2's was "*SMC is ok but who is there in SMC matters more. If there are qualified and understanding people the school develops otherwise it does not. Getting this type of member in SMC is difficult.*" The idea of selecting qualified individuals for the School Management Committee represents strategic management, aligning expertise with organizational objectives.

Furthermore, the SMC chair's perspective embodies governance principles, asserting that "*Community participation is necessary...We are there to help in developing school*". This underscores communal ownership and governance's critical role. P4's observation about increased enrollment post-SMC formation underscores effective management and leadership within the committee, substantiating positive changes. The emphasis on practical outcomes and community engagement reinforces advocating actions yielding tangible benefits.

The school, where SMC and head teacher have good coordination is performing better. The participants' insights delve into the interplay of coordination, governance, leadership, and management, within schools' functioning. The assertion that *"The school, where SMC and head teacher have good coordination is performing better"* underscores the pivotal role of coordination, echoing both management and leadership principles. This aligns with governance emphasizing practical results from effective coordination.

The concept of coordination takes on a political dimension, as noted by P2. He explains that *"every decision is made in coordination"*, reflecting the governance aspect of collective decision-making. P2's acknowledgment of their role in balancing decisions for school development highlights leadership qualities in ensuring equitable outcomes. The participants' focus on *"We don't see which political party he is aligned to. We see school"* reflects practicality, valuing results over political affiliations.

Furthermore, P4's statement that

An Observation

In a particular community school of the study area, the nine-member School Management Committee has split into three fractions. One of these groups makes it a point to visit the school twice a week, arriving as early as 6:00 AM, just before the start of classes for grades 11 and 12 at 6:30 AM. Their routine includes checking the attendance of both students and teachers and observing classroom instruction. However, despite their diligent monitoring, they lack the necessary expertise to effectively evaluate teaching practices. In their effort to engage with the school community, they regularly converse with students and have even established a complaint record book to document student concerns and their own observations. They dutifully report these findings to the head teacher. However, this group's constant presence at the school has not been well-received. Many teachers find their frequent visits intrusive, and even the head teacher admits that the group's persistent involvement has become a source of disturbance.

"We don't hinder the plans and works of Principal but rather help on it" underscores a collaborative approach, touching on management principles of teamwork and synergy. This resonates with governance theory, emphasizing shared responsibility

for school improvement. The participants' collective recognition of the importance of school-centered decisions showcases values of outcomes-focused actions.

Their observations underscore the significance of effective coordination in achieving positive results while navigating the political landscape. This confluence of theories shapes perceptions of collaboration, decision-making, and achieving practical outcomes in school environments.

The participants' observations highlight the critical importance of coordination, governance, leadership, and management within schools' dynamics. The assertion that "*The school, where SMC and head teacher do not have coordination is not performing better*" underscores the significant role of coordination in school

performance. This aligns with management and leadership theories, emphasizing the importance of teamwork and alignment in achieving positive outcomes.

Political influence is acknowledged as a factor affecting coordination, reflecting governance challenges. P1's statement, "*SMC formed without any political interference is*

An Observation

A lady was recently appointed as an Early Childhood Development (ECD) teacher at a community school of the study area. She was delighted to secure the position, as she was not only trained in early childhood development but also held a master's degree in education. Her enthusiasm for her new role was palpable. However, just a week into her service, she was unexpectedly summoned to the head teacher's office. In a somber tone, the head teacher informed her, "Ma'am, I was very supportive of your appointment as the ECD teacher, but the School Management Committee was not pleased with this decision. Now, there is pressure from the higher education office, and I am unable to do anything further. I have to withdraw my decision to appoint you. Please forgive me". The news was a harsh blow, shattering her hopes and leaving her in a difficult position.

better", underscores the importance of impartiality and governance's role in fostering effective decision-making. P3's remarks about the development of the school after

SMC involvement highlight the leadership aspect of collective contributions, irrespective of participants' education levels.

P9's perspective as a retired school inspector further reinforces the importance of coordination, echoing management principles of clear communication and collaboration. Their observation that *"The head teachers can work properly when there is good coordination between SMC and head teacher"* accentuates the leadership role of fostering effective teamwork. The assertion that *"The school where SMC is active is performing better"* underlines the role of governance in involving the

community in decision-making and oversight. Active SMCs exemplify participatory governance, aligned with emphasis on practical outcomes.

Regular SMC meetings and improved participation reflect effective management and leadership. P2's statement, *"They like not disturbing us in our daily tasks"*, underscores effective management by the SMC, allowing educators to focus on teaching. P4's emphasis on active involvement, regardless of political affiliations,

**Rautahat Village tense over school's election
May 23, 2015**

The Himalayan Times

RAUTAHAT: Tension ran high in Bishrampur village of Rautahat district on Monday as two groups of locals clashed over election of a school management committee.

Rautahat police had to use three shells of tear gas to control the situation.

During the election of the management committee of Nepal Higher Secondary School in the district, two groups started pelting stones at each other following the dispute between two of the candidates.

In the clash between supporters of the opposing candidates, namely Jagannath Sahani and Ram Prabesh Patel; Sadhu Sahani and Chintu Sahani of Bairiya-3 and Sukhal Mukhiya of Bairiya-6 sustained injuries on their heads, Kameshor Sahani of Samanpur VDC Accountant informed.

It has been learned that the clash started after Jagannath Sahani filed his candidacy in a Patel-dominated community and Yadav community's support to Sahani made the situation even worse. DSP Nabin Krishna Bhandari of the Rautahat District Police Office stated that they had to resort to the baton charge also to stop the clash.

Stating that some police personnel also sustained injuries in the clash, he added that the election was conducted successfully under their security after a delay of some hours.

aligns with active governance values, focusing on tangible results over political concerns.

P11's perspective as a municipality education department head further reinforces the importance of active SMCs. Their observation that "*The SMC is active there. They meet timely and make timely decisions*" highlights management's role in effective decision-making. Participatory decisions, as noted, align with governance principles of involving stakeholders.

The participants' statements underscore the significance of active SMCs in promoting effective governance, participatory decisions, and inclusive leadership. This blend of theories shapes perceptions of school management, collaboration, and achieving practical outcomes through community engagement.

The assertion that "*The school where SMC is not active is not performing better*" emphasizes the role of governance in participatory decision-making. Inactive SMCs reflect a governance gap, which contrasts with the principles of achieving practical results. The challenges of irregular meetings and lack of consensus highlight management and leadership difficulties. P1's statement, "*Our SMC is active only in the case of budget*", underscores a management focus that might miss academic concerns. This points to the importance of balanced leadership that aligns with pragmatic goals.

P3's remarks about hindrances from principal and some teachers showcase leadership and management challenges. Their call for respectful treatment aligns with values, emphasizing inclusivity and cooperation.

Their observations underscore the significance of active SMCs in promoting effective governance, participatory decisions, and inclusive leadership. Conversely, inactive SMCs hinder effective management and decision-making, leading to

performance challenges. This blend of theories shapes perceptions of school management, collaboration, and achieving practical outcomes through community engagement. The recognition that “*The political intervention is high in this type of schools*” underscores governance challenges tied to external influences.

The difficulties faced by head teachers in maintaining balance amid political dynamics reflect management and leadership challenges. P1’s statement, “*When the principal is busy in managing internal politics, how can he contribute in school development?*” underscores management issues that hinder effective leadership. P2’s acknowledgment of party politics and its influence on decisions illustrates pragmatic concerns over impartiality.

P3’s perspective emphasizes inclusive governance, aligning with governance principles. The understanding that “*Everyone’s voice is important*” resonates with participatory governance theories. P4’s recognition of placing school above party politics embodies practical priorities.

P9’s observation about party politics reflecting in SMC member’s biased opinions underscores the challenges of unbiased decision-making and effective governance. P10’s insights into the impact of political influence on community schools’ quality highlight the broader implications of governance and leadership challenges.

The participants’ insights underscore the significance of effective coordination, impartial decision-making, and collaborative efforts in achieving practical outcomes. This confluence of theories shapes perceptions of governance structures, leadership roles, and the necessity of coordination for positive school development. Their observations underscore the challenges of maintaining impartial governance, effective leadership, and decision-making amid political interventions.

This blend of theories shapes perceptions of school management, leadership integrity, and the practical complexities of community-based education institutions.

The participants' reflections on school dynamics reveal a convergence of governance, leadership, and management theories. Acknowledging leadership's importance, they highlight the influence of parents' education levels on development. The selection of qualified individuals for the School Management Committee exemplifies strategic management in achieving organizational goals. Furthermore, the SMC chair's perspective underlines the significance of communal ownership, emphasizing governance's role in decision-making. Observations of positive changes post-SMC formation reinforce effective management and leadership within the committee. The participants' recognition of practical outcomes and community engagement showcases the interplay of these theories in fostering school development.

In schools with active SMCs, the participants explore the interrelation of coordination, governance, leadership, and management. Effective coordination, resonating with management and leadership, is underscored as pivotal for improved performance. The political dimension of coordination is recognized, emphasizing governance's role in collective decision-making. Acknowledging party politics, participants highlight the need for impartiality. Their insights underscore the importance of inclusive governance and participatory decisions. This convergence of theories shapes perceptions of collaboration, decision-making, and practical outcomes within school environments.

SMC in Institutional Schools

Privately owned institutions, often referred to as private schools, operate without government subsidies, relying on parental fees for funding. In Nepal, the

surge in private schools followed the reinstatement of democracy in 2046 v.s. These institutions adopted the term “institutional schools” after the 2002 education act and regulation amendments. This mandated the formation of School Management Committees, a requirement previously absent. Two categories of institutional schools exist: those governed by the Company Act and those under the Trust (*Guthi*) Act, both prevalent in this municipality.

The SMC chair is typically chosen from the investor, resulting in limited public involvement. Recent education regulation amendments have expanded SMC membership to include local government representatives, the ward chair, and members of the municipal education department. The remaining parent and teacher representatives are selected by the SMC chair, shaping the composition of this type of school’s structure.

There are two school boards in this type of school. One is SMC to satisfy the government body and the next is either company board or trustee board. The participants’ insightful perspectives offer a comprehensive lens through which to explore the interplay of governance, leadership, and management theories within institutional schools. The dichotomy of school boards, encompassing the School Management Committee and the company or trustee board, vividly underscores the response to governmental requisites. This duality aligns with governance’s core tenet of adapting practical measures to fulfill regulatory mandates while maintaining operational efficiency.

The complex fabric of governance becomes evident as participants narrate their experiences with the SMC. P5’s account, “*We have SMC since it is necessary for government documentation but its members do not have big role in school development*”, unveils the dual roles of SMCs, mandated for “*government*

documentation” while yielding limited developmental influence. P7’s position as an SMC chair encapsulates governance’s formal structure as he said, *“I am chairing the SMC because of the government rule and people requested me. I don’t know more about my jobs”*, where individuals assume roles as per regulatory stipulations.

His candid admission reveals a reliance on the existing school leadership to manage all affairs, highlighting a common scenario where the SMC chair serves more as a figurehead than an active participant in school governance. While his trust in the head teacher’s team speaks to the confidence he has in their abilities, it also underscores the potential risks of having an SMC chair who is disengaged from the decision-making

P7’s Experience

My friends asked me to take on the role of SMC chair. Honestly, I don’t know much about what this position entails. I’m not familiar with the responsibilities or the intricacies of school management. But I trust the head teacher and his team completely. They’ve been in this field for years, and I believe they know what they’re doing. Whenever they need my approval or a signature, I just sign wherever they tell me to. They’re doing a good job, and I don’t feel the need to worry or interfere.

process. This passive approach might work when the school leadership is competent and ethical, but it could lead to problems if there are governance issues or if more strategic decisions are required.

Meanwhile, P9 and P11 provide intriguing insights into the contrasting effectiveness of trust and company steering committees, further illustrating governance’s nuances in shaping decision-making dynamics as P9 said, *“Institutional schools’ SMC is only for the sake. Their steering committee functions better; and that is doing better also”* and P11, *“In private schools there is no dispute. And SMC is not meant for the sake of school’s development but rather their company steering committee is functioning well, which is not bad”*.

Leadership intricacies are underscored in the narratives of P7 and P8. P7's role, driven by government directives, showcases the formal governance structure that relies on assigned positions. On the other hand, P8's candid admission of minimal involvement in her statement *"I remember I am the SMC member when they call me.*

Frankly speaking, our participation is almost zero in school. SMC is for the name only" emphasizes the challenge of engaging SMC members effectively, revealing leadership complexities in fostering proactive participation.

P11's observation of the diminished disputes in private school points to leadership's pivotal role in sustaining harmonious relationships.

P8's Experience

Initially, I was thrilled when offered the position, believing I would actively contribute to discussions on student development and play a meaningful role in the school's growth. I anticipated the role would bring a deep sense of fulfillment. However, my experience has been far from what I expected. I am rarely called for meetings—perhaps only twice a year—and when I am, there is little to no discussion. Instead, I'm simply asked to sign off on the minutes. I've never attended a meeting where all the members were present. Disappointed and feeling sidelined, I am now reconsidering whether I should continue in the role, as the reality has not lived up to my initial expectations.

Within the realm of management, the functional disparities between the SMC and steering committees come to the forefront. P6's account of the vibrant company steering committee underscores the art of efficient management and prompt decision-making. This aligns with governance principles that advocate effective management practices for productive committee operations. Evaluations offered by P12 and P13 about *"meeting minutes"* elucidate management's profound impact on committee efficacy, reflecting how management practices transcend into tangible outcomes since P12's view was *"When we see the minute of private school SMC, it is thin and public schools' thick. Though it does not indicate anything about school development, we can guess how active the SMC is in private school"* and P13's was *"Private schools'*

one is for documentation only and community schools' for party politics, frankly speaking".

The practical adaptation of SMCs to meet regulatory requisites, combined with the diverse functionality of steering committees, exemplifies the intricate play of the theories in shaping governance structures, leadership dynamics, and management strategies that resonate within the educational landscape. The assertion (of P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11 and P12) that *"The school is private property"* underscores the central theme of private ownership, highlighting that owners are custodians regardless of public participation. This encapsulates governance's essence, where practical realities dictate the preservation and management of private property, aligning with the owners' responsibilities.

Participants' perspectives offer a multifaceted view of governance, as evident in P5's statement *"The government do not help in anything but rather we are paying sufficient tax. We are responsible for the development and safety of our school"* about government assistance and taxation. P5's reflection on the steering committee's proactive role resonates with governance principles, where trustees assume a vigilant stance. This echoes the practical approach of private school management, ensuring efficient governance by upholding property interests. P6's acknowledgment of potential politics alludes to governance challenges, which they deftly manage to maintain the institution's integrity since he viewed, *"Sometimes we sense politics by our parents and teacher-staffs. But we manage it. We don't let the national party politics interfere our institutions"*.

Leadership's prominence shines through participants' view on school property's stewardship. P7's assertion of trustees overseeing property mirrors leadership qualities in safeguarding institutional assets. P8's acknowledgement of

investors' property underscores the leadership's role in resource management, showcasing prudent stewardship. Their perspective on politics, if harnessed positively, aligns with leadership principles of maintaining a balanced environment for stakeholders' benefit.

Management intricacies emerge as participants highlight the ease of managing private institutions due to private ownership. P9's perspective underscores the successful management of private property, demonstrating effective resource utilization from his statement *"It is their private property and they are keeping it safe and utilizing maximum of their resource. That is good. You don't find it in community schools"*. This resonates with management theories, where efficient utilization of resources contributes to the institution's well-being. P10's observation on community schools underscores management's challenges in communal property management, advocating a communal approach to fulfill responsibilities because he said, *"Managing it in private schools have been easy because of the private property. But it does not mean they are good in all. Public property is the responsibility of all. This is where community schools should work"*.

The notion that parents prioritize their child's education over property aligns with the values, where education's practicality supersedes other considerations. This reflects management's emphasis on prioritizing educational quality, enhancing the institution's appeal to parents. The participants' observations culminate in a landscape where private ownership intersects with practical governance, leadership, and management theories. The notion of private ownership is mirrored in the active stewardship of property by owners, while governance principles manifest through proactive trusteeship. Leadership's mantle emerges as leaders navigate political

nuances while maintaining property integrity. Management strategies shine through prudent resource utilization, echoing the efficacy of private ownership.

The perspectives of private school head teachers also provide an illuminating lens through which to explore the convergence of governance, leadership, and management. Their stance, that “*SMC is supportive for any political and government dealing but educationally they don’t need it*”, underscores the utility of School Management Committees in navigating governmental and political realms. This dimension aligns with the essence of SMC, where they serve as facilitators for administrative requirements and solutions to broader social issues.

P5’s assertion that SMCs serve as “*support for any government documents and issues*” underscores governance principles, where SMCs act as liaisons for official matters. P6’s perspective mirrors practicality, highlighting the steering committee’s pivotal role in educational and school development issues. This synergy between governance and leadership echoes the need for distinct structures to address specific aspects effectively.

Leadership dynamics are unveiled through SMC’s operational framework. The revelation that SMC meetings are initiated by the school itself showcases leadership’s active role. The practicality of meeting biannually, as indicated by the necessity for “*fee determination in February/March and for scholarship determination in June/July*”, echoes decision-making while adhering to specific educational needs. This also aligns with leadership principles, demonstrating responsiveness to pertinent matters within a structured timeline.

Management intricacies come into the forefront as head teachers elucidate SMC’s limited role educationally. P5’s sentiment that SMCs are “*not a support for us educationally*” underscores management’s involvement in educational matters. P6’s

reference to the steering committee as a valuable aid in educational and school development underscores effective management strategies. This mirrors management principles, where specific bodies cater to diverse aspects for streamlined outcomes.

The significance of SMCs for government dealings aligns with governance principles, while steering committees assume leadership and management roles in educational and developmental contexts. This confluence of theories underpins the schools' functional landscape, where effective governance, proactive leadership, and strategic management collaboratively shape private institutions.

The notion that these institutions are “*private property*” underscores their unique status as custodians of their educational spaces, devoid of public ownership. This perspective aligns with practical realities, where private ownership dictates the responsibility of conserving and managing the property, resonating with the essence of governance. The participants' viewpoints reflect governance complexities, as conveyed by P5's observation on government assistance and taxation. His insight into the active role of steering committees showcases a governance structure driven by regulatory mandates, while also exemplifying strategies to ensure effective management practices.

The role of leadership takes center stage in participants' narratives, revealing the multifaceted role of stewards. P7's assertion of trustees' vigilant oversight underscores leadership's pivotal responsibility in safeguarding institutional assets. P8's acknowledgement of investors' property mirrors leadership's role in effective resource management, reflecting their stewardship in maintaining property integrity. Their acknowledgment of the potential for politics underscores leadership's proactive management of external influences while maintaining property and educational

objectives. This demonstrates pragmatic values of maintaining a balanced environment for the benefit of all stakeholders.

Furthermore, the analysis reveal management intricacies as participants highlight the ease of managing private institutions due to the autonomy of private ownership. P9's perspective unveils successful management practices, where optimal resource utilization contributes to the institution's wellbeing. This echoes management theories, emphasizing efficient resource management as a driver of school success. P10's perspective underscores management challenges in communal property management, advocating for a communal approach to fulfill collective responsibilities. Their views reflect management's emphasis on prioritizing educational quality over property concerns, reinforcing the perspective of placing education at the forefront.

The participants' insights, woven together, reveal a landscape where private ownership harmoniously intersects with effective governance, adaptive leadership, and astute management practices. This blend of theories collectively shapes the ethos of privately owned educational institutions, resonating with their distinctive role in the educational fabric.

SMC Functioning: Community and Institutional School Difference

The educational landscape in Nepal is a complex tapestry of community-owned and institutionally owned schools, each with its unique set of dynamics shaped significantly by the role and functionality of the School Management Committee. This analysis further explores the essence of effective school governance aligning with transformative leadership, and outcome focused management theories discussed in the literature review and data presentation within the context of these two categories.

SMC in community schools. The introduction of School Management Committees transformed these schools, placing a strong emphasis on community involvement in governance. The SMCs' composition, including parents, donors, local intellectuals, teachers' representatives, parents' representatives, and municipal representatives, reflects the pluralistic nature of governance, a concept underscored in the literature review. This philosophy seeks practical solutions through a diverse range of stakeholders, acknowledging the importance of shared perspectives and experiences.

These community schools embody governance's essence, emphasizing practical implications and shared governance principles, as highlighted in the literature review. The notion of these schools being perceived as "public property" emphasizes community ownership and collaborative decision-making, a recurrent theme in the literature review. The connection between community involvement, and practical outcomes within these schools aligns with the philosophical foundations of this educational movement. Leadership, a vital component highlighted in the literature review, is prominently present in these community schools. The role of head teachers and their influence on school development is evident, emphasizing the essential qualities of effective leadership, which was underlined in the literature. The selection of qualified individuals to serve on SMCs reflects strategic management, aligning expertise with the schools' objectives, an approach congruent with the governance and leadership theories highlighted in the literature.

Effective coordination within SMCs is essential for improving school performance, echoing the collaborative governance principles emphasized in the literature. SMCs' involvement in decision-making mirrors core aspects of management theory, emphasizing teamwork and synergy among stakeholders,

underpinning the collaborative governance approach. Furthermore, the governance principles discussed in the literature come to the fore as SMCs hold collective responsibility for decision-making, ensuring impartiality and effectiveness.

SMC in institutional schools. Institutionally owned schools in Nepal, commonly referred to as private schools, are governed by the Company Act or the Trust (*Guthi*) Act. The composition of their SMCs differs substantially from community schools, often involving limited public participation and less individual interest. This contrast aligns with the governance theme, emphasizing the private ownership aspect, where practical realities dictate property preservation and efficient management. The quote “to take things as interring into such a continuously developing situation, instead of taking them in isolation” (The Pennsylvania State University, 2001, p. 144) in the language of Dewey encapsulates the approach adopted in private schools.

The governance complexities of private schools are evident, as owners play a more prominent role in decision-making, which is in line with the governance theory discussed in the literature. Trustees and steering committees, representing an aspect of the governance theory, are tasked with preserving property integrity, a function congruent with the themes. The dual roles of SMCs within private schools, which involve both government documentation and limited developmental functions, reveal the governance intricacies characteristic of this school category. Leadership remains pivotal in managing private schools, a point well-supported by the literature review. Navigating political nuances while maintaining property integrity requires the essential qualities of effective leadership. The proactive role of head teachers in private schools, initiating SMC meetings and addressing pertinent issues within a structured timeline, signifies the significance of leadership in achieving a balance

between property management and educational objectives, consistent with the literature's emphasis on leadership within school governance.

Private ownership affords these schools greater autonomy in management, reflecting management principles extensively explored in the literature. Efficient resource utilization, a core aspect of management, becomes crucial for the success of private schools, further underlining the importance of efficient management strategies. The challenge posed by communal property management in community schools contrasts with the approach of efficiently managing private school resources, highlighting the significant role management plays in private institutions. The documentation of meeting minutes offers insights into management practices and committee efficacy, closely aligning with the management theories.

In conclusion, the educational landscape in Nepal represents a dynamic arena, where the functioning of community-owned and institutionally owned schools' SMCs function differently. The community schools underscore the importance of community ownership, shared governance, and practical outcomes, a theme reinforced in the literature review. Conversely, private schools prioritize private property stewardship, effective governance, adaptive leadership, and efficient resource management. The nuanced perspective of private school head teachers reveals how these theories manifest in practice, connecting the analysis to the literature provided in the review. This confluence of theories guides decision-making, fosters collaboration, and significantly influences the quality of education in Nepal's diverse educational settings, as depicted in the literature review. Therefore, the extensive literature provided serves as a solid foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of school governance in Nepal which is creating tensions in and to SMCs.

SMC Tensions: A Governance Perspective

In the context of community and institutional schools, various tensions arise within School Management Committees, particularly in the areas of SMC selection, corruption, SMC members' governance literacy, and politics. These tensions impact the broader governance, leadership, and management of schools.

The process of selecting SMC members, particularly in community schools, creates conflicts related to qualification, representation, and equity. An editorial published in the Kathmandu Post in August 2024 headlined 'Keep Politics Out of School' says, "The persistent politicization of Nepal's education system has hindered meaningful reform. Public schools suffer declining quality, while private institutions face criticism for prioritizing profit". Sunkuda Secondary School in Bajhang, once a top performer, has declined due to politically influenced School Management Committee appointments. Guardians questioned the legitimacy of the chairperson's election. Broader trends show falling student performance, particularly in public schools. Despite constitutional autonomy for local governments, federal interference continues, weakening efforts to enhance educational outcomes and restore public trust".

In community schools, SMC chairs are often selected from among parents, either through elections or consensus. However, this process leads to tension when members lack the necessary qualifications. P2 stated, "SMC is ok but who is there in SMC matters more," reflecting concerns about the quality and competence of selected members. The tension between leadership needs and community representation becomes apparent when less educated or unqualified individuals are selected, causing inefficiencies in school governance. In such cases, the leadership might struggle to guide the SMC effectively.

The SMC chair is usually selected from among the school's investors, minimizing community involvement and creating a symbolic rather than functional role in institutional schools. P7's reflection, "*I am chairing the SMC because of the government rule...I don't know more about my jobs,*" highlights a lack of leadership and management understanding among SMC chairs, undermining the governance structure.

The selection process in both school types leads to leadership challenges. In community schools, the lack of qualified candidates hinders decision-making, while in private institutions, the selection process often results in superficial governance roles. Effective governance requires aligning selection processes with leadership competence and community interests.

Corruption within SMCs emerges through financial mismanagement, favoritism, and misuse of funds, leading to governance crises. In some cases, SMCs engage in practices that prioritize personal or political gain over school development. P1's statement, "*Our SMC is active only in the case of budget*", suggests that members may focus more on financial matters than academic progress, reflecting potential financial corruption and misaligned priorities. Additionally, the lack of transparency in budget allocation can fuel tensions between school leadership and SMC members, weakening the management structure.

Private schools may face corruption in terms of favoritism and self-interest. P5 mentioned that SMCs are formed primarily for government documentation, leaving the actual governance to steering committees that might operate with less oversight. This opens up potential for corruption as steering committees are largely accountable only to themselves.

Corruption undermines the core principles of governance by weakening trust between school leadership and the SMC. Effective governance in both community and institutional schools requires establishing clear, transparent financial management practices to mitigate these tensions and enhance leadership integrity.

lack of governance literacy among SMC members leads to ineffective decision-making, poor leadership, and management failures. Many SMC members in community schools lack the educational background necessary to fully understand governance principles. P2 observed, “*If there are qualified and understanding people, the school develops; otherwise, it does not.*” This reflects the gap between what the governance structure needs and the members’ capabilities. Such literacy gaps create a tension where the head teachers struggle to implement effective leadership due to the SMC’s inability to contribute meaningfully.

Governance literacy in private schools may be minimal as well, particularly when SMCs are more focused on regulatory compliance rather than active engagement. P8 stated, “*SMC is for the name only,*” highlighting the disengagement and poor understanding of governance duties. Here, management issues arise when leadership is left unsupported by governance bodies.

Governance literacy is crucial for both leadership and management. Without governance education, SMC members cannot fulfill their roles effectively, leading to poor decision-making and a lack of visionary leadership. To resolve this, schools should invest in governance training for SMC members.

Politics plays a significant role in the governance of community schools and, to a lesser extent, institutional schools, creating conflicts that affect school leadership and management. Political affiliations often interfere with the functioning of SMCs in community schools. P2's comment, “*We don’t see which political party he is aligned*

to, we see school,” reveals the tension between neutral governance and political pressures. The presence of political agendas within SMCs leads to favoritism, biased decision-making, and conflicts with school leadership. P1’s observation that “*SMC formed without any political interference is better*” further reinforces this tension.

In private schools, while politics is less overt, it can still influence governance indirectly. As P9 noted, “*Sometimes we sense politics by our parents and teacher-staffs,*” showing that even in privately managed institutions, political biases can creep in, causing subtle but impactful governance challenges.

Political tensions weaken the effectiveness of governance structures by diverting attention from school development to partisan interests. Strong leadership is required to navigate these tensions and focus on inclusive management that prioritizes educational outcomes over political gains. The necessity of having an SMC in institutional (private) schools raises significant questions. The existence of dual committees—a steering committee to satisfy the company or trust office and an SMC to satisfy the education office—places an unnecessary burden on these schools. A single committee could effectively meet the needs of both. Moreover, the responsibility and accountability of the designated SMC members appear to be diminishing. As reflected in the perspective of the female SMC member (P8), their role in contributing to school development is almost non-existent.

Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the contrasting functions of School Management Committees in community and institutional schools. The analysis revealed significant differences in the structure, participation, and effectiveness of SMCs between these two types of educational institutions.

In community schools, SMCs are chaired by a parent representative and involve frequent meetings that encourage participation from a diverse population. However, issues arise concerning the qualifications and capabilities of SMC members, often questioned by teachers and head teachers. Additionally, the concept of managing public property introduces complexities, with some participants suspecting corruption within the SMC. Tensions between SMC members, head teachers, and teachers further complicate the committee's effectiveness.

In contrast, SMCs in institutional (private) schools are chaired by investors and are less participatory, with meetings held infrequently. Similar to community schools, the capability of SMC members is also questioned. There is notable dissatisfaction among SMC members due to their limited inclusion in discussions. The presence of dual committees—one to satisfy the education office and another to satisfy the company's or trust's requirements—adds to the challenges, making the SMC's role less impactful.

The analysis of SMC tensions in the areas of selection, corruption, governance literacy, and politics reveals significant challenges in the governance of both community and institutional schools. Selection Tensions create leadership challenges by placing unqualified or disengaged individuals in governance roles. Corruption undermines trust and effective financial management, straining the relationship between school leaders and SMCs. Governance Literacy gaps lead to poor decision-making and ineffective management. Political Tensions further exacerbate conflicts by introducing biased, non-educational influences into governance structures. Institutional school SMC existence needs to be analyzed.

CHAPTER VI

SMCs: Governance Through Policy and Bureaucracy

This chapter is formulated based on the central research inquiry: “What are the leadership and management responsibilities of SMCs delineated in policy documents related to school development, and what perspectives do bureaucrats hold regarding the leadership and management functions of SMCs?” Information was collected through a comprehensive review of existing policy documents and literature, interviews conducted with two education officers from Municipal Education Department and an officer from Education Development and Coordination Unit. Throughout the presentation of data, participants are identified as follows: officers of Municipal Education Department (marked as P11 and P12), and an officer from Education Development and Coordination Unit (presented as P13).

Policy Perspectives on SMCs in School Governance

In the context of educational governance, the roles and responsibilities of School Management Committee have been historically outlined in documents such as *Shiksha Istihar* 1996 v.s., which is described in the previous sections. Additionally, Education Act 1971 and Education Regulation 2002, with their subsequent amendments, further delineate the functions of SMC. These defined roles and responsibilities closely correlate with the leadership and management dimensions discussed in this section, emphasizing the crucial role of SMC in educational governance and their impact on effective leadership and management within schools.

The responsibilities outlined for School Management Committees in Nepal’s Education Act of 1971, Article 12(6) and 12(7) emphasize the importance of effective governance. Governance within the context of SMCs refers to the structures and processes that ensure schools operate transparently, allocate resources efficiently, and

remain accountable to stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and government bodies.

For community schools, governance involves the careful oversight of resource management. The duty to oversee school operations highlights the importance of resource allocation and monitoring. SMCs are expected to ensure that resources such as funding, materials, and physical infrastructure are used responsibly and effectively. Transparency in resource management is a critical governance principle, as it reassures stakeholders that public resources are not being misused or wasted. This commitment to transparency is equally evident in institutional schools, where managing physical infrastructure is a core responsibility. Proper maintenance of facilities not only ensures a conducive learning environment but also supports the long-term sustainability of the institution.

Another key aspect of governance is the regular updating of academic, physical, and financial records. This practice reflects the value placed on transparency and accountability in governance. Keeping stakeholders informed about the school's performance and resource utilization is essential for promoting trust and fostering collaborative decision-making. The requirement to submit reports to external bodies such as the Rural/Municipal Education Council and the Education Development and Coordination Unit underscores the need for compliance with external regulations. This ensures that schools operate within the legal frameworks established by the government and are subject to oversight by higher authorities.

Additionally, SMCs are responsible for facilitating annual audits conducted by independent auditors. This practice further reinforces transparency and accountability, as it provides an external assessment of the school's financial management. The requirement to act on the auditor's findings demonstrates responsiveness and a

commitment to continuous improvement. Governance in this context involves not only adhering to established regulations but also taking proactive steps to address any issues identified in the audit process.

Furthermore, the safeguarding of school assets is a critical component of governance. Both community and institutional schools are tasked with ensuring that assets are protected in accordance with legal provisions. This includes maintaining comprehensive records of all fixed and current assets, which is essential for effective resource management. Protecting these assets ensures that they continue to support the school's educational mission and that they are not subject to misuse or loss.

Management responsibilities within SMCs focus on the efficient utilization of resources and the administration of key operational processes. In community schools, SMCs are charged with managing available resources to ensure the smooth operation of the school. This includes everything from financial resources to physical infrastructure and human capital. Effective management requires careful planning and coordination to ensure that resources are allocated where they are needed most and used in a manner that maximizes their impact.

One of the primary management responsibilities is the recruitment and deployment of qualified teachers. SMCs are responsible for appointing educators who meet the statutory qualifications and possess valid teaching licenses. This reflects the importance of human resource management, which focuses on ensuring that the right individuals are hired for the right roles. By prioritizing the recruitment of qualified teachers, SMCs contribute to the overall quality of education provided to students.

Another key management function is the administration of teacher salaries and benefits. SMCs are tasked with ensuring that teachers are compensated fairly and in accordance with government standards. This responsibility highlights the importance

of financial management and the need to maintain accurate records of salary disbursements. Proper compensation management is essential for maintaining staff morale and ensuring that teachers remain motivated and committed to their roles.

Data-driven decision-making is another critical aspect of management. SMCs are required to update academic, physical, and financial statistics regularly, which supports evidence-based decision-making. By collecting and analyzing data, SMCs can identify areas where improvements are needed and develop strategies to address them. This approach ensures that decisions are informed by accurate and up-to-date information, leading to more effective management of school operations.

Additionally, the responsibility to address teacher misconduct through disciplinary measures reflects the importance of performance and behavior management. SMCs must establish clear policies and procedures for addressing instances of misconduct, ensuring that disciplinary actions are carried out fairly and consistently. This structured approach to performance management helps maintain a professional work environment and upholds the school's standards of conduct.

Leadership within SMCs is characterized by the ability to create a positive school culture, foster collaboration, and uphold ethical standards. For community schools, one of the key leadership responsibilities is to maintain a healthy academic environment free from political, religious, or communal influences. This responsibility highlights the role of ethical leadership in promoting an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Leaders within SMCs must prioritize the well-being of students and ensure that the school remains a safe and welcoming space for all.

Another important leadership responsibility is the establishment of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) to enhance academic quality. This demonstrates a commitment to stakeholder engagement, as it provides a platform for parents and

teachers to collaborate on initiatives that improve the school. Effective leadership involves fostering partnerships with various stakeholders and encouraging their active participation in the school's development.

For institutional schools, leadership also involves adhering to and executing government directives. This responsibility underscores the importance of accountability and the need for leaders to navigate complex regulations while maintaining organizational integrity. Leaders within SMCs are expected to set an example for others by demonstrating responsibility, ethical decision-making, and a commitment to upholding the school's values and mission.

The roles and responsibilities outlined in Articles 12(6) and 12(7) of the Education Act 1971 highlight the integration of governance, management, and leadership principles within SMCs. Governance ensures transparency, accountability, and compliance with legal requirements. Management focuses on efficient resource utilization and operational effectiveness. Leadership emphasizes ethical conduct, stakeholder engagement, and the creation of a positive school culture. Together, these elements contribute to the effective governance and operation of schools, ensuring that they provide high-quality education and support the holistic development of students.

Likewise, Education Regulation 2002, in its section 5(a), Article 22(a) elaborates the roles and responsibilities of Community Based Schools as "The management committee must submit an application, accompanied by a school improvement plan spanning a minimum duration of three years, in order to assume control of the school" and in Article 22(c) as "to designate the head teacher and community educators; to select educators and personnel whose salaries are sourced from the school's funds; to establish memoranda of understanding (MoU) with

individuals and governmental or non-governmental entities for the betterment of the school; and to formulate and execute the school's development plan".

In the line with governance principles, the requirement for the management committee to submit a three-year school improvement plan reflects the aspect of strategic planning. It showcases the committee's role in long-term visioning, aligning with the governance theory that emphasizes the development of strategic objectives to guide the institution. This demonstrates the committee's commitment to ensuring the school's sustainable growth and improvement over time.

The appointment of the head teacher and community educators corresponds to the management theory's concept of staffing and human resource management. Effective management necessitates the selection of qualified individuals to fill key roles within the school. Leadership also plays a role as these appointments may involve inspiring and guiding educators toward achieving the school's mission and objectives.

The point "selection of educators and personnel" further underscores the significance of sound management practices. Selecting educators and staff whose salaries are funded by the school's resources underscores the importance of resource allocation, which is a central element of management theory. It involves the prudent allocation of financial and human resources to ensure efficient school operation.

The capacity to form MoU with various stakeholder, be they individuals or organizations, demonstrates the governance aspect of external relations. Governance theory stresses the importance of collaborative partnerships and stakeholder engagement in decision-making and school development. The committee's ability to establish these agreements highlights its role in fostering community and external support for the school.

The formulation and execution of a school development plan embody both management and leadership principles. Management theory emphasizes the need for structured planning and execution of tasks to achieve organizational goals, while leadership theory pertains to inspiring and guiding the school community toward a shared vision. The committee's role in developing and implementing such plans showcases its managerial and leadership functions in steering the school's progress.

The same Education regulation, in its Section 6, Article 25 (1) describes the rights and duties of Community School Management Committee in 20 points where within the framework of governance theory, several responsibilities of the School Management Committee are evident. Firstly, the committee is tasked with conducting, overseeing, inspecting, and administering the school, aligning with the principles of efficient and effective institutional oversight. Additionally, the SMC plays a crucial role in procuring the necessary financial resources for the school's operation, reflecting its commitment to sustaining the institution financially. Moreover, safeguarding and enhancing the welfare of teachers within their service is consistent with the governance principle of accountability to stakeholders. Reporting on absenteeism and violations of departmental regulations underscores the SMC's adherence to established rules and standards. Lastly, the establishment and maintenance of a secretariat office at the school demonstrate the SMC's commitment to transparency and accountability through proper record-keeping.

From the management theory perspective, the SMC's roles become evident in functions such as selecting teachers for training programs, a task focused on human resource development and capacity building. The responsibility to report to the Education Development and Coordination Unit for the appointment of permanent teachers when government-approved positions remain vacant exemplifies the SMC's

management of staffing resources. Furthermore, managing the procurement of educational materials and selecting auditors in compliance with legal requirements aligns with core management functions involving resource allocation and financial oversight.

Leadership theory principles are also embedded in SMC's roles. The establishment of agreements requiring trained teachers to serve a minimum of three years reflects a leadership decision impacting the school's stability and development. Actively engaging the school in various government programs demonstrates a proactive leadership approach aimed at enhancing the school's performance and relevance. Motivating students, teachers, and parents to contribute to academic and overall school development showcases leadership traits that foster a positive school culture and encourage stakeholder participation. Lastly, carrying out tasks as assigned by the Education Development and Coordination Unit signifies the SMC's leadership.

Finally, Section 6, Article 26 (1) describes the rights and duties of Institutional School Management Committee in 13 points where in the realm of governance theory, the SMC of Institutional school undertakes several significant roles. Firstly, it functions as a coordinating body, collaborating with the Company Steering Committee or *Guthi (Guthiyars)* to oversee and manage school operations. This collaborative approach aligns with governance principles that emphasize inclusive decision-making and shared responsibilities. Furthermore, the SMC's duty to provide annual reports to the assembly of donors and parents underscores its commitment to transparency and accountability, key elements of effective governance. Additionally, ensuring student participation in examinations reflects the SMC's dedication to upholding academic standards and quality in line with governance goals.

From the management theory perspective, the SMC is involved in various functions. Appointing teachers and initiating the process for their permanent employment highlights its human resource management responsibilities. The establishment and management of a welfare fund for teachers and staff demonstrate the SMC's commitment to employee welfare and align with management principles that emphasize the well-being of human resources. Moreover, the allocation and utilization of funds from the welfare fund underscore its financial management capabilities, which are crucial in ensuring resource efficiency.

Leadership theory principles are also evident in the SMC's roles. Initiating disciplinary actions against teachers who violate the established code of conduct showcases its leadership in maintaining discipline and a positive school culture. Engaging the school in various government programs reflects proactive leadership, aimed at enhancing the school's participation and performance. Finally, executing duties and responsibilities delegated by the Education Development and Coordination Unit indicates the SMC's adaptability and responsiveness to external directives and leadership in implementing them effectively.

The School Management Committee of Institutional schools' roles and responsibilities encompass governance, management, and leadership functions that collectively contribute to the effective operation, transparency, and growth of the school. Its collaborative approach, focus on employee welfare, and proactive engagement align with the core principles of these theories, ensuring a well-rounded approach to school administration.

Various policy documents, in addition to the Education Act and Regulations, have outlined duties and responsibilities for School Management Committees. For instance, the Practical Exercise Implementation Directives 2073 v.s. require SMCs in

technical and vocational schools to implement practical education in consultation with trainers. Similarly, the School Improvement Plan Preparation Directives 2074 v.s. mandate SMCs to prepare, submit to the appropriate government office within two months of the session's start, and implement a school improvement plan. These directives also assign SMCs additional responsibilities, including overseeing the implementation and conducting school and classroom observations.

Furthermore, the School Scholarship Management Directive 2074 v.s. designates the SMC chairperson as the head of the scholarship management committee. The School Subsidiary Management Directive 2074 v.s. assigns SMCs three key duties: resource collection for school operations, monitoring and evaluating activities, and managing accounts with proper audits. Additionally, if a school is selected as a model school by the government, the Model School Management Directive 2074 v.s. entrusts the SMC with 11 responsibilities, ranging from appointing the principal to developing and executing a master plan for the school's development.

In summary, governance principles are reflected in transparent resource oversight, compliance with regulations, and accountability to higher authorities. Management aspects are evident in efficient resource allocation, financial management, and personnel oversight. Leadership qualities shine through the creation of a positive school culture, student and parent engagement, and disciplinary actions. Together, these roles ensure effective educational governance, sound management practices, and inspirational leadership within Nepal's education system, fostering transparency, efficiency and a conducive learning environment.

Bureaucratic Perspectives on SMCs in School Governance

School Management Committees have played a pivotal role in shaping Nepal's educational institutions, reflecting a blend of governance, leadership, and management theories. Early SMCs laid the foundation for education in Nepal, and their roles expanded, marked by multifaceted responsibilities. Leadership, managerial, and governance aspects have all contributed to SMC effectiveness. Proactive committee members showcase leadership, while management principles govern tasks like financial oversight and curriculum design. The transition to involving parents and local representatives reflects decentralized governance principles. Challenges lie in translating governance ideals into actionable strategies and addressing the relevance of SMCs in modernized educational frameworks. In essence, SMCs' historical evolution weaves governance's decentralization, leadership's influence, and management's coordination to shape Nepal's educational landscape.

In community schools, effective coordination, influenced by management and leadership theories, is crucial for performance improvement. The political dimension of coordination underscores governance's role in collective decision-making. Inclusivity and transparency highlight shared decision-making ideals. In institutional schools, private ownership's responsibilities intersect with practical strategies of governance, leadership, and management practices. This blend shapes these schools' unique roles in the educational landscape.

Policy documents outline the roles and responsibilities of SMCs, reflecting management and leadership. Governance principles encompass transparent resource oversight and compliance with regulations. Management aspects involve efficient resource allocation and financial management. Leadership qualities include creating a positive school culture, engaging students and parents, and enforcing discipline.

These roles ensure educational governance, sound management, and inspirational leadership, fostering transparency, efficiency, and a conducive learning environment in Nepal's education system.

Policy documents serve as the foundational framework for School Management Committees and encompass elements of school leadership, and management theories. These documents underscore practical decision-making, resource allocation, and efficient management. They also emphasize the critical facets of transparency, stakeholder participation, and inclusive governance, aligning seamlessly with governance and leadership theories. In the words of policies, insights are provided that shed light on the integral roles of leadership, management, and governance theories within SMCs. Policy documents stress the significance of community-based leadership, shared decision-making, and the integration of schools within their respective communities. Importantly, they recognize the challenges inherent in translating policy intentions into practice, especially in the presence of political influences. Their emphasis on capacity-building closely aligns with leadership and governance theories. Additionally, they underline the necessity of aligning committee members' abilities with their responsibilities for effective school governance, a reflection of management theories.

These perspectives underscore the importance of practicality, transparency, stakeholder participation, capacity-building, and effective policy implementation in achieving positive outcomes in educational leadership and governance, as encapsulated in Dewey's assertion that, "a person learns by merely having the qualities of things impressed upon his mind through the gateway of senses" (The Pennsylvania State University, 2001, pp. 33-34), and that "having received a store of sensory impressions, association or some power of mental synthesis is supposed to

combine them into ideas – into things with a meaning” (The Pennsylvania State University, 2001, p. 34).

Now, in connection to all these interpretation, further we interpret the versions of bureaucrats regarding leadership and management functioning of SMC in course of school governance. Three bureaucrats were interviewed, marked as P11, P12, and P13, to interpret this. Their versions are mentioned below following the interpretation.

Interpreting P11’s view with	P11’s Version
leadership theory, the Education Act and Education Regulation have vested School Management Committees with specific roles and responsibilities. Underpinning this allocation is the government’s aspiration to entrust schools to the community, reflecting a community-centric approach to leadership. The core assumption here is that schools are community assets, and community members should assume responsibility for their administration, which resonates with leadership theory emphasizing community-based decision making. By management theory the envisioned community-led approach	The Education Act and Regulation assign numerous roles and responsibilities to School Management Committees (SMCs) to ensure effective school governance, particularly following the restoration of democracy when the government aimed to entrust school management to the community. However, this vision faces two major challenges: political interference and community reluctance. Political parties often manipulate SMCs, and elected members frequently lack the necessary skills, while capable parents are hesitant to take on leadership roles. SMCs are tasked with creating annual development plans, managing resources, maintaining records, fostering a healthy academic environment, and establishing parent-teacher associations. While institutional schools are also regulated through SMCs, their private nature leads them to focus more on documentation, yet they still achieve commendable results. Despite the clear assignment of leadership roles to SMCs, a significant gap exists between policy and practice due to the insufficient qualifications and proactive involvement of SMC members. Schools where SMC members’ abilities align with their responsibilities tend to perform better, while those with mismatches struggle. To address this, policy interventions, including budget allocations for training and capacity-building of SMC members, are necessary.

also extends to the development of a localized curriculum. This emphasis on tailoring

education to local needs aligns with management theories that stress the importance of curriculum development as a strategic management component. However, challenges emerge in the form of party politics, which can disrupt the autonomous decision-making process and hinder effective management and governance.

Seeing it through governance theory, the Education Act and Regulation delegate significant leadership and management roles to SMCs, making them crucial components of school governance. These roles encompass formulating annual school development plans, ensuring seamless day-to-day operations, and fostering positive educational outcomes. This reflects governance theories that advocate for shared decision-making and distribution of responsibilities among stakeholders for effective governance.

Despite the clear assignment of leadership and management roles to SMCs in policy, there is a noticeable gap between policy intent and practical implementation. This discrepancy underscores the complexities inherent in translating governance and management theories into effective practice, emphasizing the importance of aligning policy with on-the-ground realities.

One notable challenge is the skills gap among elected or appointed SMC members, as they may lack the requisite knowledge and skills for their roles. This aligns with leadership theories emphasizing leadership development and capacity-building as crucial for enhancing leadership effectiveness. A potential solution lies in policy intervention through budget allocation for training and capacity-building, in line with governance theories promoting proactive policies to strengthen leadership and governance capabilities.

Schools that manage to align the competencies of their committee members with their respective responsibilities tend to excel, while those facing a mismatch

experience difficulty. This underscores the significance of management theories that emphasize competency-based role assignments for effective performance and governance outcomes.

P11's view highlights how leadership and management play a pivotal role in understanding the

challenges and

solutions within the

education sector,

particularly in the

context of

community-centered

leadership, effective

management, and

governance policies.

P12's view

highlights a notable

emphasis on

leadership theories,

particularly those

pertaining to

community-based

leadership and shared

decision-making. The

government's

overarching vision, as

P12's Version

The Education Act and Education Regulation have bestowed numerous roles and responsibilities upon School Management Committees. The government's overarching vision was to entrust schools to the community, with the fundamental assumption that schools are a community's asset and, consequently, community members should shoulder the mantle of their administration. The intrusion of party politics emerged as a substantial impediment. Individuals chosen or elected for SMC positions often lacked the requisite knowledge and skills needed for the effective management of schools. Simultaneously, political parties intervened and manipulated these committees. The Education Act and Regulation have delegated a plethora of pivotal roles in school leadership and management to SMCs. These roles encompass the creation of annual school development plans, ensuring the smooth day-to-day operation of schools, and ultimately yielding positive outcomes. SMCs are entrusted with the stewardship of resources, the management of human resources, meticulous record-keeping, fostering a conducive academic environment, and establishing parent-teacher associations to contribute to the school's progress. The roles and responsibilities assigned to SMCs are integral to the leadership and management functions for effective school governance. However, it's essential to note that the government also seeks to regulate institutional schools through SMCs. Nevertheless, institutional schools, owing to their status as private entities, often engage in self-regulation, with a primary focus on documentation processes. Nonetheless, they have been able to achieve commendable results. Despite the clear allocation of leadership and management roles to SMCs in policy, a critical question arises concerning the qualifications and proactiveness of the members elected or selected to these committees. This disparity between policy and practice underscores the significant role played by political parties. Elected members frequently lack the necessary knowledge and skills for their roles, while capable parents may be disinclined to assume leadership positions within SMCs.

outlined in the text, reflects these leadership principles by entrusting schools to the community. This perspective views schools as essential community assets, thereby placing the responsibility of their administration in the hands of community members. The very foundation of this vision aligns with leadership theories that underscore the significance of involving community stakeholders in shaping the direction of educational institutions. It emphasizes the idea that for effective leadership, schools should be viewed not as isolated entities but as integral components of the communities they serve.

Within the context of management theories, the challenges presented by party politics and the deficits in knowledge and skills among individuals chosen for School Management Committee roles come to the forefront. Effective management of educational institutions hinges on having individuals with the requisite competencies and abilities. The intrusion of political parties into the affairs of SMCs, as mentioned in the text, poses significant challenges to the smooth management of schools. In the realm of management, this situation underscores the need for unbiased and skilled management teams to ensure the efficient operation of educational institutions.

The delegation of pivotal roles in school leadership and management to SMCs underscores a governance approach discussed in the text. This governance approach aligns with theories advocating for the distribution of responsibilities among various stakeholders to ensure effective school governance. The text specifically mentions tasks such as creating annual school development plans and fostering a conducive academic environment, which are emblematic of governance principles aiming for the active involvement of SMCs in shaping the direction and policies of educational institutions. This reflects the notion that effective governance is not a top-down process but one that involves diverse stakeholders in decision-making.

His view draws attention to a challenge that frequently arises when implementing policies derived from leadership and management — the gap between policy intentions and practical implementation. In this context, the influence of political parties and the qualifications of SMC members point to the complexities of translating well-intentioned policies into effective on-the-ground practices. This challenge underscores the importance of aligning policy with the realities of the educational landscape.

It implies a need for capacity-building among SMC members, who may lack the necessary knowledge and skills for their roles. This capacity-building requirement resonates with leadership that underscore the importance of leadership development and training as fundamental for effective leadership. The proposed policy intervention through budget allocation for training further aligns with governance, which advocate for proactive policies aimed at enhancing the capabilities of leadership and governance structures within educational institutions.

This view underscores the critical importance of aligning the abilities of committee members with their respective responsibilities to achieve effective school performance. This alignment principle, a core tenet of management, stresses that performance excellence in governance outcomes is contingent on matching individuals' competencies with their roles within the educational context.

This expanded interpretation demonstrates how leadership and management permeate the challenges and solutions within the education sector. It underscores the paramount importance of community involvement, capacity-building, and effective policy implementation in achieving positive outcomes in education leadership and governance.

P13's view begins with an exploration of leadership theories, focusing on the assumption that schools are invaluable community assets. This perspective aligns with leadership that emphasize community-centered leadership, where community members bear responsibility for administration. It highlights the belief that leadership should be distributed among those with a vested interest in the institution, reflecting a shared leadership model.

The challenges posed by partisan politics and the lack of knowledge and competencies among

P13's Views

The assumption that schools are invaluable community assets led to the idea that their administration should be a community responsibility, fostering the development of localized curricula. However, party politics has significantly hindered this vision. Individuals selected for School Management Committee roles often lack the necessary skills for effective school management, and political entities frequently manipulate these committees for their own agendas. The Education Act and Regulation assign SMCs critical roles, including creating annual development plans, managing daily operations, overseeing resources, maintaining records, fostering academic excellence, and establishing parent-teacher associations. These responsibilities are crucial for effective school governance. Despite the government's intent to regulate institutional schools through SMCs, these private entities often engage in self-regulation, focusing primarily on documentation. Even so, they have achieved commendable results. However, a key issue remains: the gap between policy and practice. Many elected SMC members lack the necessary qualifications and proactive involvement, highlighting the influence of political parties. This discrepancy underscores the need for policy interventions to enhance the effectiveness of SMCs in fulfilling their roles.

selected or elected School Management Committee members highlight management theories. Effective management in educational institutions requires competent individuals, and the intrusion of political entities can disrupt the efficiency of management processes. This underscores the importance of having a skilled and impartial management team.

This view delves into governance practices by detailing the roles delegated to SMCs in the leadership and administration of schools. These roles include creating comprehensive school development plans, overseeing daily operations, and pursuing

positive educational outcomes. The responsibilities entrusted to SMCs reflect governance principles emphasizing the participation of multiple stakeholders in decision-making processes to ensure effective governance.

A recurring theme in the text is the gap between policy ideals and practical realities. This underscores the complexities associated with translating governance into effective practice. The interference of political entities in SMCs and the qualifications of committee members highlight the challenges of aligning policy intentions with on-the-ground implementation.

The need for capacity-building among SMC members who may lack the necessary knowledge and skills resonates with that stress leadership development and training. The proposed policy intervention through budget allocation for training aligns with governance practices advocating proactive policies to enhance leadership and governance capabilities within educational institutions.

P13's view highlights the significance of aligning committee members' abilities with their responsibilities for effective school governance. This reflects management that emphasize competency-based role assignments as essential for achieving favorable governance outcomes.

This interpretation of P13's view illustrates how leadership and management practices permeate the challenges and solutions within the education sector. It underscores the importance of community involvement, capacity-building, and effective policy implementation in achieving positive outcomes in education leadership and governance.

In summary, the perspectives provided by P11, P12, and P13 center on the integration of leadership and management practices within the context of School governance. All three perspectives underscore the significance of leadership theories,

particularly those promoting community-based leadership. They emphasize the idea that schools are invaluable community assets and that community members should actively participate in their administration. This perspective aligns with leadership that advocate for shared decision-making and distributed leadership, emphasizing that educational institutions should not operate in isolation but as integral components of the communities they serve.

The challenges stemming from party politics and the qualifications of SMC members highlight management theories. Effective management within educational institutions demands competent individuals, and the intrusion of political entities can disrupt efficient processes. These perspectives underscore the need for skilled and impartial management teams to ensure smooth operations.

The delegation of leadership and management roles to SMCs reflects governance emphasizing shared decision-making and the distribution of responsibilities among stakeholders for effective governance. The mentioned tasks, such as creating development plans and overseeing daily operations, epitomize governance principles aiming to involve diverse stakeholders in shaping educational policies. Effective governance, as articulated in these perspectives involves collaboration and participation from multiple parties.

A recurring theme across these views is the challenge of translating policy intentions into practical implementation. This discrepancy highlights the complexities involved in aligning policy objectives with the realities of the education landscape. The intrusion of political entities into SMCs and the qualifications of committee members underline the difficulties in executing well-intentioned policies effectively.

The need for capacity-building among SMC members resonates with leadership theories emphasizing leadership development and training. The proposed

policy interventions, such as budget allocation for training, align with governance theories advocating proactive policies aimed at enhancing leadership and governance capabilities within educational institutions.

The significance of aligning committee members' abilities with their responsibilities for effective school governance is emphasized in all three perspectives. This underscores the importance of management theories that highlight competency-based role assignments for achieving favorable governance outcomes.

The insights offered by government officials shed light on the significant role of leadership and management within the context of School Management Committees and school governance. Collectively, these perspectives underscore the importance of community-based leadership, where educational institutions are perceived as valuable community assets, and active community involvement in their administration is strongly advocated. This perspective aligns harmoniously with leadership theories that promote shared decision-making processes and emphasize the integration of educational institutions within the communities they serve, thereby emphasizing a collaborative or shared leadership model. Furthermore, these perspectives underscore the formidable challenges encountered in managing educational institutions, especially when individuals lack the essential knowledge and competencies required for effective management. These insights emphasize the critical nature of having competent and impartial management teams to ensure efficient and effective operational and management processes. The intrusion of political influences into educational institutions can disrupt these processes, highlighting the need for competent and impartial management.

Moreover, the delegation of leadership and management roles to School Management Committees resonates that advocate for shared decision-making and the

equitable distribution of responsibilities among diverse stakeholders for the purpose of fostering effective governance. The specific roles and responsibilities entrusted to SMCs, such as the development of strategic plans and the day-to-day oversight of school operations, exemplify the core governance principles that seek to engage a wide array of stakeholders in the formulation and execution of educational policies. A recurring theme across these perspectives revolves around the challenge of translating policy objectives into practical implementation, revealing the intricacies involved in harmonizing policy objectives with the practical realities of the educational landscape.

These challenges are compounded by the presence of political influences and the qualifications of committee members, making the alignment of policy intentions with on-ground realities a complex endeavor. The call for capacity-building programs for members of School Management Committees aligns with leadership theories that underscore the importance of leadership development and training. Additionally, these perspectives underscore the need for proactive policy measures, including budget allocation for training, which are consistent with governance theories that advocate for policies aimed at enhancing leadership and governance capabilities within educational institutions.

Finally, a recurring emphasis in these perspectives highlights the significance of aligning the competencies of committee members with their designated roles to ensure effective school governance. This alignment principle, rooted in management theories, underscores the imperative of matching individual competencies with their respective roles, thereby promoting favorable governance outcomes

Chapter Summary

The Education Act and Regulation of Nepal assign various roles to School Management Committees in both community and institutional schools. The

government of Nepal recognizes the differences in these roles, as discussed in the previous chapter, highlighting that community and institutional schools require distinct approaches to management. Despite these differences, the overarching role of SMCs remains consistent: they are responsible for leading and managing schools to ensure their development. This mandate emphasizes the importance of SMCs in driving the strategic direction and day-to-day operations of educational institutions across Nepal.

However, when the interpretation of these roles reaches educational bureaucrats, concerns about the gap between policy and practice become apparent. While SMCs are indeed given significant responsibilities for school management and leadership, the effectiveness of these committees is often hindered by the selection process and the influence of party politics. Bureaucrats question the capabilities of SMC members, noting that political interference can compromise the fair and necessary selection of committee members. This political influence ultimately prevents the full and effective implementation of the policies intended to empower SMCs to fulfill their roles in school governance.

CHAPTER VII

SMCs: Governance Roles Through Stakeholder Views

This chapter is formulated based on two central research inquiries: “How do community members and teachers perceive the leadership and management roles carried out by SMCs in the community and institutional schools, respectively?” and “What are the practical roles and actions undertaken by SMCs in the context of school development?” Quantitative data is embedded within the qualitative interviews. The sets of questionnaire, for the quantitative data, were developed from the interpretation of chapter IV to chapter VI; history of SMC, its different roles developed in community and institutional schools, and policy and bureaucrats view on their role. The theoretical base for questionnaire is governance and its leadership and management aspects described in literature review section. Information was collected through two sets of questionnaire each from parents and teachers. Close ended questions with five options from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’ numbered from 1 to 5 respectively were implemented (Please see Annex 2). The calculation of mean values and standard deviation is done on the basis of number the respondents ticked.

The quantitative data are presented on the tables. The tables are generated from the average of the responses among the population cluster calculated in SPSS. Similarly, the qualitative interviews are presented in direct quotes using participants’ identity as P1 – P12. P1 and P2 are the head teachers of community schools, P3 and P4 are the SMC members of same schools. Likewise, P5 and P6 are the head teachers of institutional schools and P7 and P8 are the SMC members of the very schools. Similarly, P11 and P12 are the educational bureaucrats of the municipal office.

Throughout our exploration, we have delved into the evolutionary journey of the School Management Committee in Nepal, examining its pivotal role in school development, and the distinct ways it operates within community and institutional (private) schools. Notably, SMC stands as the progenitor of the schooling concept in Nepal, marking its initiation in the country's educational landscape. Its enduring contribution to school development is underscored by its resilience in the face of evolving policies and documents. This steadfastness has positioned SMC as a cornerstone of educational progress.

When we venture into specific schools, it becomes evident that the level of SMC's engagement plays a significant role in shaping its impact. Furthermore, a noteworthy concern surfaces as head teachers raise apprehensions about the qualifications and effectiveness of SMC members. This underscores the importance of aligning the committee's composition with the educational needs and aspirations of school.

Comparative analysis reveals that SMCs tend to exhibit more activity and vibrancy within community schools compared to their institutional counterparts. In the community school context, the SMC stands as the sole governing entity, overseeing matters of paramount importance. In contrast, institutional schools witness an additional layer of governance in the form of a company steering committee or trust steering committee, mandated by the Company Act or Trust (*Guthi*) Act. This duality of governing structures has implications for their efficiency and effectiveness in institutional schools. The policy and bureaucrats' views further clarified that SMCs are given the role of school governance, especially leading and managing role.

Now, we pivot our exploration towards the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the operational efficacy of SMCs within educational institutions. To attain a

comprehensive understanding, a systematic sampling approach was employed. Specifically, parents and teachers (inclusive of head teachers) from 14 community schools and 12 institutional schools within the municipality were systematically chosen. From each school, a random selection of 18 parents and 8 teachers was drawn from the provided lists after multi-staged sampling. Each stratum of the population, comprising parents and teachers, received a tailored set of questionnaires. The quantitative perceptions of parents and teachers are triangulated with the qualitative interview of key stakeholders like SMC chairs, SMC members, head teachers and educational bureaucrats. This methodological approach ensures a representative insight into the perspectives of these crucial stakeholders.

In essence, this section serves as a bridge between the theoretical understanding of SMCs and the practical experiences of those directly involved in the educational ecosystem. By gauging their perceptions, we endeavor to shed light on the nuanced dynamics that shape the functioning of SMCs within schools. Through systematic analysis, we aim to unearth valuable insights that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of SMCs' role in school governance and development.

Table 2. *Demographic distribution of respondents (parents)*

Parents' Category	Sub Category	School Category	
		Community	Institutional
Gender	Male	108	101
	Female	144	115
Academic Qualification	Masters and Above		38
	Bachelor	17	84
	+2	53	52
	SLC	172	27
	Under SLC	10	15
Occupation	Agriculture	46	38
	Government Service		18
	Service in Private Organization	54	37
	Service in I/NGO		18
	Foreign Employment	47	39
	Business/Entrepreneur	35	44
	No Job	70	22
Students' Grade wise	Grade 1 - 5	85	73
	Grade 6 - 8	90	79
	Grade 9 -12	77	64

The meticulous selection process for the study involved 216 parents from institutional schools and 252 parents from community schools. The gender distribution reveals that approximately 46.8% of parents in institutional schools were male, while 42.9% of parents in community schools were male. The study encompassed 14 community schools and 12 institutional schools, selected thoughtfully using multi-staged sampling techniques. Notably, gender balance was not a primary focus during this process.

Parents' academic qualification was also considered while collecting data since it matters on what and how they said. It is noteworthy that none of the parents from community schools held master's degrees or higher, while a substantial 38.9% of parents from institutional schools possessed advanced educational backgrounds. Disparities in bachelor's degrees and 12th-grade completion were also evident, with

only 6.7% of parents in community schools having completed bachelor's degrees, compared to a significantly larger contingent of 38.9% in institutional schools. The comparison extended to parents with lower educational qualifications, revealing a substantial 39.7% of community school parents with educational backgrounds equivalent to or below the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) level, as opposed to 6.9% in institutional schools. In summary, these findings lead to the conclusion that the overall academic level of parents with children attending community schools is notably lower when compared to parents whose children are enrolled in institutional schools within the Godawari Municipality.

Next, additional insights into their occupation was also considered to add the variety in responses. It was observed that no children of government service holders were enrolled in community schools, in contrast to approximately 8.3% of parents from institutional schools holding positions in government services. The table also sheds light on the occupation of parents involved in agriculture, private organizations, foreign employment, entrepreneurship, and joblessness. Notably, community school parents exhibited slightly higher percentages in private organizations (21.4%) and joblessness (27.8%) compared to their counterparts in institutional schools (17.1% and 10.2%, respectively). However, both types of schools had similar percentages of parents engaged in agriculture, foreign employment, and entrepreneurship.

Grade-wise consistency of their children in the sampling process was also necessary to make the responses inclusive. Principals were requested to distribute questionnaires proportionately across primary, basic, and secondary levels. Institutional schools adhered to this distribution, with approximately 33.8%, 36.6%, and 29.6% at the primary, basic, and secondary levels, respectively. Similarly,

community schools exhibited comparable adherence, with 33.7%, 35.7%, and 30.6% at the primary, basic, and secondary levels, respectively.

Table 3. *Demographic distribution of respondents (teachers)*

Teachers' Category	Sub Category	School Category	
		Community	Institutional
Gender	Male	56	48
	Female	56	48
Academic Qualification	Masters and Above	28	30
	Bachelor	64	50
	+2	20	16
Service Year	0-5 years	30	27
	6-10 years	39	46
	11-15 years	31	16
	16-20 years	12	7

The data collection process was meticulous, employing a questionnaire distribution method facilitated by the respective head teachers. A crucial aspect of this process was the commitment to upholding gender parity within the sample. In both institutional and community schools, an equal distribution of 48 male and 48 female teachers in the former, and 56 teachers of each gender in the latter, resulted in a 50% representation for both males and females. This deliberate effort to maintain gender balance ensured that the research captured a well-rounded perspective on the leadership and management qualities of SMCs.

While academic qualifications were not the primary focus of the research, they were documented during the data collection process, offering additional context to the diverse backgrounds of the participating teachers. Among the 208 teachers, 58 held Master's degrees, 114 had Bachelor's degrees, and 36 completed their education at the 12th-grade level. The breakdown within institutional schools revealed that 31.2% held Master's degrees, 52% had Bachelor's degrees, and 16.7% completed education up to the 12th grade. In community schools, 25% had Master's degrees,

57.1% held Bachelor's degrees, and 17.8% completed education at the 12th-grade level.

Considering teachers' years of service is crucial when examining their perceptions of SMCs, as experience within the education system can significantly influence viewpoints. The analysis classified teachers based on their years of service. A noteworthy portion of teachers, 28.1% from institutional schools and 26.8% from community schools (comprising 27 out of 96 and 30 out of 112 teachers, respectively), had relatively brief tenures of less than 5 years within their current educational institutions. The majority of teachers, both from institutional and community schools, fell within the 6 to 10 years of service category, constituting 46 out of 96 (47.9%) from institutional schools and 39 out of 112 (34.8%) from community schools. Teachers who had dedicated 11 to 15 years of service to their respective institutions numbered 16 out of 96 (16.7%) in institutional schools and 31 out of 112 (27.7%) in community schools. In contrast, the percentage of teachers with more extended tenures, surpassing 15 years within the same institution, was relatively small. Institutional schools had only 7 teachers out of 96 (7.3%) in this category, while community schools had 12 teachers out of 112 (10.7%).

Understanding these diverse service-year profiles among teachers is essential for contextualizing their perceptions and viewpoints regarding SMCs and their roles in school governance and management. It allows for a nuanced interpretation of the data, considering the varying levels of experience that teachers bring to the study.

As the research progressed, clear differences between the SMCs of community and institutional schools were observed. Policy documents indicate that the formation processes for SMCs in these two types of schools are distinct, with differences in the prescribed members, including the chairperson. Participants also

noted differences in how these SMCs function. Despite the importance of SMCs for school development, several layers of problems have been identified, one of which is the SMC members' understanding of their own roles.

To assess SMC members' understanding of their roles, questionnaires were developed for parents and teachers, who are the primary recipients of SMCs' activities. The way SMCs function is influenced by how they perceive their own roles, so this perception can be evaluated through the perspectives of these key stakeholders. The SMCs' governance role perception was measured based on ten leadership and management attributes identified in the literature: decision-making, participation, accountability and responsibility, social responsibility, goal pursuit, relationship management, communication, effectiveness and efficiency, network management, and monitoring.

For each of the ten attributes, several statements were developed. After collecting the questionnaires, the data was tabulated and analyzed using SPSS software. The mean and standard deviation for each statement were calculated separately for community school parents, community school teachers, institutional school parents, and institutional school teachers. Following this, the average of these averages for each of the ten attributes was manually calculated.

Community School SMCs' Governance Perception

Parents are the key recipients of the decisions and activities carried out by the SMC, as their children's future is directly influenced by the SMC's actions. Therefore, parents' perceptions are crucial in evaluating the effectiveness of SMCs. The mean values calculated in the tables describe the level of satisfaction toward the performance of SMC. Higher mean value indicates higher dissatisfaction since the scale 1 starts from "strongly agree" and ends with 5 "strongly disagree". The

questionnaire was distributed as of Appendix 2 with full statements. After collecting the data, in the first phase it was tabulated along with the statement and calculated the mean value. Then, in the second phase it was summarized with the main headings of each statements with the means of means. Parents from community schools did not express satisfaction with the performance of their SMC. Table 4 clarified it.

Table 4. *Parents' perception on community school SMC's governance*

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Decision Making	252	1	5	4.46	.660
Participation	252	1	5	4.26	.666
Accountability and Responsibility	252	1	5	4.12	.682
Social Responsibility	252	2	4	3.06	.666
Goal Pursuing	252	2	5	4.25	.831
Relationship Management	252	1	5	4.12	.524
Communication	252	2	5	4.80	.543
Effectiveness and Efficiency	252	1	5	4.25	.628
Network Management	252	1	5	4.33	.591
Monitoring	252	1	5	4.52	.677

The table provides a detailed analysis of parents' perceptions of the effectiveness of School Management Committees in various leadership and management activities. Responses from 252 parents reveal significant dissatisfaction with the SMC's performance across ten key attributes. The mean scores, ranging from 1 to 5, indicate that higher values correspond to lower perceived effectiveness, with standard deviations reflecting the consistency of these perceptions.

In the area of decision-making, the mean score is 4.46 (SD = 0.660), suggesting that parents are largely dissatisfied with how decisions are made by the SMC. The relatively consistent responses highlight a shared concern that the SMC may not be making decisions that align with the community's needs or expectations. Similarly, participation attribute of SMC is rated poorly, with a mean of 4.26 (SD = 0.666), indicating that parents feel excluded or inadequately involved in the school's decision-making processes.

Accountability and responsibility, with a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.682), is another area where parents express dissatisfaction. This score suggests that parents believe the SMC is not taking sufficient ownership of its actions or decisions, leading to concerns about transparency and trust. Social responsibility, while slightly better rated with a mean of 3.06 (SD = 0.666), still reflects a significant gap between parental expectations and the SMC's performance. This could indicate that while the SMC attempts to address social issues, these efforts are perceived as insufficient or misaligned with community needs.

When it comes to goal pursuing, the mean score of 4.25 (SD = 0.831) underscores parental concerns about the SMC's ability to achieve educational objectives effectively. The variability in responses suggests that some parents may see sporadic successes, but the overall sentiment remains one of dissatisfaction.

Relationship management is similarly rated, with a mean of 4.12 (SD = 0.524), indicating that the SMC struggles to foster positive relationships within the school community, which could be detrimental to collaborative efforts and overall school morale.

Communication emerges as the most concerning area, with the highest mean score of 4.80 (SD = 0.543), pointing to severe dissatisfaction. Parents consistently feel that the SMC fails to communicate effectively, whether in terms of clarity, frequency, or transparency. This lack of communication likely exacerbates other issues, such as decision-making and accountability, further eroding trust in the SMC.

Effectiveness and efficiency, with a mean of 4.25 (SD = 0.628), also receive poor ratings, indicating that parents perceive the SMC as inefficient in managing resources and operations. The relatively consistent responses suggest that this is a widespread issue. Network management, with a mean score of 4.33 (SD = 0.591),

reflects similar dissatisfaction, particularly in how the SMC interacts with external stakeholders and the broader community. Finally, monitoring is rated with a mean of 4.52 (SD = 0.677), suggesting that parents view the SMC's oversight capabilities as severely lacking, contributing to a sense that the SMC is not ensuring accountability within the school.

The high mean scores across all attributes indicate pervasive dissatisfaction among parents with the SMC's leadership and management activities. These findings suggest that the SMC is failing to meet the community's expectations in critical areas, particularly in communication, decision-making, and monitoring, which are essential for effective school governance and the overall school development.

The Chairperson of the SMC at a community school (P3) expressed, *“Our foundation is rooted in democracy. We make decisions collectively before proceeding with any task. We make a sincere effort to involve all stakeholders in the decision-making process, although it's not always possible to satisfy everyone. Our aim is to run the school in accordance with the established rules and regulations, but I acknowledge that I may not be fully aware of all the intricacies of these rules. Ensuring quality education is primarily the responsibility of the head teacher, and we place our trust in their abilities. Our role is to support and assist them in achieving this goal.”*

P3's view underscores democratic principles in governance. Collective decision-making and involving stakeholders align with democratic governance ideals, promoting transparency and inclusivity. However, challenges in satisfying everyone highlight the complexity of governance in diverse school communities. The commitment to running the school in accordance with established rules and regulations reflects the importance of adhering to governance norms. The

Chairperson's acknowledgment of their limited knowledge of intricacies emphasizes the need for continuous governance education. Trusting the head teacher for quality education emphasizes collaborative governance, where roles are clearly defined, with the SMC playing a supporting role.

In terms of leadership, the Chairperson demonstrates leadership qualities by promoting a democratic approach to decision-making within the SMC. Their commitment to involving stakeholders reflects inclusive leadership, fostering a sense of community engagement. The Chairperson's trust in the head teacher's abilities highlights a form of distributed leadership, recognizing the head teacher as the educational leader responsible for quality education. This approach allows for a division of responsibilities while maintaining a clear leadership structure. The emphasis on supporting and assisting the head teacher underscores a collaborative leadership style, where leadership is shared to achieve common educational goals.

In the context of management, the interview emphasizes the SMC's role in collectively managing the school's operations while adhering to established rules and regulations. This approach aligns with effective management practices, ensuring compliance with educational policies. However, the acknowledgment of not fully understanding all the regulatory intricacies suggests the importance of management education for SMC members. Trusting the head teacher's expertise in ensuring quality education demonstrates a managerial decision to delegate responsibilities effectively. The SMC's role in supporting and assisting the head teacher reflects a collaborative management approach, ensuring that the school's management functions smoothly and in alignment with its goals.

The Chairperson of the SMC at the adjacent community school (P4) stated, *"We actively collaborate with the head teacher and the teaching staff on various*

initiatives aimed at enhancing educational quality. It's important to note that we may not be well-versed in every aspect. I have additional professional commitments, so the head teacher plays a crucial role providing guidance to us. Through our joint efforts and coordination with the head teacher, we are striving to oversee and administer the school in alignment with the established rules and regulations."

The words of P4 reflects a collaborative approach to governance. Active collaboration with the head teacher and teaching staff in enhancing educational quality aligns with good governance principles, emphasizing the importance of collective efforts. The Chairperson's acknowledgment of not being well-versed in every aspect signifies transparency in governance, recognizing areas of expertise and limitations. This collaborative governance approach ensures that decisions are well-informed and inclusive. Aligning school oversight and administration with established rules and regulations demonstrates a commitment to governance compliance and policy adherence within the SMC's governance framework.

In terms of leadership, the Chairperson demonstrates leadership qualities by actively collaborating with the head teacher and teaching staff. This collaborative leadership approach promotes shared decision-making and fosters a sense of collective ownership in enhancing educational quality. The acknowledgment of personal commitments and reliance on the head teacher for guidance reflects a form of distributed leadership, where leadership responsibilities are shared based on expertise and availability. Through joint efforts and coordination, the Chairperson exemplifies leadership in facilitating a cohesive and well-coordinated team focused on aligning the school's activities with established rules and regulations.

Regarding management, the interview highlights a collaborative management approach within the School Management Committee. Active collaboration with the

head teacher and teaching staff emphasizes the importance of teamwork in managing the school's operations. The Chairperson's acknowledgment of not being well-versed in every aspect underscores the importance of management education for SMC members. Relying on the head teacher for guidance demonstrates effective management delegation, recognizing expertise within the team. The joint efforts and coordination mentioned represent an approach to school management that ensures efficient operation and adherence to established rules and regulations, reflecting good management practices within the SMC.

The data from 252 parents indicates widespread dissatisfaction with the School Management Committees across several key areas. High mean scores in decision-making (4.46), participation (4.26), accountability (4.12), and communication (4.80) reflect a consistent concern that SMCs are failing to meet community expectations. The poor performance in communication, in particular, is seen as exacerbating issues in other areas, such as decision-making and accountability, leading to a general lack of trust and transparency.

The qualitative feedback from SMC Chairpersons (P3 and P4) highlights a commitment to democratic principles and collaboration. P3 emphasizes collective decision-making and support for the head teacher, demonstrating an inclusive and collaborative leadership style. P4 also underscores collaboration with the head teacher and teaching staff, recognizing their expertise while acknowledging personal limitations.

Despite these efforts, the dissatisfaction expressed by parents suggests that the practical execution of these democratic and collaborative ideals may be falling short. The SMCs' challenges in communication and effective management, as noted in the quantitative data, contrast with the Chairpersons' intentions and highlight a need for

better alignment between governance practices and community expectations. This gap suggests that while the SMCs aim to adhere to democratic and collaborative principles, their execution may require refinement to enhance overall effectiveness and address the areas of concern identified by parents.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings in this study presents a complex yet insightful picture of the effectiveness of SMCs. Quantitative data gathered from 252 parents reveal strong dissatisfaction across core leadership and management attributes, particularly in communication ($M = 4.80$), decision-making ($M = 4.46$), and accountability ($M = 4.12$), indicating significant perceived shortcomings. In contrast, qualitative interviews with SMC Chairpersons (P3 and P4) depict a different narrative, one of democratic intentions, collaborative practices, and trust in head teachers to lead educational efforts. This contrast, rather than weakening the findings, strengthens the integration by uncovering a critical gap between perceived performance and stated intent. The qualitative data suggest that while governance ideals exist at the leadership level, their implementation may be inconsistent or poorly communicated to stakeholders. Thus, the mixed-methods integration is both valid and valuable, as it not only confirms the dissatisfaction reported by parents but also contextualizes it within the governance practices articulated by SMC leaders. This triangulated approach allows for a deeper understanding of where disconnections occur and where interventions, particularly in communication and stakeholder inclusion, can be targeted for improvement.

Similarly, the next table (table 5) describes the teachers' perception of SMCs' activities in community schools which also indicated the dissatisfaction.

Table 5. *Teachers' Perception on community school SMC's governance*

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Decision Making	112	2	5	4.65	.725
Participation	112	1	5	4.28	.634
Accountability and Responsibility	112	2	5	4.11	.601
Social Responsibility	112	2	4	3.98	.723
Goal Pursuing	112	1	5	4.71	.587
Relationship Management	112	1	5	4.94	.475
Communication	112	2	5	4.45	.543
Effectiveness and Efficiency	112	1	5	4.67	.635
Network Management	112	2	5	4.19	.692
Monitoring	112	1	5	4.27	.544

The table provides insights into teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of School Management Committees across ten key attributes related to leadership and management activities. The responses from 112 teachers suggest significant dissatisfaction with the SMC's performance, as reflected in the mean scores, where higher values correspond to lower perceived effectiveness. The standard deviations provide an understanding of the consistency of these perceptions.

In terms of decision-making, the mean score is 4.65 (SD = 0.725), indicating that teachers are highly dissatisfied with how decisions are made by the SMC. The relatively high standard deviation suggests some variability in opinions, though the overall sentiment is negative. Participation is rated with a mean of 4.28 (SD = 0.634), showing that teachers feel excluded from the decision-making processes within the school. This exclusion could contribute to a lack of engagement and motivation among the teaching staff.

Accountability and responsibility are also perceived poorly, with a mean score of 4.11 (SD = 0.601). Teachers appear to believe that the SMC does not take adequate responsibility for its actions, which could lead to a lack of transparency and trust within the school. Social responsibility, with a mean of 3.98 (SD = 0.723), while slightly better rated, still reflects dissatisfaction. This suggests that teachers feel the

SMC is not adequately addressing its social responsibilities, which may impact the school's relationship with the broader community.

Goal pursuing, with a mean score of 4.71 (SD = 0.587), is another area of concern for teachers, who perceive the SMC as ineffective in achieving educational objectives. This score highlights a significant gap between the SMC's intentions and its actual performance. Relationship management, with the highest mean score of 4.94 (SD = 0.475), indicates severe dissatisfaction, suggesting that the SMC is failing to foster positive relationships within the school, which could have serious implications for staff morale and collaboration.

Communication is another critical area, with a mean of 4.45 (SD = 0.543), reflecting teachers' perceptions that the SMC's communication is poor in terms of clarity, frequency, or transparency. This lack of effective communication likely exacerbates other issues, such as decision-making and relationship management, further eroding trust in the SMC. Effectiveness and efficiency, with a mean score of 4.67 (SD = 0.635), is similarly rated poorly, indicating that teachers view the SMC as inefficient in managing school resources and operations.

Network management is rated with a mean of 4.19 (SD = 0.692), reflecting dissatisfaction with how the SMC manages external relationships and interactions. The variability in responses suggests that some teachers may have different experiences with this aspect of the SMC's work. Finally, monitoring, with a mean of 4.27 (SD = 0.544), suggests that teachers believe the SMC is not effectively overseeing school activities and ensuring accountability, which could have negative implications for school governance and overall performance.

The high mean scores across all attributes indicate a pervasive dissatisfaction among teachers with the SMC's leadership and management activities. These findings

suggest that the SMC is failing to meet the expectations of the teaching staff, particularly in areas such as relationship management, decision-making, and effectiveness, which are crucial for fostering a positive and productive school environment.

Now, in connection, we interpret the views of participants regarding everyday practice of SMCs. The head teacher of a community school (P1), in response to the interview, mentioned, *“There is distinction between theory and practice. The Chairperson of the School Management Committee may not have a full understanding of the school’s operational aspects. For what I know, I make efforts to encourage them to align with the Education Act and Regulations. However, in certain instances, they insist on making decisions independently. For example, there was a case where a teacher was hired without completing the proper procedure (please keep this confidential), and an unnecessary building was constructed (pointing toward an 8-room building). Concerning participation, the SMC does invite all stakeholders to meetings, but only a few actively engage. When it comes to academic matters and overall functioning of the school, they require guidance.”*

The interview with P1 reveals a gap between theoretical governance principles and practical implementation. It highlights the importance of SMC in the governance structure but also exposes challenges. The SMC’s limited understanding of the school’s operational aspects illustrates the need for improved governance literacy and training among committee members. Additionally, the instances of independent decision-making and procedural irregularities suggest potential governance issues. The disclosure of a teacher appointment made without proper procedures further emphasizes the need for transparency and adherence to governance regulations within the school system.

In terms of leadership the interview reflects the head teacher's role as a leader who attempts to bridge the gap between theory and practice in school management. The head teacher demonstrates leadership by taking the initiative to encourage alignment with the Education Act and Regulations, showing a commitment to upholding educational standards. The acknowledgment of the SMC's limited understanding and the need for guidance in academic and school functioning underscores the head teacher's leadership in providing direction and expertise. However, challenges in asserting leadership are evident, as some decisions are made independently, emphasizing the importance of effective leadership within the SMC itself.

Regarding management, the interview highlights the practical challenges of managing the school's operations effectively. The head teacher's efforts to navigate discrepancies between theory and practice underscore the need for efficient management practices within the SMC. The case of an unauthorized teacher appointment and an unnecessary building construction reveals lapses in administrative control and the importance of adhering to proper management protocols. Moreover, the management of stakeholder engagement emerges as a concern, with limited participation despite invitations. To improve management, there is a clear requirement for better coordination, adherence to regulations, and the development of robust administrative processes within the SMC to ensure the school's smooth operation.

The head teacher of the neighboring community school (P2) mentioned, *"Our SMC is present on the school premises every day, observing and attempting to provide feedback. However, their comprehension may not meet the desired standards. When making decisions, we strive to involve as many stakeholders as possible. The meetings and active participation of stakeholders are commendable. Nonetheless, as*

the head teacher, I find it challenging to educate them about the Education Act, Regulations, and the frequent circulars issued by the Education Offices (with a smile)."

In terms of governance, P2' view reveals a proactive SMC that is present daily, embodying active governance involvement. However, there's a gap between their presence and effective governance due to their limited comprehension. This highlights the significance of governance literacy and training for SMC members to meet desired standards. The emphasis on stakeholder involvement and participation aligns with good governance principles, promoting transparency and inclusivity in decision-making. The head teacher's challenge in educating the SMC about relevant regulations suggests the importance of continuous governance education for effective school leadership.

In the realm of leadership, the head teacher exhibits leadership qualities by acknowledging the SMC's active presence and attempts to provide feedback. The involvement of stakeholders in decision-making reflects collaborative and inclusive leadership, promoting a sense of ownership within the school community. However, the challenge in educating the SMC about education laws and regulations suggests a need for assertive leadership in terms of guiding and empowering committee members. The head teacher's willingness to address this challenge with a smile demonstrates leadership resilience in navigating obstacles.

Regarding school management, the interview underscores the SMC's consistent presence and their role in observing and providing feedback on school operations. However, their limited comprehension raises concern about effective management practices within the committee. The commitment to involving stakeholders in decision-making aligns with participatory management principles,

fostering a sense of community involvement. The head teacher's challenge in educating the SMC about Education Act, Regulations, and circulars from Education Offices highlights a management gap that needs addressing. Effective management involves not only operational efficiency but also ensuring that the SMC is well-informed and capable of making informed decisions in line with educational policies.

The quantitative data reflects a widespread dissatisfaction among teachers regarding the effectiveness of School Management Committees across several key attributes. With high mean scores across decision-making, participation, and accountability, teachers perceive the SMCs as ineffective in critical areas. Specifically, decision-making (mean = 4.65) and participation (mean = 4.28) scores indicate that teachers feel excluded from decision processes and that the SMC lacks effectiveness in making decisions. This is supported by qualitative insights from interviews, which reveal practical governance issues. The head teacher of one community school (P1) highlighted a disconnect between theoretical expectations and practical realities, including procedural irregularities such as unauthorized teacher appointments and unnecessary constructions. This illustrates the gap in the SMC's understanding and adherence to governance principles.

Similarly, the other head teacher (P2) noted that although the SMC is present daily and strives to involve stakeholders, their limited comprehension hampers effective governance. The consistent high mean scores across attributes like goal-pursuing (mean = 4.71) and relationship management (mean = 4.94) suggest that the SMC struggles with achieving educational goals and maintaining positive relationships within the school. These findings underscore the need for improved governance literacy and training for SMC members. Both quantitative and qualitative

data point to a need for better alignment between SMC practices and regulatory standards to enhance overall school management and effectiveness.

The convergence of quantitative and qualitative findings presents a nuanced understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding SMCs. Quantitative results indicate widespread dissatisfaction among teachers, particularly in areas such as relationship management ($M = 4.94$), goal pursuit ($M = 4.71$), and decision-making ($M = 4.65$), reflecting concerns over the SMCs' capacity to fulfill leadership and management functions effectively. However, qualitative interviews introduce a more complex picture. Head teachers (P1 and P2) acknowledged the presence and engagement of SMC members in school activities, and described efforts to involve stakeholders and uphold governance norms. Yet, both head teachers also noted a gap between policy expectations and practical understanding among SMC members, highlighting a disconnect not of intent, but of capacity. While teachers' dissatisfaction may stem from visible shortcomings in implementation, qualitative accounts reveal that some SMCs are actively engaged and willing to contribute, albeit hindered by limited governance literacy and procedural awareness. Taken together, the data suggest that the dissatisfaction expressed in surveys may be rooted less in resistance and more in capability gaps, pointing toward a need for targeted training and capacity-building initiatives rather than a complete overhaul of SMC structures. This integrated perspective emphasizes both the urgency of reform and the potential for improvement through strategic support.

Institutional School SMCs' Governance Perception

The same set of questionnaire were distributed to the parents of institutional school. They also are not satisfied with the performance of their child's school SMC. Even some of the parents do not know there is SMC in their child's school. The table

below describes how the parents of institutional school are perceiving the activities of their child's school SMC. The mean values calculated in the tables describe the level of satisfaction toward the performance of SMC. Higher mean value indicates higher dissatisfaction since the scale 1 starts from "strongly agree" and ends with 5 "strongly disagree". The questionnaire was distributed as of Appendix 2 with full statements.

Table 6. *Parents' perception on institutional school SMC's governance*

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Decision Making	216	1	5	4.33	.657
Participation	216	2	5	4.43	.634
Accountability and Responsibility	216	1	5	4.65	.621
Social Responsibility	216	2	5	4.98	.543
Goal Pursuing	216	2	5	4.72	.537
Relationship Management	216	1	5	4.94	.476
Communication	216	2	5	4.53	.587
Effectiveness and Efficiency	216	1	5	4.21	.628
Network Management	216	2	5	4.32	.654
Monitoring	216	1	5	4.28	.539

The table presents the analysis of parents' perceptions of School Management Committees across various leadership and management attributes. Responses from 216 parents indicate an overall dissatisfaction with the SMC's performance. The mean scores, ranging from 1 to 5, highlight areas where parents feel the SMC is not meeting their expectations, with higher values reflecting lower perceived effectiveness. The standard deviations offer insight into the consistency of these perceptions among respondents.

For decision-making, the mean score is 4.33 (SD = 0.657), suggesting that parents are generally dissatisfied with the SMC's decision-making processes. The standard deviation indicates a moderate level of agreement among parents regarding this dissatisfaction. Participation is slightly better rated, with a mean of 4.43 (SD = 0.634), but still reflects a sense of exclusion among parents from school decision-making processes.

Accountability and responsibility receive a mean score of 4.65 (SD = 0.621), indicating significant concerns about the SMC's ability to be accountable and responsible for its actions. This suggests that parents feel the SMC is not fulfilling its responsibilities effectively. Social responsibility, with a mean score of 4.98 (SD = 0.543), is perceived slightly better, though it still reflects a level of dissatisfaction with the SMC's efforts to address social issues within the school community.

Goal pursuing is rated with a mean of 4.72 (SD = 0.537), indicating that parents believe the SMC is not effectively achieving its educational goals. This score highlights a gap between the SMC's goals and its performance. Relationship management, with a mean of 4.94 (SD = 0.476), shows considerable dissatisfaction, suggesting that the SMC struggles to build and maintain positive relationships within the school community.

Communication, with a mean score of 4.53 (SD = 0.587), reflects parents' perceptions of inadequate communication from the SMC, which could contribute to the dissatisfaction seen in other areas. Effectiveness and efficiency, with a mean of 4.21 (SD = 0.628), point to concerns about the SMC's overall management and resource utilization. Network management is rated with a mean of 4.32 (SD = 0.654), indicating dissatisfaction with how the SMC manages its external relationships and interactions.

Finally, monitoring is rated with a mean score of 4.28 (SD = 0.539), suggesting that parents feel the SMC is not effectively overseeing school activities or ensuring accountability. This dissatisfaction with monitoring practices further contributes to concerns about the SMC's governance.

The high mean scores across all attributes indicate a general dissatisfaction among parents with the SMC's leadership and management. The findings suggest that

the SMC is perceived as failing to meet expectations in critical areas such as decision-making, accountability, and communication, which are crucial for effective school governance and positive outcomes.

The chairperson of the SMC at an institutional school (P7) mentioned, *“We are aware of the circumstances. I assumed the position of SMC chair because there were no other volunteers, and I was requested to take on this role. In practice, our head teacher handles the majority of responsibilities. Our main duty involves signing meeting minutes and other documents related to the school’s development.”*

P7’s view reveals a governance structure that may face challenges related to participation and active engagement. The Chairperson’s acceptance of the role due to a lack of other volunteers highlights potential limitations in the governance structure’s effectiveness. While awareness of the situation is noted, the concentration of responsibilities in the head teacher’s hands indicates a potential gap in distributed governance. The primary role of signing meeting minutes and documents suggests a limited role in the governance process, raising questions about the SMC’s active participation and decision-making within the institution.

In terms of leadership, the Chairperson appears to have assumed the role out of necessity, indicating a form of reluctant leadership. The lack of volunteers and a request to take on the position suggest challenges in leadership engagement. The head teacher’s handling of the majority of responsibilities places a considerable leadership burden on them, potentially overshadowing the Chairperson’s leadership influence. The Chairperson’s primary duty of signing documents indicates a limited leadership role within the SMC, raising concerns about the depth of their leadership impact on the institution.

Regarding management, the interview highlights a potential imbalance in responsibilities and management practices. The Chairperson's assumption of the role due to a lack of volunteers suggests a management gap in the institution. With the head teacher handling the majority of responsibilities, there may be concerns about an effective management structure and delegation of duties. The Chairperson's primary duty of signing documents reflects a limited management role within the SMC. This arrangement may necessitate a review of the institution's management practices to ensure a more balanced distribution of responsibilities and effective governance.

A member of the SMC at the next institutional school (P8) expressed, *"I never get information of meeting agendas. I receive invitations to attend meetings, and when I do, I simply listen and sign documents. I've repeatedly stated my intention not to continue in this position. It appears that the SMC in my school exists more as a symbolic title rather than an actively functioning body."*

The interview with P8 highlights significant governance challenges. The SMC member's lack of information regarding meeting agendas suggests a lack of transparency and communication within the governance structure. The passive role of simply attending meetings and signing documents reflects a governance structure that may not actively engage in decision-making or policy formulation. The member's expressed intention to step down indicates governance dissatisfaction and potential leadership gaps. The characterization of the SMC as a symbolic title rather than an actively functioning body underscores concerns about its effectiveness in school governance.

The interview underscores significant management challenges within the institutional school's governance structure. The member's lack of information regarding meeting agendas suggests a lack of effective management communication.

The passive role of attending meetings and signing documents indicates potential management gaps in overseeing the school's operations. The member's intention to step down reflects management dissatisfaction or ineffectiveness. The characterization of the SMC as a symbolic title rather than an actively functioning body raises concerns about the overall management structure's efficacy and its ability to oversee and administer the school's affairs effectively.

The analysis of parents' perceptions and qualitative insights reveals widespread dissatisfaction with the School Management Committees across various attributes of leadership and management. With mean scores across all attributes indicating significant discontent, parents perceive the SMCs as ineffective, particularly in areas such as decision-making (4.33), participation (4.43), and accountability (4.65). The high mean scores reflect a consistent dissatisfaction with the SMC's ability to meet expectations and fulfill its responsibilities.

Qualitative data from SMC Chairperson (P7) and SMC member (P8) provide context to these quantitative findings. P7's account reveals a governance structure where the Chairperson's role is largely ceremonial, with the head teacher shouldering most responsibilities. This limited engagement suggests a gap in active leadership and decision-making, which likely contributes to the dissatisfaction observed. P8's experience highlights issues with transparency and effective communication within the SMC. The lack of information about meeting agendas and a passive role in meetings underscore a broader issue of ineffective governance and leadership.

Overall, the quantitative data underscores concerns about the SMC's performance in critical areas such as communication, accountability, and effectiveness. The qualitative feedback supports these concerns by illustrating a governance structure that may lack active engagement and transparency, further

impacting the SMC's effectiveness in school governance. The combination of these insights suggests a need for a more engaged and accountable SMC to address the significant gaps identified by parents and improve overall governance practices.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings offers a layered understanding of parents' perceptions of SMCs. Quantitatively, the data reveals widespread dissatisfaction across leadership and management attributes, with high mean scores in decision-making ($M = 4.33$), participation ($M = 4.43$), and accountability ($M = 4.65$), indicating a belief that SMCs are underperforming in crucial governance areas. However, qualitative interviews with SMC members (P7 and P8) shed light on structural and contextual limitations contributing to these perceptions. Rather than deliberate negligence, the responses point to systemic issues such as a lack of clarity in roles, insufficient communication, and passive involvement. For instance, P7's acceptance of the chairperson role due to a lack of volunteers and reliance on the head teacher suggests limited governance capacity rather than outright failure. Similarly, P8's account of uninformed participation in meetings indicates a governance model lacking in transparency and engagement. These insights suggest that while dissatisfaction is prevalent, it stems from governance inertia and symbolic participation rather than intentional exclusion or inefficiency. The findings point to an urgent need for capacity building, orientation on governance roles, and mechanisms to foster participatory leadership. Therefore, despite the overwhelmingly negative quantitative evaluations, the qualitative data reveals space for improvement if SMC structures are re-energized through strategic intervention, training, and systemic reform.

Now, the next table explains about teachers' perception of institutional schools SMC performance. The same set of questionnaire which was provided to the teachers of community schools were provided to them.

Table 7. *Teachers' perception on institutional school SMC's governance*

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Decision Making	96	2	5	4.11	.623
Participation	96	1	5	4.64	.641
Accountability and Responsibility	96	2	5	4.32	.678
Social Responsibility	96	1	4	3.29	.691
Goal Pursuing	96	2	5	4.38	.744
Relationship Management	96	1	5	4.47	.541
Communication	96	1	5	4.53	.539
Effectiveness and Efficiency	96	2	5	4.25	.637
Network Management	96	1	5	4.17	.519
Monitoring	96	1	5	4.41	.663

The table outlines teachers' perceptions of School Management Committees in institutional (private) schools, covering various aspects of governance. Responses from 96 teachers indicate their levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the SMC's performance across several key attributes. The mean scores, ranging from 1 to 5, provide an overview of how teachers perceive the effectiveness of the SMC, with higher values reflecting lower effectiveness. The standard deviations offer insight into the variability of these perceptions among respondents.

In decision-making, the mean score is 4.11 (SD = 0.623), indicating that teachers are dissatisfied with the SMC's decision-making processes. The relatively high standard deviation suggests variability in opinions, but overall dissatisfaction is clear. Participation is rated with a mean of 4.64 (SD = 0.641), reflecting a strong sentiment among teachers that they are excluded from meaningful participation in the SMC's activities and decisions.

Accountability and responsibility have a mean score of 4.32 (SD = 0.678), suggesting that teachers perceive the SMC as lacking in taking responsibility for its

actions and decisions. Social responsibility, with a mean of 3.29 (SD = 0.691), is notably lower, indicating significant dissatisfaction with how the SMC addresses social issues and fulfills its broader societal obligations.

Goal pursuing is rated with a mean of 4.38 (SD = 0.744), showing that teachers feel the SMC is not effectively achieving its educational goals. Relationship management receives a mean score of 4.47 (SD = 0.541), suggesting that while there is some concern, it is relatively less severe compared to other areas. Communication, with a mean of 4.53 (SD = 0.539), indicates that teachers perceive the SMC's communication efforts as inadequate, impacting the transparency and clarity of interactions.

Effectiveness and efficiency, with a mean score of 4.25 (SD = 0.637), reflect dissatisfaction with how well the SMC manages resources and operations. Network management is rated with a mean of 4.17 (SD = 0.519), showing that teachers have concerns about the SMC's ability to handle external relationships and networks effectively. Finally, monitoring, with a mean of 4.41 (SD = 0.663), suggests that teachers believe the SMC is not adequately overseeing school activities or ensuring accountability.

The high mean scores across all attributes reflect a general dissatisfaction among teachers with the governance of institutional school SMCs. Teachers perceive the SMC as falling short in crucial areas such as decision-making, accountability, and social responsibility. These perceptions highlight significant areas where the SMC may need to improve its practices to better meet the needs and expectations of the teaching staff.

The head teacher of an institutional school operating under a trust (P5) commented, *“Our SMC lacks the expertise in leadership and school management, and*

they are aware of this limitation. They place complete trust in us, the head teacher and the teaching staff. They maintain positive relations with us, and because they only attend meetings two or three times a year, they don't necessarily require in-depth policy knowledge. To be candid, they function more as a symbolic entry for our school, as the school board (a committee responsible for running the trust) takes on the majority of responsibilities”.

The interview with P5 highlights a governance structure where the School Management Committee acknowledges its limitations in leadership and school management expertise. Their awareness of these limitations reflects transparency in governance, as recognizing weaknesses is essential for effective decision-making. The SMC's trust in the head teacher and teaching staff aligns with a delegated governance approach, where decision-making authority is entrusted to those with expertise. The limited attendance at meetings and the lack of in-depth policy knowledge may suggest that the SMC functions more symbolically, potentially affecting the school's governance efficiency and decision-making process.

In terms of leadership, the head teacher plays a significant leadership role by being the trusted authority in the school. The SMC's acknowledgment of their limited expertise and their trust in the head teacher and teaching staff highlight a form of distributed leadership, where leadership responsibilities are assigned based on expertise. This approach allows the head teacher to assume a leadership role in areas where they have knowledge and experience. However, the limited involvement of the SMC in day-to-day affairs may affect the depth of their leadership influence, making the head teacher the primary leader within the institution.

Regarding management, the interview underscores a delegation of management responsibilities within the school. The SMC's limited expertise in

leadership and school management suggests the need for training and development in these areas. Their infrequent meeting attendance and lack of in-depth policy knowledge may indicate a potential gap in the school's management practices. The head teacher assumes a significant role in managing the school's operations. While this delegation can enhance efficiency, it also raises concerns about the overall management structure's effectiveness, as the SMC may not be fully engaged in overseeing the institution's management processes. The school board's involvement in major responsibilities highlights a clear division of management responsibilities.

The head teacher of an institutional school operated by a company (P6) explained, *“As a private school, all the investors are actively engaged in the school's development. Some of us have undergone training and stay updated with the Education Act, Regulations, and other educational policies. The Chairperson of the SMC is chosen from among the investors, and the other members are selected by the chair in accordance with the Education Regulations. The SMC convenes only twice a year, primarily for governmental documentation purposes, and that constitutes the extent of their involvement”*.

P6's description provides insights into the governance structure of a privately-operated institutional school. The active involvement of investors in school development aligns with a participatory governance model often seen in private institutions. The presence of trained individuals staying updated with educational policies demonstrates a commitment to effective governance. The selection of the SMC Chairperson from among investors and adherence to Education Regulations indicate a clear governance structure. However, the infrequent SMC meetings, convened mainly for documentation, suggest limited participation in decision-making.

This raises questions about the depth of governance engagement and the extent to which stakeholders actively influence school affairs.

In terms of leadership, the description highlights the role of investors in school governance. The active engagement of investors in school development points to a form of distributed leadership, where authority is shared among those financially invested in the institution. The presence of trained individuals staying updated with educational policies suggests leadership competence among some stakeholders. However, the selection of the SMC Chairperson from investors and the limited extent of SMC involvement in biannual meetings may indicate a concentrated leadership influence, potentially limiting broader stakeholder engagement in decision-making.

Regarding management, the description of P6 indicates a governance structure with investors actively participating in school affairs. The presence of trained individuals who stay updated with educational policies reflects a commitment to effective management practices. The selection of the SMC Chairperson from among investors and adherence to Education Regulations suggests a well-defined management framework. However, the infrequent SMC meetings, primarily focused on governmental documentation, may imply limited day-to-day management involvement. This raises questions about the extent to which the SMC actively oversees and manages the school's operations and suggests potential gaps in the institution's overall management structure.

Teachers' perceptions of School Management Committees in institutional (private) schools reveal significant dissatisfaction, particularly in decision-making, participation, and communication. The data shows high mean scores across attributes, indicating widespread concern about the effectiveness of the SMCs. Specifically, teachers rated decision-making at 4.11, participation at 4.64, and communication at

4.53, highlighting dissatisfaction with how decisions are made and how involved teachers feel in the process. The lower score for social responsibility (3.29) further suggests that the SMC is failing to address broader societal issues effectively.

Qualitative insights from two head teachers (P5 and P6) offer context to these quantitative findings. P5 points out that the SMC often functions symbolically, with the head teacher and teaching staff handling most responsibilities. This limited involvement and lack of policy knowledge among SMC members might contribute to the high dissatisfaction scores. P6 describes a governance structure where investors, who are actively engaged and well-informed, choose the SMC Chairperson and meet infrequently. This structure supports effective governance at a high level but may lack depth in day-to-day management and decision-making, leading to similar concerns about limited SMC engagement.

The analysis of teachers' perceptions regarding SMCs in institutional schools reveals widespread dissatisfaction across key governance attributes, particularly in participation ($M = 4.64$), communication ($M = 4.53$), and goal pursuing ($M = 4.38$). Teachers feel excluded from meaningful decision-making ($M = 4.11$) and perceive limited effectiveness in the SMC's roles, with concerns about accountability, monitoring, and broader social responsibility. However, qualitative data from head teachers (P5 and P6) provides critical context that helps explain these perceptions. At P5's school, the SMC acknowledges its lack of leadership and management expertise and functions more symbolically, entrusting day-to-day responsibilities to the head teacher and staff. This reflects a delegated governance model, which, while efficient in practice, may marginalize broader stakeholder engagement and contribute to teacher dissatisfaction. Similarly, in P6's institution, the SMC is formed by investors and exists primarily to fulfill regulatory requirements. Though some members are

trained and policy-aware, their limited engagement, meeting only twice annually, creates a superficial governance presence that teachers may perceive as ineffective. Together, these findings suggest that the SMCs, though formally established, often serve ceremonial or compliance-driven roles, lacking the participatory depth needed to foster inclusive, transparent, and accountable school governance. Addressing this gap requires structural reforms that enhance stakeholder involvement, clarify governance roles, and empower SMCs with the capacity to engage meaningfully in school management processes.

Overall, while the qualitative data illustrates some effective governance practices, it also reveals gaps between the SMC's strategic intentions and their practical influence. These gaps likely contribute to the teachers' dissatisfaction, particularly concerning decision-making and participation. The limited involvement of SMCs in daily operations and their infrequent meetings further suggest a need for enhanced engagement and a reevaluation of their roles in school governance to better align with the expectations and needs of the teaching staff.

Stakeholder Perceptions of SMC Performance and Functioning

The assessment focused on various aspects, including decision-making quality, participatory approach, responsibility, accountability, leadership quality, communication quality, effectiveness, efficiency, relationship management, and network management within the SMCs in their respective schools. These insights, grounded in parents' and teachers' experiences, can be interpreted through the lenses of school governance, leadership, and management theory, shedding light on the multifaceted dynamics of SMCs. In this regard, the educational bureaucrats also expressed their views.

A high ranked official of the Education Department of the Municipality (P11) noted, *“In numerous schools, the SMCs do not operate in strict accordance with the established rules and regulations. Nevertheless, the situation has improved compared to a decade ago. SMCs often struggle to fulfill their duties due to socio-political pressures they face. In some instances, they encounter pressure from their families and the broader society, while in others, their political affiliations may exert influence. Another significant issue in practice is conflicts between the head teacher and other SMC members, although such conflicts are rare in the case of institutional schools.”*

P11’s observation highlights governance challenges within schools. The discrepancy between SMCs and established rules and regulations suggests governance non-compliance in some institutions. However, the noted improvement over a decade suggests progress in addressing governance issues. Socio-political pressures faced by SMCs indicate external influences on school governance, potentially impacting decision-making and autonomy. Conflicts between the head teacher and SMC members emphasize internal governance challenges. The rarity of such conflicts in institutional schools suggests a potential difference in governance dynamics. Overall, the analysis underscores the complexities and multifaceted nature of governance issues within educational institutions.

In terms of leadership, he reveals leadership challenges within the SMCs. The struggle to adhere to established rules and regulations suggests leadership inefficiencies in ensuring compliance. The improvement over time reflects potential leadership efforts to address governance issues. Socio-political pressures and external influences highlight challenges in maintaining strong leadership within the SMCs. Additionally, conflicts between the head teacher and SMC members indicate potential

leadership clashes. The rarity of such conflicts in institutional schools may indicate more cohesive leadership dynamics. The analysis illustrates the complex interplay of leadership factors impacting school governance.

The interview touches on management challenges within schools, emphasizing non-compliance with established rules and regulations by SMCs. The noted improvement suggests management efforts to rectify governance issues. The impact of socio-political pressures on SMCs indicates external influences on school management, potentially affecting decision-making and operations. Conflicts between the head teacher and SMC members highlight internal management challenges and potential issues in coordinating school affairs. The rarity of such conflicts in institutional schools suggests varying management dynamics. Overall, the analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of management challenges in educational institutions and the need for effective management practices to ensure compliance and smooth operations.

Another official from the Education Department of the Municipality (p12) remarked, *“There is often a disconnect between policy and practice. SMC members who are tasked with implementing policies often lack a comprehensive understanding of those policies. They require extensive orientation and training. While many head teachers are aware of the policies, they may find it challenging to assert their knowledge in front of the other SMC members. In numerous cases, our intervention becomes necessary to bridge this gap and ensure effective policy implementation.”*

P12’s remarks highlight a governance challenge characterized by a gap between policy and practice within schools. The disconnect between policy and the implementation process underscores governance inefficiencies. The SMC members’ lack of comprehensive understanding of policies points to potential governance

literacy issues. The need for extensive orientation and training emphasizes the importance of capacity-building in governance. The difficulty head teachers face in asserting their knowledge in front of SMC members suggests potential leadership challenges. The necessity for external intervention to bridge the policy implementation gap underscores governance limitations, highlighting the need for improved governance education and cooperation between stakeholders.

In terms of leadership, his remarks reflect leadership challenges within the SMCs and schools. The disconnect between policy and practice suggests leadership inefficiencies in translating policies into actionable practices. The head teachers' struggle to assert their policy knowledge highlights leadership dynamics within the SMC, possibly involving power dynamics or communication barriers. The official's intervention to bridge the gap underscores leadership's role in guiding and facilitating policy implementation. The analysis emphasizes the need for stronger leadership and communication within SMCs to ensure effective policy execution and alignment with educational goals.

The interview reveals management challenges within schools, characterized by the disconnect between policy and practice. The SMC members' lack of understanding of policies suggests management limitations in overseeing policy implementation. The need for extensive orientation and training reflects management gaps in capacity-building. Head teachers' difficulty in asserting their knowledge implies potential management challenges in communication and coordination. External intervention to bridge the implementation gap underscores management limitations within the SMC structure. Overall, the analysis highlights the importance of robust management practices, capacity-building, and effective communication to align policy with school operations and governance.

The interviews reveal a gap between theoretical governance principles and practical implementation. This gap underscores the need for practical approaches to address real-world challenges. For instance, some SMCs struggle to comply with established rules and regulations. In terms of leadership, the interviews highlight various leadership styles, from proactive and collaborative approaches to reluctant and passive leadership. Leadership means adapting leadership styles to the specific context and needs of the school community. For example, a leader may adjust their approach to encourage stakeholder involvement and navigate governance challenges effectively.

Regarding management, the interviews reveal challenges in implementing policies and managing school operations. Management emphasizes the need for practical solutions and capacity-building to bridge the gap between policy and practice. It suggests that effective management involves adapting to the unique circumstances of each school while ensuring compliance with regulations.

School governance insights from parents. Parents' perspectives on SMCs provide insights into school governance, particularly concerning stakeholder participation and shared governance. Parents' feelings of exclusion from decision-making processes reflect governance concerns, emphasizing the importance of involving all relevant parties in decision-making. Furthermore, parents' views on responsibility, accountability, relationship management, and communication quality underscore governance issues. Effective governance, as highlighted by parents, necessitates transparent and equitable information dissemination, fostering collaboration and transparency in decision-making processes. This aligns with the principles of governance theory that advocate for inclusive governance, collaboration

among diverse stakeholders, and transparent communication in educational institutions (McPortland, 2011).

The interviews with various stakeholders in the educational system underscore the importance of capacity-building in educational governance as Neupane (2023) highlights the need for sufficient knowledge of governance, especially in leadership and management aspects, within SMCs. Governance calls for a balanced approach that combines theoretical ideals with practical realities to improve governance, leadership, and management within schools. This practical approach can lead to more effective and responsive educational institutions that better serve their communities.

Leadership theory and parents' perceptions. Parents' perceptions reveal the need for different leadership styles within SMCs. Their desire for greater involvement in decision-making suggests a demand for participative leadership. The absence of transformational leadership within SMCs is evident in parents' concerns about inclusivity, transparency, and social responsibility. Transactional leadership principles emerge from parents' concerns about responsibility, accountability, goal pursuit, and efficiency. The perceived lack of relational leadership qualities, such as effective collaboration, active listening, and empathy, highlights the need for enhancing relationship management within the committees. Effective leadership in SMCs is characterized by a blend of these various leadership styles to address the diverse needs and challenges faced (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Leadership styles within SMCs are diverse, ranging from proactive and collaborative approaches to reluctant and passive leadership. Effective leaders must be adept at navigating governance challenges, sometimes deviating from strict adherence to theoretical ideals to encourage stakeholder involvement and address governance issues practically. The interviews reveal that leadership dynamics within

SMCs play a pivotal role in determining their effectiveness, further highlighting the need for a practical leadership approach that adapts to real-world complexities which recognizes that educational leaders need to balance theoretical knowledge with practical skills to drive meaningful change in school governance.

Management theory and parental concerns. Parents concern about goal pursuit and resource allocation align with the principles of goal-oriented management. Effective management within SMCs involves setting clear objectives, aligning activities with school goals, and allocating resources judiciously. Effective communication management, as emphasized by parents, is crucial in the context of decision-making and transparency. Concerns about the efficiency and effectiveness of SMCs in task completion and promises underline the importance of efficient management practices. Thus, effective management in SMCs requires a balance of clear goal-setting, efficient resource allocation, and timely task completion to fulfill the expectations of parents (Fukuyama, 2014).

The management of educational institutions also faces challenges, particularly in the implementation of policies and day-to-day operations. Practical management underscores the necessity for practical solutions and capacity-building to bridge the gap between policy and practice effectively. It recognizes that effective management must involve flexibility and adaptability to the unique circumstances of each school while ensuring compliance with regulations. The interviews emphasize that a flexible and context-specific approach to managing school affairs is vital to address the complexities of educational administration.

Teacher perspectives on school governance. Information collected from 208 teachers adds valuable insights into the functioning of SMCs, aligning with the key principles of school governance. Teachers perceive SMCs as lacking in practicality

and effectiveness, emphasizing the need for practical actions that lead to positive outcomes. Effective school governance, as viewed by teachers, requires a participatory approach and inclusive decision-making. Transparent communication and consideration of broader impacts are essential components of effective governance, according to teachers. These insights parallel the principles of governance theory, which emphasize practicality, transparent communication, and the inclusion of all stakeholders in decision-making processes (The Pennsylvania State University, 2001).

Leadership and management theory in teacher perspectives. Teachers' perceptions highlight the need for effective leadership within SMCs, which includes setting clear goals, motivating educators, and providing a conducive working environment for school development. Additionally, teachers emphasize the importance of effective management within SMCs, focusing on setting goals, allocating resources, and monitoring progress. The significance of effective communication resonates with teachers, underlining the need for clarity, transparency, and responsiveness in SMC communication efforts. Furthermore, teachers point out the importance of efficiency and effectiveness, aligning with management theory principles. Effective management involves streamlining processes, setting clear goals, and allocating resources judiciously to enhance both efficiency and effectiveness.

Chapter Summary

The assessment of School Management Committees highlights significant challenges in decision-making, leadership, and management within schools. Parents and teachers express concerns about the SMCs' ability to meet expectations, pointing to issues such as governance non-compliance, socio-political pressures, and conflicts between head teachers and SMC members. The observed disconnect between policy

and practice, as noted by educational officials, underscores the need for better governance education, leadership training, and capacity-building within SMCs. Effective governance requires transparent communication, participatory decision-making, and adherence to established regulations, all of which are currently lacking in many institutions.

Leadership and management within SMCs also face scrutiny, with parents and teachers calling for more proactive and participative approaches. The emphasis on practical solutions, adaptability, and context-specific management practices aligns with the principles of leadership theory. Teachers' and parents' concerns about goal-setting, resource allocation, and communication efficiency highlight the importance of aligning management practices with educational goals. The analysis underscores the need for a balanced approach that integrates theoretical ideals with practical realities, ultimately aiming to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of educational institutions.

CHAPTER VIII

Impact of School Management Committees on School Development

This section analyzes data previously presented and interpreted in chapters IV to VII, connecting it to the literature on governance and its leadership and management aspects. The analysis identified four key themes and highlighted several challenges affecting the efficiency of School Management Committees. These challenges were discovered through the interpretation of both qualitative and quantitative data. Before delving into the analysis, the findings from the interpretation were carefully documented, and this chapter is organized around those findings. The focus is on understanding how these challenges impact SMCs and exploring ways to improve their effectiveness.

SMCs in Adapting to Social and Educational Changes

The evolution of SMC has been shaped by the dynamic political, social, and educational contexts within the country, leading to various challenges and transformations in the roles and structures of SMCs. In this discussion, we will delve deeper into the challenges associated with the evolution of these aspects and their attributes, providing a more nuanced understanding of the complexities involved.

The transition from decentralized, community-driven governance during the early periods to more centralized models during the Rana regime posed significant challenges. Centralized governance often led to the exclusion of local voices and needs, creating a disconnect between the education system and the communities it was meant to serve. This tension between centralization and decentralization has persisted throughout Nepal's educational history, with each shift bringing its own set of challenges as research by Feiger (2024) indicated that more democratic nations tend to adopt decentralized education systems, fostering greater stakeholder voice and

choice. The centralization under the Education Act of 1971, for instance, diminished local autonomy, which later had to be restored with the democratic movements, reflecting the ongoing struggle to balance these governance models which Durke (2023) involves managing tension between non-governmental sector contributions and their potential unbalance rule making process.

Political interference has been a persistent challenge in the governance of SMCs. The involvement of municipal representatives and ward chairmen in SMCs, particularly post-2015, introduced a new layer of governance complexity as “the capacity of majority of local government members is seemed inadequate to assume this role” (Timalsina, 2023,p. 54). While the intent was to increase local accountability, it often led to politicization of school management, where decisions were influenced by political agendas rather than educational needs. The version of an

The version of an elected chair of SMC from a school of research location

I vividly recall the time when a candidate from an opposing political party emerged as a significant challenge to my position. Though we were personal acquaintances, I recognized the potential threat he posed if he decided to run. I understood that maintaining my leadership role was crucial, so I knew I had to approach the situation with diplomacy and careful persuasion. I spent an entire night engaged in deep conversation with him, attempting to convince him to withdraw his candidacy. It was no easy task, balancing political considerations with our personal connection added a layer of complexity. The discussion was intense, requiring tact, patience, and strategic negotiation. In the end, my efforts paid off. He agreed to step down, allowing me to continue my leadership without the need for a direct political confrontation. [This experience underscored the delicate balance between politics, personal relationships, and leadership within school management committees. It reminded me (the researcher) that sometimes, behind-the-scenes negotiations are essential for maintaining stability and ensuring the success of the larger mission].

elected chair of SMC from a school of research location clarifies it.

This has raised concerns about the integrity of the education system and the potential for corruption, as political figures may prioritize their interests over the best interests of schools and students.

The evolution of SMCs has required constant adaptability to the changing political and educational landscape. This adaptability, while necessary, also presented challenges in maintaining consistency and stability in governance practices as Tondral (2022) emphasized that stable organizational structure within government are crucial for ensuring long-term governance stability. The frequent renaming and restructuring of committees, as seen with the transition from *Vidyalaya Sanchalak Samiti* to *Vidyalaya Prabandha Samiti*, and later to *Vidyalaya Vyawasthapan Sahayog Samiti*, and finally, *Vidyalaya Vyawasthapan Samiti* reflected the government's attempts to respond to societal and political changes. However, these changes often led to confusion, disrupted governance processes, and hindered the long-term planning and development of educational institutions.

The shift from visionary, community-based leadership during the early periods to more bureaucratic, management-focused leadership styles in later periods highlighted significant challenges in leadership capacity. The early Gurus and religious leaders who led educational initiatives were deeply connected to their communities and provided holistic guidance to students. However, as governance became more centralized and formalized, leadership roles became more administrative, focusing on managing existing institutions rather than inspiring educational innovation. The lack of specialized knowledge for municipal representatives in educational management further exacerbated this issue, limiting their effectiveness in school governance as the study by Felter (2024) has also highlighted how a lack of role clarity contributes to ineffective school governance, suggesting the need for training, self-assessment and policy adaptation to enhance board effectiveness.

The entry of municipal representatives into SMCs disrupted the traditional power dynamics within schools as Hamal (2020) critiqued that state interference in Nepali education, noting that despite decentralization efforts, true local ownership was lacking and school decentralization is seen as superficial. Teachers and head teachers, who traditionally held significant authority in school management, found themselves sharing power with politically appointed figures. This shift created tensions and conflicts, particularly when municipal representatives lacked the educational expertise needed to make informed decisions. The resulting power struggles often undermined the effectiveness of school governance and led to frustrations among educators, who felt that their professional knowledge and authority were being disregarded as power struggles lead to ineffectiveness, weakening resistance efforts and fostering ineffective management practices (Rintamaki and Alvesson, 2023). The findings of impact of political influence during research is presented in the following table.

Table 8. *Impact of political influence in SMCs*

Area	Insights
Federalism and Role Ambiguity	The transition to federal governance has led to confused mandates between SMCs and local governments. Lack of role clarity creates administrative overlaps and conflicts.
Resource Inequity	Despite promises of equitable distribution, political leverage often determines access to resources, deepening regional disparities in educational quality.
Political Contestation in SMCs	SMCs have become politicized platforms, with local politicians manipulating elections and sidelining actual education stakeholders, compromising participatory and community governance.
Teacher Management Conflicts	Federal-local power struggles over teacher recruitment and deployment create job insecurity, provoke protests, and disrupt school operations.
Local Government Capacity Gaps	Many municipalities lack technical, financial, and governance skills to manage schools effectively, pointing to a major training and institutional capacity need.

Leadership during the community-based phases of SMCs faced the challenge of sustaining engagement from local communities. As educational governance became more formalized and centralized, the active involvement of communities often waned since power centralization leads to inefficiencies and weakened governance, undermining effective local self-governance (Kharel and Acharya, 2023). This was particularly evident in the late-Rana period when the role of SMCs was redefined to align with centralized governance models, reducing the scope for community participation. The challenge has been to maintain a balance between formal governance structures and the active involvement of local communities, which is essential for ensuring that schools meet the specific needs of their students.

The centralization of educational management during certain periods, particularly under the Education Act of 1971, posed significant challenges for local autonomy. The reconstitution of SMCs into District Education Councils under this act reflected a top-down approach to management, which often disregarded the unique needs and contexts of individual schools since Nkambule (2023) concluded that a top-down approach to management often leads to ineffective knowledge sharing, fostering anti-collaborative cultures. This centralization limited the ability of local communities and school leaders

An incident in a school of research area which turned to a viral local news reveals the challenge:

A significant incident recently shook the local community. News spread quickly that a School Management Committee member from the town's community school physically assaulted the SMC chairperson, resulting in a bleeding injury. The confrontation stemmed from deep-seated political tensions, as the two individuals belonged to opposing political parties. According to reports, the SMC member accused the chairperson of corruption, alleging that the chair failed to provide a complete financial account for a building project funded by a foreign donor agency. [The altercation highlights the intense rivalry and mistrust within the SMC, with accusations of financial misconduct adding fuel to the fire. The incident has not only raised concerns about governance within the school but also about the broader implications of political conflict affecting the educational environment].

to make decisions that were tailored to their specific circumstances, leading to inefficiencies and a lack of responsiveness to local needs.

The management of resources, including finances, infrastructure, and educational materials, has been a persistent challenge for SMCs.

Ensuring accountability and transparency in the management of schools has been a significant challenge throughout the evolution of SMCs which is essential in good governance (Roelofs, 2023). The shift towards centralized management models often resulted in a lack of accountability at the local level, as decision-making power was concentrated in the hands of a few individuals or government bodies. The introduction of municipal representatives into SMCs was intended to address this issue by increasing local accountability, but it also raised concerns about transparency, particularly in relation to the potential for political interference and corruption. Establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation has been crucial but difficult to implement consistently across the diverse and evolving governance structures.

The historical evolution of SMCs in Nepal is a testament to the complex and dynamic nature of educational governance, leadership, and management. While the evolution of these aspects has allowed Nepal to adapt to changing educational and political landscapes, it has also introduced significant challenges. Balancing centralization with local autonomy, ensuring effective leadership, and maintaining accountability and transparency in management are ongoing challenges that continue to shape the effectiveness of SMCs in Nepal. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing governance models that can effectively respond to the unique needs of schools and communities in Nepal, ensuring that educational governance remains both context-sensitive and responsive to the demands of the future as

Shangraw (2019) concluded that the challenges of federalism, particularly in education policy decision making that emphasized the need for accountability and capacity-building to achieve democratic and inclusive governance.

Comparing SMC Governance in Community vs. Institutional Schools

The comparative analysis of the functioning of School Management Committees in community-owned and institutionally-owned schools in Nepal reveals significant differences in governance, leadership, and management practices. These differences are rooted in the distinct ownership structures and the varied roles SMCs play in these two types of schools.

Community schools in Nepal operate under a governance structure that emphasizes broad community involvement. The SMCs in these schools typically include a diverse mix of stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, donors, and local intellectuals. This composition reflects a commitment to shared governance, where decisions are made through collaboration and the inclusion of various perspectives. This approach aligns with theories of pluralistic governance, which advocate for the involvement of multiple stakeholders in decision-making processes to achieve practical and inclusive outcomes as Bhattarai (2022) concluded for stakeholder consultation for effective policy-making in case of community school management.

Leadership within community schools is often centered around the head teachers, who play a crucial role in guiding the SMCs and ensuring the effective implementation of school policies. The selection of qualified individuals to serve on SMCs is a key aspect of strategic management, ensuring that those with the necessary expertise contribute to the school's objectives. This leadership style emphasizes the importance of effective coordination and collaboration, which are essential for improving school performance and achieving educational goals.

Despite the strengths of this governance model, community schools face challenges related to the qualifications and capabilities of SMC members. The version of a head teacher, mentioned in the box, highlights the tension between professional integrity and external pressures in the governance of educational institutions. Tensions can arise when members lack the necessary education or experience to make informed decisions which World Health Organization (2024) is a tool for effective implementation, leading to inefficiencies and conflicts within the school. Moreover, issues of corruption and political interference can undermine the effectiveness of the SMCs, as decisions may be swayed by personal or political interests rather than the school's best interests as Parajuli et al. (2019) critiqued 'participatory decision-making' in school initiative as superficial, serving more as a façade for managerial restructuring rather meaningful decentralization.

A Version of a Headteacher

I find myself in a difficult position, often recognizing that certain candidates are not the best fit for the school's needs. Yet, the immense external pressure I face forces me to accept the situation. This pressure prevents me from intervening in the election process to ensure the selection of more suitable candidates, even when I know it's what the school truly needs. Adding to the challenge is the fact that those who are genuinely capable and qualified to lead the School Management Committee (SMC) often show little interest in taking on the role. This leaves the process vulnerable to external influences, further weakening the committee's effectiveness.

Speaking honestly, I feel a sense of resignation. I know that any attempt to challenge or interfere with the process could come with serious consequences, like being transferred to another school. In this environment, remaining quiet and compliant seems like the safer option, even though I know it compromises the governance of the school.

Institutionally-owned schools, often referred to as private schools, operate under a governance model that is more aligned with private ownership and management principles. SMCs in these schools are typically composed of investors and trustees, with a primary focus on preserving property and ensuring efficient management. The governance structure in these schools is less participatory, with

limited involvement from the broader community as Newig et al. (2023) concluded that reduced citizen participation in governance poses risks, potentially leading to effective outcomes, diminished stakeholder influence, and a weakened ability to address sustainability challenges within diverse contexts. This approach aligns with governance theories that emphasize the importance of property stewardship and efficient management in private enterprises.

Leadership in private schools is often characterized by a strong focus on property management and resource utilization. The head teachers in these schools are struggling in managing the SMCs and their internal steering committee, ensuring that meetings are held regularly for steering committee and that issues are addressed promptly leaving SMC just for the government required documentation. This leadership style is more hierarchical, with a clear emphasis on maintaining the integrity of the school's property and resources. Management practices in private schools are geared towards efficiency and effectiveness, reflecting the principles of outcome-focused management theories as it (Lu et al., 2023) enhances work engagement, leading to improved performance, that contribute to sustainable organizational success.

The challenges faced by SMCs in private schools are often related to the dual roles they play, satisfying both government requirements and the needs of the school's owners. This duality can lead to a dilution of the SMC's role, making it more symbolic than functional not aligning with policy directives which School Improvement Plan Preparation Directives 2074 v.s recommends for minimum six SMC meeting in a year. Additionally, the limited participation of the broader community and the potential for corruption within the governance structure can further complicate the management of private schools.

Across both community and institutional schools, several tensions impact the functioning of SMCs. The process of selecting SMC members often leads to conflicts related to qualifications and representation. In community schools, unqualified members may hinder effective decision-making, while in private schools, the selection process may result in superficial governance roles. A teacher, visibly frustrated, shared his concerns about the leadership within his school. His words reflected a deep sense of injustice and resentment. Despite his extensive education and qualifications, he felt subordinate to SMC members who, in his view, lacked the necessary academic background and professional training to effectively govern the school. This disparity between his expectations and reality led to a sense of

A Teacher's Frustration

I have completed a master's degree, passed the Teacher Service Commission, and received all the necessary training. Yet, here I am, forced to follow the orders of these illiterates," he said, gesturing toward the SMC chair and its members. "It's not fair. Shouldn't they have academic qualifications? Shouldn't they need training?"

disenfranchisement, where the teacher believed that the governance of the school was being compromised by individuals who, in his opinion, were unqualified to lead. His concerns underscored the tension between educational professionals and SMC members, raising questions about the criteria for leadership within school management committees and the impact of such leadership on the school's educational environment.

Financial mismanagement and favoritism are common issues that undermine trust and effective governance as favoritism (Resce and Vaquero-Pineiro, 2024) can lead to inefficiency, diluting the quality and intended benefits. In community schools, corruption can lead to a focus on financial matters over educational progress, while in

private schools, the lack of oversight in steering committees may open the door to corruption.

A lack of governance literacy among SMC members leads to poor decision-making and ineffective leadership. This is particularly problematic in community schools, where SMC members may lack the educational background necessary to fulfill their roles effectively. Political affiliations can interfere with the functioning of SMCs, particularly in community schools as Parajulee (2021) concluded that Nepal's federalism faces challenges due to power centralization, lack of resources, and unclear jurisdiction, hindering effective governance and service delivery. These tensions can lead to biased decision-making and conflicts with school leadership, weakening the overall governance structure.

Findings of community and institutional SMCs functioning is presented in the following table:

Table 9. *Dimensional conclusion of community and institutional school SMC functioning*

Dimension	Community Schools	Institutional (Private) Schools
Governance Style	Participatory, pluralistic	Centralized, investor-focused
Leadership	Head teacher-guided, collaborative	Hierarchical, property-centered
Challenges	Unqualified members, political interference, corruption	Symbolic SMCs, internal conflict, limited participation
Decision-making Tensions	Lack of expertise, politicization	Owners vs. formal policy obligations
Community Role	Strong but declining	Minimal to symbolic
Financial Integrity	Vulnerable to favoritism and corruption	Risk of misalignment between ownership and policy
Governance Literacy	Often lacking	Often procedural, not pedagogical

The functioning of SMCs in Nepal's community and institutional schools reflects the complex dynamics of governance, leadership, and management within these

educational institutions. Community schools emphasize shared governance and community involvement, while private schools focus on property stewardship and efficient management. However, both types of schools face significant challenges related to member selection, corruption, governance literacy, and political tensions. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the unique needs and contexts of each school type, as well as a commitment to improving governance practices to ensure the effective functioning of SMCs.

Political Influence and Capacity Gaps in Nepal's SMCs

Educational bureaucrats emphasized the importance of community involvement in decision-making. This aligns with participatory leadership but presents challenges when decision-making power is diluted or conflicted due to political influence. The intrusion of political parties into SMC activities can lead to biased decision-making that may not serve the best interests of the school community, ultimately undermining the effectiveness of school governance.

The mandate to submit a three-year school improvement plan requires visionary leadership and an innovative mindset which (Farhan, 2024) are essential for organizational growth that drives strategic direction, and achieve long-term sustainable development by integrating forward-thinking approaches. However, the gap between policy and practice reveals a significant challenge in executing these plans effectively, often due to the lack of alignment between the goals set by SMCs and the actual needs and capabilities of the schools. The Education Act 1971 and Education Regulation 2002 emphasize transparency and accountability, particularly in resource management and financial auditing. However, the reality often shows a lack of accountability among SMC members, especially when political pressures override governance standards which (Ansell et al. 2023) can undermine governance efficiency

by distorting priority and creating instability. This undermines the ability of SMCs to fulfill their roles responsibly.

Bureaucrats stressed the need for capacity-building, reflecting a leadership challenge where SMC members may not have the skills or knowledge required to be accountable leaders. An example of my experience (mentioned in the box) can lead to mismanagement

My Experience

A friend of mine was recently elected as the SMC chair of the only community secondary school in our town. Given my experience as a head teacher at an institutional school, I wanted to meet with him and share some leadership and management ideas I had acquired over the years to help him run the school effectively. We arranged a time to meet, and I was eager to offer my support.

However, before I could even begin to offer my advice, he launched into a story of his own. "The former chair, who wasn't from my party, was corrupt. He didn't bring in any financial help for the school. But now, I'll make sure that changes. I'm going to do it. You're working at a big school, right? Please help me by donating bags for the children. Then I'll show them my power," he said confidently.

I was taken aback by his approach, which focused more on demonstrating his influence than on the actual leadership and management of the school. His emphasis on proving himself and securing donations as a show of power left me feeling uneasy. In the end, I chose to remain quiet, unsure of how to respond to his unexpected priorities.

of resources, poor decision-making, and ultimately, ineffective governance which

even showed the lack of network managing. The creation of Parent-Teacher

Associations and the involvement of various community members in decision-making

processes are crucial for participatory leadership in (Koh et al., 2023) school

improvement initiatives to foster sustainable outcomes, developing distributed

leadership, and creating context-specific plans, leading to long-term success.

However, the lack of awareness (Puri and Chhetri, 2024) and potential biases among

SMC members often results in ineffective engagement, where decisions may not fully

reflect the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders, particularly marginalized groups.

The governance theory's emphasis on shared decision-making is compromised

when political interference and the limited capacity of SMC members restrict

meaningful participation. This creates a leadership vacuum where decisions may be

made by a few, rather than through a collaborative approach, weakening the governance structure. Leadership in maintaining a politically neutral, safe, and inclusive school environment is crucial. However, SMCs often struggle with this responsibility due to external pressures, such as political or communal influences, which can lead to an environment that is not conducive to learning. The challenge here lies in balancing social responsibilities with the pressures of local politics and community dynamics.

The strategic planning aspect requires SMCs to set and pursue long-term goals that align with the broader educational objectives. However, the disconnect between policy and practice which (Acharya, 2024) requires targeted interventions and improved policy-practice alignment, exacerbated by political interference, means that SMCs often struggle to meet these goals effectively. This misalignment hampers the overall effectiveness of educational governance. SMCs are tasked with managing relationships between teachers, students, and the community. Challenges arise when political influences disrupt these relationships, leading to conflicts, decreased morale, and inefficiency in school operations. The difficulty in managing these relationships effectively can result in a fragmented school environment.

Forming partnerships through MoUs and engaging with external stakeholders is crucial for effective governance. However, challenges in network management arise when SMCs lack the negotiation skills or authority to form and maintain these partnerships effectively. Effective communication is vital for good governance, particularly in sharing information on school operations and decision-making processes. SMCs are required to provide regular updates on various aspects of school management, but communication gaps which (Comingking et al., 2024) can lead to decreased understanding, lower motivation, and ultimately reduced efficiency, often

persist due to the inadequate communication skills of SMC members or deliberate withholding of information due to political reasons. This lack of transparency can lead to mistrust among stakeholders. The requirement for effective management of resources and assets is at the core of management theory. Challenges arise when SMCs, due to limited skills or external pressures, fail to manage resources efficiently. Ineffective resource management leads to wastage, financial discrepancies, and ultimately, poor educational outcomes.

The bureaucrats' observations on the inefficiencies caused by political interference reflect broader challenges in ensuring operational effectiveness. The political landscape often disrupts the smooth functioning of SMCs, resulting in delayed decisions, poor execution of plans, and a general lack of efficiency in school management. SMCs are responsible for monitoring school operations, including financial audits. However, the effectiveness of this oversight is often compromised by a lack of technical know-how or the influence of external pressures, particularly from political entities. An example of an incident happened during research clarifies it:

I received a call from a close friend whose wife had recently passed the Teacher Service Commission and had been appointed to a remote village school. Knowing that I reside in a city area, he reached out for assistance.

"Hello, friend. I need a favor," he began.

"Of course, how can I help?" I replied.

"My wife just got appointed to a school in a remote village, but there's a vacant of teaching position at a school nearby yours that would be perfect for her. I want to get her transferred there, but the challenge is that the School Management Committee chair at that school belongs to the opposition party. Could you help me get acquainted with him?"

My friend's request placed me in a difficult position, highlighting the influence of politics even in the educational sector. The request not only involved a favor but also navigating the political dynamics within the SMC, which could complicate the process. It underscored the complexities and pressures that educators and their families face in securing favorable appointments, often needing to rely on personal connections and political maneuvering to achieve their goals.

This results in poor monitoring practices, allowing mismanagement and corruption to go unchecked. Effective governance requires strong network management, particularly in forming partnerships that enhance school operations. However, challenges arise when SMCs lack the authority or capability to manage these networks effectively, leading to missed opportunities and weakened governance. Governance literacy gap found in SMCs during research is presented below in table.

Table 10. *Governance literacy gap in SMCs*

Area	Insights
Policy vs Practice Gap	Mandated practices like transparent audits are rarely fulfilled due to weak capacity and politicized environments.
Capacity and Leadership Vacuum	Many SMC members lack essential skills in strategic planning, financial management, communication, and network negotiation.
Participatory Governance Challenges	SMCs often fail to represent marginalized voices, and ‘shared governance’ is frequently compromised.
Communication Gaps	Deliberate or unintentional communication lapses reduce transparency, motivation, and stakeholder cohesion.
Management Weaknesses	Poor resource and network management, ineffective monitoring, and weak partnerships reduce school efficiency and accountability.
Need for Reform	Calls for robust training, depoliticization, alignment between policy and ground realities, and clearer accountability mechanisms.

The integration of governance, leadership, and management practices in the operation of SMCs in Nepal is critical to their success. However, significant challenges remain, particularly in areas such as decision-making, accountability, participatory approaches, and operational efficiency. Political interference, lack of capacity, and the gap between policy and practice exacerbate these challenges, highlighting the need for robust capacity-building programs, clearer policy implementation strategies, and stronger mechanisms for accountability and transparency. By addressing these challenges, SMCs can better fulfill their roles in

ensuring effective educational governance, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes in Nepal (Timalsina, 2023). The insights provided by bureaucrats emphasize the importance of community-based leadership, skilled management, and shared governance in achieving these goals.

SMC Tensions Developed over Time

The decentralization of authority under the federal system has resulted in considerable ambiguity regarding the roles and responsibilities (Chandrika and Acharya, 2020) of SMC and local governments in education governance. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) grants significant power to local governments to manage education, including teacher recruitment, curriculum implementation, and school management.

The lack of clearly delineated responsibilities has caused power struggles that undermine the governance of schools. Governance principles emphasize the importance of role clarity and well-defined structures to ensure effective decision-making and avoid conflicts. Therefore, resolving these ambiguities is essential for the smooth functioning of school governance.

The embedded quantitative data with qualitative insights displayed the following result:

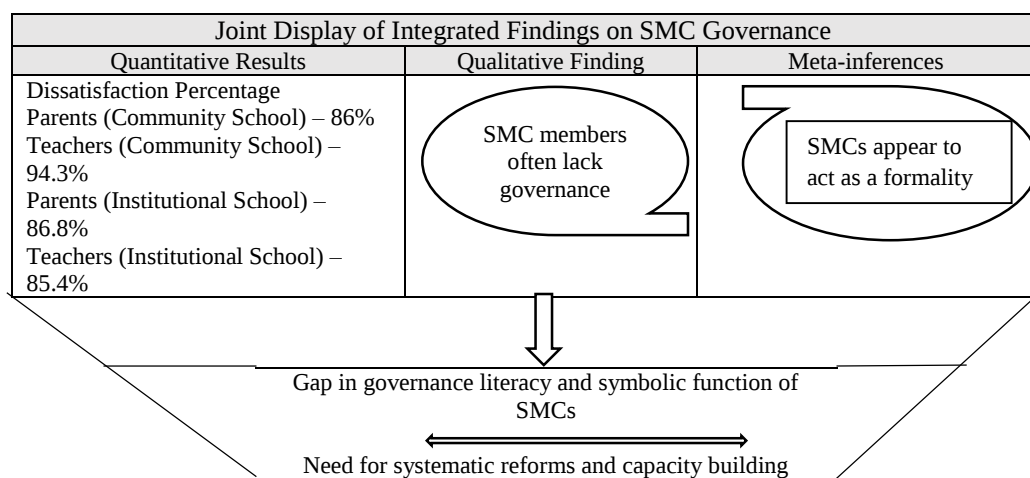


Figure 5: Joint Display of Integrated Findings on SMC Governance

The integrated joint display of quantitative and qualitative findings reveals significant dissatisfaction among stakeholders toward SMCs in both community and institutional schools in Nepal. Dissatisfaction percentages calculated by transforming mean Likert scale values (1–5) into proportions of discontent using the formula $(\text{Mean} - 1) \div 4 \times 100\%$, were quantified as parents in community schools at 86.5%, teachers in community schools at 94.3%, parents in institutional schools at 86.8%, and teachers in institutional schools at 85.4%. These high levels pinpoint deep-seated concerns, especially in leadership (decision-making, participation, accountability) and management (communication, goal pursuit, relationship building) aspect of governance.

Nepalese studies confirm these trends. Neupane (2023) found that SMC members often lack leadership and management traits, such as transparent decision-making and community communication, which are essential for operational effectiveness. Similarly, Paudel & Pokharel (2022) highlighted political interference, weak accountability, and poor stakeholder representation in decentralized school governance. These real-world observations align closely with the high dissatisfaction scores measured among teachers and parents.

Yet, the qualitative data provide critical context: SMC leaders express democratic intentions and collaborative practices but face governance literacy gaps and structural limitations (Gairhe, 2023; Neupane, 2023). While stakeholders report dissatisfaction, it emerges from lack of execution and communication, not from malice or negligence. Thus, the joint display illustrates a misalignment between strategic intent and stakeholder perception, pointing to clear areas for intervention, namely, enhancing training, capacity-building, and structural reforms. Addressing these gaps could materially improve both perceived and actual SMC effectiveness

One of the promises of federalism was the meaningful allocation of resources (Hasan and Ari, 2023). However, the evident showed that the resource allocation in schools has still not been in consensus of all the stakeholders for the effective outcome. Political influences have better access to financial and human resources, allowing them to manage schools more effectively, while others face chronic shortages of teachers, learning materials, and infrastructure.

The inequitable distribution of resources undermines the principle of equal educational opportunity and exacerbates regional disparities in educational quality. Governance in education requires transparent and equitable resource allocation to ensure that all students, regardless of their location, have access to quality education.

Political interference in the functioning of School Management Committees is a persistent challenge. SMCs, intended to be community-based bodies responsible for school governance, have increasingly become arenas for political contestation. Local politicians often influence SMC elections and decision-making processes, sidelining education experts and community stakeholders. This politicization compromises the autonomy and effectiveness of SMCs (Pherali, 2021).

Political interference undermines the principles of participatory governance, which emphasize community involvement and decision-making based on educational needs rather than political interests. Ensuring that SMCs function as independent and community-driven entities is crucial for effective school governance.

Teacher recruitment, deployment, and transfer have become contentious issues under the federal system. Local governments have been given the authority to manage teachers, but this has led to conflicts with federal policies (Timalsina, 2023). Teachers often express concerns about job security and arbitrary transfers, leading to protests and strikes that disrupt the educational process.

Effective teacher management is a critical aspect of school governance. It requires clear policies, transparent processes, and a focus on teacher welfare to ensure stability and motivation among educators.

Many local governments lack the administrative capacity and expertise needed to manage schools effectively. Local officials often have limited training in educational governance, financial management, and policy implementation, leading to inefficiencies and poor decision-making.

Capacity-building is a fundamental aspect of effective governance (Schaffner et al., 2024). Providing local officials with the necessary training and resources to perform their duties competently is essential for improving school governance.

Overcoming Governance Challenges in Nepal's SMCs

The data interpretation highlights a range of challenges faced by School Management Committees in their governance, leadership, and management functions. These challenges reflect broader issues within educational governance and underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of both theoretical principles and practical realities. Governance theory emphasizes the importance of effective decision-making, a participatory approach, accountability, and social responsibility in ensuring robust and responsive school governance. However, the research reveals several challenges related to these aspects. Leadership and management attributes of governance challenges prevailed in SMCs are concluded in the following table.

Table 11. *Challenges of leadership and management attributes of governance in SMCs*

Dimension	Challenges Identified	Theoretical Connections / Research Citations
Decision-making	Policy-practice disconnect; socio-political interference	Governance theory; Khanal (2016), Aryal (2021)
Participatory governance	Exclusion of parents and teachers; weak stakeholder engagement	Su et al. (2023); Governance principles of inclusion
Accountability	Policy non-compliance, low awareness of roles	Leadership theory; capacity-building needs
Social responsibility	Politicized priorities override educational needs	Sellke (2011) – risk management and stakeholder engagement
Goal setting	Misalignment between SMC objectives and school development	Management theory – SMART planning
Relationship management	Conflicts between headteachers and SMCs; limited collaboration	Importance of conflict resolution, collaborative leadership
Communication	Poor channels, low transparency, exclusion	Tankoric et al. (2023) – importance of communication in leadership
Efficiency & effectiveness	Resource mismanagement, implementation failure	Need for performance metrics, evaluation tools
Network management	Lack of partnerships; weak external stakeholder coordination	Emphasis on distributed leadership and multi-sectoral collaboration
Monitoring	Weak systems for evaluation and feedback	Governance theory – need for robust oversight tools

Firstly, decision-making within SMCs often suffers due to a disconnect between policy and practice because (Khanal, 2016) good policy in good implementation condition is vital. Educational officials and stakeholders note that SMCs frequently struggle to implement policies effectively, resulting in decisions that may not align with established guidelines. This disconnect signifies a significant governance challenge where theoretical policies fail to translate into practical, actionable strategies. Leaders within SMCs are expected to bridge this gap by

ensuring that decisions are based on a thorough understanding of policies and that socio-political pressures do not overshadow educational objectives since Aryal (2021) concluded that community participation is crucial for school management however, barriers like poor communication and unclear roles hinder involvement, highlighting the need for community awareness. The challenge here lies in balancing adherence to rules with the need for practical adaptability, a key component of effective leadership.

Participatory governance is another critical area where challenges emerge. Parents and teachers often feel excluded from decision-making processes, highlighting a significant gap in the inclusivity of SMC operations to (Su et al., 2023) strengthen transparency and accountability encouraging public involvement. The research underscores the importance of involving all relevant stakeholders in governance to ensure that decisions reflect diverse perspectives and needs. Effective leadership must promote a participatory approach by fostering an environment where stakeholder voices are heard and valued. This involves addressing communication barriers and internal conflicts that hinder active participation. Leaders need to create structures that facilitate engagement and collaboration, overcoming obstacles that limit stakeholder involvement.

Accountability and responsibility are central to effective governance, yet SMCs frequently face issues with non-compliance to regulations and a lack of understanding of policies among members. This reflects a broader challenge in ensuring that governance practices are both transparent and effective. Leaders within SMCs must reinforce accountability by ensuring that all members understand their roles and responsibilities. This may require providing additional training and support to enhance members' comprehension of policies and their implementation. Leaders also need to establish clear mechanisms for holding members accountable for their

actions, ensuring that governance practices align with established regulations and educational goals.

Social responsibility is another area where governance challenges become apparent. Socio-political pressures can sometimes overshadow the SMCs' commitment to social responsibility, leading to decisions that may not fully address community needs. Effective governance requires a focus on the broader impact of decisions which (Sellke, 2011) emphasizes effective stakeholder engagement and transparent risk across all phases of risk management, ensuring that actions contribute positively to the school community and beyond. Leaders must navigate these pressures while maintaining a strong commitment to social responsibility, balancing external influences with the need to uphold educational values and priorities.

Goal pursuit is a fundamental aspect of effective management, but many SMCs struggle with setting and achieving clear objectives. The research points to a lack of alignment between SMC activities and school goals, which hinders progress and impacts overall performance. Effective management requires the establishment of clear, measurable goals and ensuring that all activities are directed towards achieving these objectives. This involves not only setting goals but also developing strategies to monitor progress and make adjustments as needed to stay on track.

Relationship management within SMCs presents another significant challenge. Internal conflicts between head teachers and SMC members, as well as limited stakeholder involvement, can strain relationships and impact the functioning of the committee. Effective management involves addressing these conflicts and fostering positive interactions among all stakeholders. This requires implementing conflict resolution strategies, promoting open communication, and building collaborative

relationships. By improving relationship management, SMCs can enhance their ability to work together effectively and achieve their goals.

Communication is a critical component of effective management encompassing (Tankoric et al., 2023) written, oral, listening, and non-verbal skills for preparing better future, yet many SMCs face issues with poor communication. Ineffective communication can lead to misunderstandings, exclusion of key stakeholders, and a lack of transparency in decision-making processes. Effective management involves establishing clear channels for information sharing and feedback, ensuring that all stakeholders are engaged and informed. This includes not only disseminating information but also actively seeking input from stakeholders and addressing their concerns.

Effectiveness and efficiency are crucial measures of management success, but many SMCs struggle with inadequate implementation and resource allocation. The research highlights the need for SMCs to streamline processes, set clear objectives, and allocate resources effectively to improve performance. This involves developing systems for monitoring progress, evaluating the effectiveness of actions, and making adjustments as needed to enhance overall efficiency.

Network management is another area where challenges emerge. Effective network management involves building and maintaining relationships with external partners and stakeholders to support governance goals. However, many SMCs struggle with coordination and collaboration with external organizations. Enhancing network management requires developing partnerships, engaging with external stakeholders, and leveraging these relationships to support school development.

Monitoring is a vital aspect of management, yet many SMCs face challenges with inconsistent oversight. Effective monitoring involves tracking progress, ensuring

compliance with regulations, and evaluating the effectiveness of actions. This requires implementing robust monitoring systems that provide timely and accurate information on the performance of SMCs. By improving monitoring practices, SMCs can better assess their performance, address issues promptly, and ensure that they meet their goals.

The research findings underscore the complexities and challenges faced by SMCs in leadership and management. Governance theory provides a framework for understanding these challenges, highlighting the importance of effective decision-making, participatory approaches, accountability, and social responsibility in achieving robust governance. Similarly, effective management requires attention to goal pursuit, relationship management, communication, effectiveness, efficiency, network management, and monitoring.

Overcoming governance challenges prevailed among the SMCs can be analyzed through the following figure:

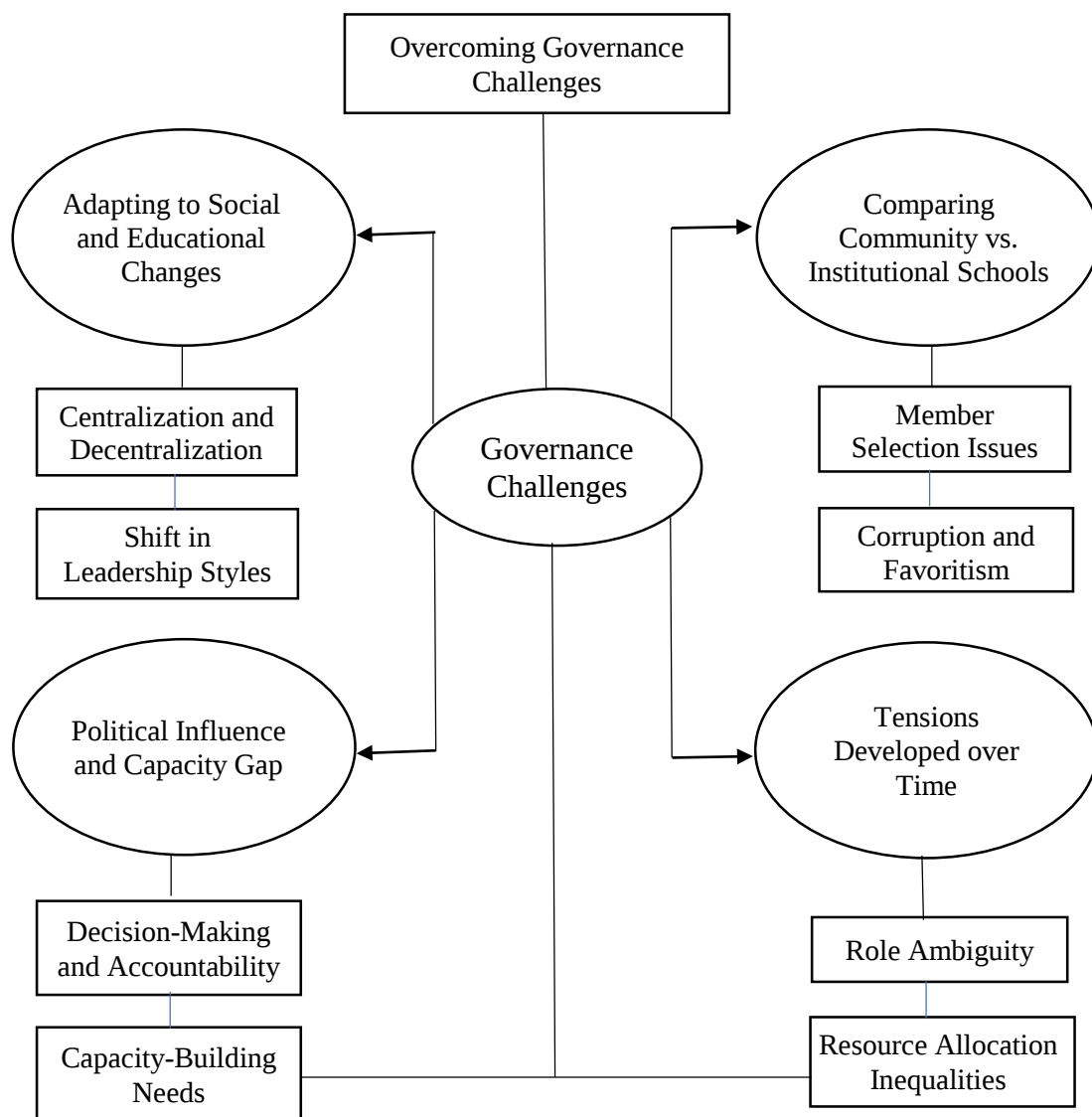


Figure 6. Overcoming governance challenges

In the diagram, at the core is the theory-practice gap, shown as a dividing line between normative frameworks, like governance theory, participatory leadership, and management models, and practical challenges, such as political interference, capacity deficits, poor communication, and fragmented roles. Flowing from top to bottom, each segment illustrates how these challenges affect decision-making, accountability, participation, goal setting, and stakeholder relationships. The muted earth tones symbolize both the grassroots nature of SMCs and the subdued progress due to unresolved tensions between policy ideals and ground-level execution.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates theoretical principles with practical strategies. Leaders within SMCs must navigate socio-political pressures, promote inclusivity, and reinforce accountability while maintaining a focus on social responsibility. Effective management involves setting clear goals, improving communication, fostering positive relationships, and implementing robust monitoring systems. By addressing these challenges, SMCs can enhance their effectiveness and responsiveness, ultimately improving the governance and management of educational institutions as Khadka (2021) also concluded that Nepali school governance practices remain low, as measured by Worldwide governance indicators, and has minimal impact.

Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzed the complex evolution of School Management Committees in Nepal and their roles in adapting to shifting political, social, and educational landscapes. It delved into the historical tensions between centralized and decentralized governance, highlighting how centralization under the Education Act of 1971 marginalized local voices, leading to governance challenges that persist today. Political interference, particularly post-2015 (Federal Nepal), has further complicated SMC operations, often prioritizing political agendas over educational needs, thereby undermining the integrity of the education system.

The chapter also contrasted the governance models of community and private schools, noting that while community schools emphasize broad stakeholder involvement, they face challenges related to member qualifications and political interference. In contrast, private schools, with a more hierarchical governance structure, struggle with maintaining a balance between government mandates and the interests of school owners. Overall, the chapter emphasized the need for effective

leadership, accountability, and transparency within SMCs to ensure that educational governance in Nepal is responsive and context-sensitive, capable of meeting the evolving demands of schools and communities.

CHAPTER IX

Conclusions and Implications

This chapter concludes the research and generates implications. The conclusions and implications are extracted from the data interpretation and analysis in connection with the literature discussed earlier.

Conclusions

The role of School Management Committees in Nepal's educational development has undergone significant transformation due to changing political, social, and educational contexts. The analysis revealed that while SMCs have adapted to these changes, they face substantial challenges that impact their effectiveness in school governance.

Evolution of governance models. The historical evolution of SMCs from community-based models to more centralized and politicized structures has introduced both opportunities and challenges. The transition from decentralized governance, which emphasized local autonomy and community involvement, to more centralized models under regimes such as the Rana and post-1971 centralization, has led to a disconnection between local needs and educational policies. The persistent struggle to balance centralization with local autonomy reflects the ongoing tension between maintaining community engagement and adhering to centralized regulations.

Political influence. Political interference has been a significant challenge in SMC governance. The involvement of municipal representatives and ward chairperson, while intended to increase local accountability, often leads to politicization of school management. This interference undermines the integrity of educational decision-making, resulting in decisions driven more by political agendas than by the educational needs of students. The risk of inefficiency further exacerbates

these issues, highlighting the need for mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability.

Leadership and management challenges. The shift from visionary, community-driven leadership to more bureaucratic and management-focused styles has created gaps in leadership effectiveness. Early educational leaders, such as Gurus and religious figures, provided holistic guidance but lacked specialized training in modern management. As leadership roles became more administrative, the absence of specialized training for SMC members in educational management has led to inefficiencies and conflicts. This shift has affected the stability and consistency of governance practices.

Comparative analysis of governance models. A comparative analysis of SMCs in community and private schools reveals differences in governance practices. Community schools emphasize shared governance and community involvement but face challenges related to qualifications and capabilities of SMC members, corruption, and political interference. In contrast, private schools focus on property stewardship and efficient management, but struggle with limited community participation and potential for corruption. Both models highlight the need for context-specific approaches to governance that address the unique challenges faced by each type of school. However, the necessity of SMC in private schools needs to be analyzed since they are running with dual management committees; company or trust steering committee (which is more active) and school management committee (which is less active).

Governance literacy gap. Capacity gaps among SMC members and inefficiencies in resource management remain critical issues. The lack of governance literacy among members often results in poor decision-making and mismanagement

of resources. The historical reliance on community-driven resource management has given way to more formalized systems that struggle with issues of efficiency and corruption. Effective management of resources, including finances and infrastructure, is crucial for the success of SMCs and requires ongoing capacity-building efforts.

Bridging theory and practice. The gap between theoretical principles of governance and their practical implementation in SMCs is evident. Theoretical frameworks emphasize participatory governance, accountability, and social responsibility, but the practical realities of political interference, capacity gaps, and communication issues often hinder effective governance. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates theoretical principles with practical strategies.

Finally, the effectiveness of School Management Committees in Nepal is critical to the advancement of school governance and development, yet it is hindered by significant challenges stemming from political interference, evolving governance models, and gaps in capacity. As SMCs transition from community-based to more centralized structures and again community-based cycle, the balance between local autonomy and political agendas becomes increasingly complex, often undermining educational integrity and resource management. To leverage the potential of SMCs, targeted strategies are essential, including capacity-building initiatives that enhance governance literacy, frameworks to ensure transparency and accountability, and context-specific governance models that address the unique needs of both community and private schools. Bridging the gap between governance theory and practice is vital for fostering sustainable school development, emphasizing the necessity for participatory governance that genuinely reflects community involvement and educational priorities.

Implications

On the basis of the interpretation, analysis and conclusion the research concludes with the following implications:

Enhanced capacity building and training. SMC is given load of responsibilities to develop school through various policy documents. Therefore, school development process goes smoothly if the concerned authorities organize capacity-building programs for SMC members to improve their knowledge and skills in educational governance as MoEST (2080 v.s.) in its document *Shikshako Sochpatra 2079* (Education Vision Paper 2079 v.s.) and School Improvement Plan Preparation Directives 2074 v.s. have also emphasized on conducting capacity building programs for SMC members. Training should focus on governance and its leadership and management aspects to address existing gaps and improve overall effectiveness.

Transparency and accountability mechanisms strengthening. The system should develop and implement robust mechanisms for transparency and accountability within SMCs. This includes establishing clear roles and responsibilities, conducting regular audits, and ensuring that decision-making processes are open and transparent to all stakeholders. Measures should be taken to reduce political interference and mitigate the risk of corruption.

Promoting participatory governance. It is better to foster a more inclusive approach to governance by actively involving all relevant stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and community members to make them feel they are included. The policy makers should create platforms for effective communication and feedback to ensure that decisions reflect diverse perspectives and address the needs of the school community.

Improved communication and conflict resolution. Measures should be taken to enhance communication strategies within SMCs to ensure that information is shared effectively and that stakeholders are engaged in decision-making processes. Implementation of conflict resolution mechanisms to address internal disputes and promote a collaborative working environment is also necessary.

Policies with practical alignment. It is a must to bridge the gap between policy and practice by ensuring that SMC policies are aligned with the actual needs and capabilities of schools. Developing strategies to adapt policies to local contexts and providing support for the practical implementation of educational plans are also necessary.

Strengthening resource management. Inefficiencies in resource management is vivid which should be solved by implementing systems for better allocation and utilization of resources. Ensuring that SMC members have the necessary skills and knowledge to manage resources effectively and reduce the risk of misallocation and corruption is required in the case that SMCs are given load of responsibilities through various policy documents.

Fostering community engagement. It will be fruitful to strengthen the role of community involvement in school governance by revitalizing community-based initiatives and partnerships by encouraging local engagement in decision-making processes to enhance the relevance and impact of school policies and practices.

Monitoring and evaluating SMC performance. Policy should implement robust monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the performance of SMCs and identify areas for improvement. Regular evaluations should focus on governance practices, resource management, and overall effectiveness to ensure continuous improvement.

Addressing political pressures. Concerned authority should develop strategies to mitigate the impact of political pressures on SMC operations. This includes creating mechanisms to safeguard against political interference and ensuring that decisions are based on educational needs rather than political agendas.

By implementing these suggestions, SMCs can enhance their effectiveness in school governance and development, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes in Nepal. A balanced approach that integrates capacity-building, transparency, participatory governance, and effective management practices will be crucial in overcoming the challenges faced by SMCs and achieving successful educational governance.

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Appendix 1

Rights and Duties of SMCs Mentioned in Education Act and Directives (translated)

Education Act 1971 in its Article 12 (6) describes the following rights and duties of Community School Management Committee:

- a. To oversee the management of available resources for school operations.
- b. To maintain a comprehensive record of both fixed and current assets while ensuring their safeguarding.
- c. To regularly update the academic, physical, and financial statistics of the school.
- d. To authorize and ratify the annual budget of the school, subsequently transmitting this information to the Rural/Municipal Education Council and the Education Development and Coordination Unit.
- e. To uphold a conducive academic environment, refraining from any disruption stemming from political, religious, or communal affiliations.
- f. To engage qualified teachers designated by the Education Development and Coordination Unit.
- g. To facilitate an annual audit conducted by an auditor appointed by the Education Development and Coordination Unit.
- h. To take necessary actions based on the auditor's report and subsequently submit the findings to the Education Development and Coordination Unit.
- i. To adhere to directives issued by the District Education Council and the Education Development and Coordination Unit.
- j. To administer salary disbursements and benefits for teachers appointed and promoted by the School Management Committee.
- k. To establish a Parent Teacher Association with the aim of enhancing academic quality.

Education Act 1971 in its Article 12 (7) describes the following rights and duties of Institutional School Management Committee:

- a. To oversee the management of available resources for school operations.
- b. To oversee the management of the requisite physical infrastructure essential for the school's operations.
- c. To safeguard and preserve both fixed and current assets in accordance with legal provisions.
- d. To ensure the maintenance of a conducive and legally compliant academic environment within the school premises.
- e. To adhere to and implement the curriculum and textbooks mandated by the Nepal Government, seeking approval from the National Curriculum Department and Assessment Council when additional supplementary materials need to be introduced.
- f. To appoint educators who possess valid teaching licenses and meet the qualifications stipulated by statutory regulations.
- g. To administer remuneration for teachers that is either equal to or exceeds the salary thresholds established by the Nepal Government.
- h. To mete out disciplinary measures to address instances of teacher misconduct in accordance with applicable legal procedures.
- i. To faithfully adhere to and execute directives issued by the Nepal Government in compliance with the law.

The Education regulation 2002, in its Section 6, Article 25 (1) describes the following rights and duties of Community School Management Committee:

- a. To conduct, oversee, inspect, and administer the school.
- b. To procure the necessary financial resources for the school's operation.
- c. To select teachers for training programs.
- d. To establish agreements requiring teachers selected for training to serve minimum of three years upon completion of their training.
- e. To safeguard and enhance the welfare of teachers in their service.
- f. To appoint necessary teachers from the school's private finding source, ensuring they receive salaries consistent with the scale provided by the Nepal Government.
- g. To report to the Education Development and Coordination Unit for the appointment of permanent teachers in the event that positions approved by the Nepal Government remain vacant.
- h. To report to the Education Development and Coordination Unit regarding frequently absent teachers and staff, along with appropriate recommendations.
- i. To manage the procurement of necessary educational materials and resources to enhance the quality of education.
- j. To engage the school in various programs conducted by the Nepal Government.
- k. To draft and implement a code of conduct for the students.
- l. To maintain up-to-date records of teachers.
- m. To inform the assembly of donors and parents about the previous year's financial performance, academic achievements, and the upcoming year's plans.
- n. To report any violations of departmental regulations committed by teachers to the Education Development and Coordination Unit.
- o. To select an auditor, in accordance with the legal requirements, from among three auditors for appointment.
- p. To motivate students, teachers, and parents to contribute to academic and overall school development.
- q. To request the relevant authority for the disbursement of scholarships to eligible students.
- r. To reduce the salary of teaching staff in cases of unexcused absences during inspections by the inspector.
- s. To establish and maintain the secretariat office of the School Management Committee at the school and ensure the safekeeping of documents.
- t. To carry out tasks as assigned by the Education Development and Coordination Unit.

Education Regulation Section 6, Article 26 (1) of Education Regulation 2002 describes the following rights and duties of Institutional School Management Committee:

- a. To coordinate and oversee the management, inspection, supervision, and operation of the school in collaboration with members of the Company Steering Committee or *Guthi* (*Guthiyars*).
- b. To safeguard and enhance the employment status and conditions of teachers and staff.
- c. To ensure the participation of students in examinations.
- d. To engage the school in various programs and initiatives organized by the Nepal Government.

- e. To provide annual reports to the assembly of donors and parents, outlining the school's financial performance from the previous year, academic achievements, and plans for the upcoming year.
- f. To appoint teachers and initiate the process for their permanent employment after six months of initial appointment.
- g. To furnish the necessary facilities and resources required by appointed teachers and staff.
- h. To establish and manage a welfare fund dedicated to teachers and staff.
- i. To allocate and utilize the funds deposited in the welfare fund exclusively for the well-being of teacher and staff members.
- j. To administer disciplinary actions in accordance with departmental regulations against teachers who violate the established code of conduct.
- k. To select an auditor, following legal guidelines, from a pool of three auditors for official appointment.
- l. To formulate and enforce a code of conduct for students within the school.
- m. To execute duties and responsibilities as delegated by the Education Development and Coordination Unit.

School Improvement Plan Preparation Helping Book 2074 v.s. in its Article 2.5 describes the following involvement and duty of SMC:

- a. A representative from SMC will be there in school improvement plan preparation committee which consists five members including school principal (coordinator), social education reformer and teacher representative.
- b. SMC should approve the plan and submit a copy each to resource center (which is dissolved now) and local education department by the end of Jestha of the very academic year.

Model School Management Directive 2074 v.s. in its Article 6(4) has described the following roles and responsibilities of SMC:

- a. To appoint principal in accordance with annex 8 of this directive.
- b. To prepare master plan for school development, submit to the education department of local government and get it approved, and implement it.
- c. To manage teachers by appointing required number according to the required subject and number of students.
- d. To self-evaluate the school and reform the school improvement plan if required.
- e. To manage materials for practical education for students' development.
- f. To form sub-committees and give responsibilities for school and educational development.
- g. To conduct and observe and manage hostel if required.
- h. To manage school health program and first aid inside the premises of school.
- i. To get yearly social audit as mentioned in the directive.
- j. To manage environment to continue admitted students.
- k. To distribute various scholarships fairly which school got.

Vidyalaya Anudan Vyawasthapan Nirdeshika 2074 v.s. in its article 8(5) has mentioned the following roles of SMC:

- a. To manage and mobilize required resources for school conduction.

- b. To regularly monitor and evaluate the yearly programs.
- c. To get financial audit regularly by keeping account in the format prescribed by the regulation.

Appendix 2 Questionnaires

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Dear Parents,

I am Kuldip Neupane, a PhD research scholar from Graduate School of Education, Tribhuvan University.

Here is a set of questionnaire designed as a part of PhD research on the topic “SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT”. It is designed for the teachers and head teacher of the school. The objective of the research is to analyze how the teachers and community are perceiving the role of School Management Committee. As an ethical researcher, I will keep confidentiality on all the information provided by you.

Each statement has five options in continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Please, tick in a box as per your personal observation. For your convenience the option “Neutral” is also there where you can tick in case you don’t want to answer. Your sincere answer will help to reach in authentic result.

Please fill or tick (✓) the information below:

Name: Child’s Grade :

Gender: male female Child’s School:
.....

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box.

Leadership Aspect of SMC					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Focused Area: Decision Making					
The SMC makes arrangement to discuss with us on the available options before making any decisions.					
Our SMC sends us memo or circular about the decisions made in their committee to review.					
I am always involved in any of the decision made by SMC through suggestions/voting/feedback.					
Focused Area: Participation					
Our SMC includes representatives from all social classes while having any discussion					
Our SMC disseminates all the information to all the social classes equally.					
Our SMC is fully democratic in the process of decision making and implementation.					
Our SMC calls us in group for the discussion in issues.					
Focused Area: Accountability and Responsibility					
Our SMC finishes the tasks in time for the development of school.					
Our SMC seems focused on the results of the tasks they are accomplishing.					
Our SMC disseminates the work progress report publicly.					
Our SMC members seem dutiful in task completion.					
Our SMC understands the expectations of parents.					
Focused Area: Social Responsibility					
Every decision made by our SMC is environment friendly and sustainable.					
Our SMC engages all the stakeholders in dialogue before making decisions.					

Our SMC seems working considering corporate social responsibility					
We often see society volunteering in school.					
Our school organizes healthcare/awareness program for the society.					
Our school organizes adult education program in school.					
Our SMC's activities and decisions are transparent.					
Our school's financial activities and account are transparent.					
Management Aspect of SMC					
Focused Area: Pursuing Goals					
I found that our SMC clearly sets the goals to achieve the targeted outcome.					
While pursuing goals our SMC aligns towards the school's objectives.					
My SMC allocates the human and non-human resources wisely.					
My SMC collaborates with me in jobs of school.					
My SMC calls meeting to solve the problem which comes while doing the work.					
Focused Area: Relationship					
My SMC works in good collaboration with parent community.					
My SMC stays in regular connection with the parent community.					
My SMC has good sense of empathy and respect for the parent community.					
My SMC listens well to the parent community.					
My SMC often organizes interaction program with parent community.					
Focused Area: Communication					
My SMC makes effective communication in a concise manner.					
My SMC listens actively while we speak.					
There is transparency in communication made by my SMC.					
My SMC disseminates the information to all the stakeholders equally.					
My SMC makes good attention to detailed information regarding issues.					
Focused Area: Effectiveness and Efficiency					
My SMC is able enough to achieve desired outcomes.					
My SMC seems focused on accomplishing right thing at right time.					
My SMC fulfills its promises in time.					
My SMC uses technology to improve efficiency in performance.					
Focused Area: Network Management					
My school's network with society, organizations and stakeholders is nice.					
My SMC's communication channel is effective so that the information comes in time.					
My SMC has included the diverged community.					
My SMC manages network in a proper way when some conflict arrives.					
My SMC engages the stakeholders properly while resolving the conflict.					
Focused Area: Monitoring					
My SMC time and again comes to us for data collection for the monitoring process.					
My SMC provides constructive feedback to us after monitoring.					
My SMC provides corrective feedback to us after monitoring.					

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Dear Teachers,

I am Kuldip Neupane, a PhD research scholar from Graduate School of Education, Tribhuvan University.

Here is a set of questionnaire designed as a part of PhD research on the topic “SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT”. It is designed for the teachers and head teacher of the school. The objective of the research is to analyze how the teachers and community are perceiving the role of School Management Committee. As an ethical researcher, I will keep confidentiality on all the information provided by you.

Each statement has five options in continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Please, tick in a box as per your personal observation. For your convenience the option “Neutral” is also there where you can tick in case you don’t want to answer. Your sincere answer will help to reach in authentic result.

Please fill or tick (✓) the information below:

Name: Age: Service year:

Gender: male female School:

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate box.

Leadership Aspect of SMC					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Focused Area: Decision Making					
The SMC makes arrangement to discuss with us on the available options before making any decisions.					
Our SMC sends us memo or circular about the decisions made in their committee to review.					
I am always involved in any of the decision made by SMC through suggestions/voting/feedback.					
Our SMC goes through sufficient dialogues with us before making any decisions.					
Our SMC disseminates forms to fill to take our opinions to make any decisions.					
Our SMC never delays in making right decisions at right time.					
Focused Area: Participation					
Our SMC includes representatives from all social classes while having any discussion					
Our SMC disseminates all the information to all the social classes equally.					
Our SMC seeks full collaboration in finishing the tasks effectively.					
Our SMC always calls me to discuss on the dialogues.					
Sometimes I am consulted about the issues of the school by the SMC.					
I feel like I am involved in the discussion process called by SMC					
Our SMC calls all the stakeholders for discussion process time and again.					
Our SMC calls us in group for the discussion in issues.					
Our SMC has selected representatives from all the stakeholders’ strata for discussion process.					
Focused Area: Accountability and Responsibility					
Our SMC finishes the tasks in time for the development of school.					

Our SMC seems focused on tasks for the school's development.					
Our SMC disseminates the work progress report publicly.					
Our SMC takes the ownership for any result comes.					
Our SMC sometimes makes especial task force to accomplish the particular tasks.					
Our SMC members seem dutiful in task completion.					
All the members of our SMC seems responsible for the school development.					
Our SMC understands the expectations of teachers.					
Our SMC seems accountable for any positive and negative consequences.					
Our SMC communicates well about its expectation from us.					
Focused Area: Social Responsibility					
Our SMC members never shows personal interests in making decisions.					
Our SMC considers broader impact of decisions on its stakeholders.					
Every decision made by our SMC is environment friendly and sustainable.					
Our SMC seems working considering corporate social responsibility					
We often see society volunteering in school.					
We often see our SMC members volunteering for society.					
Our school organizes healthcare/awareness program for the society.					
Our school organizes adult education program in school.					
Our SMC's activities and decisions are transparent.					
Our school's financial activities and account are transparent.					
Our school has good collaboration with the community					
Management Aspect of SMC					
Focused Area: Pursuing Goals					
I found that our SMC clearly sets the goals to achieve the targeted outcome.					
My SMC seems well planned to achieve the targeted goals.					
My SMC is aware about the available resources while pursuing the goals.					
My SMC seems focused on goals while doing the tasks.					
My SMC exhibits a commendable sense of prioritization while performing the works.					
My SMC allocates the human and non-human resources wisely.					
My SMC motivates and inspires me to work in school.					
My SMC mobilizes us as a team member to achieve the school's goals.					
I am feeling positive work environment in my school because of SMC					
My SMC organizes program for our continuous development to achieve the goals.					
Focused Area: Relationship					
My SMC has good cooperation among teacher community.					
My SMC addresses the need of teacher community for the smooth teaching learning environment.					
My SMC listens well to the teacher community.					
My SMC has good sense of empathy and respect for the teachers community.					
My SMC often organizes interaction program with teacher community.					
Focused Area: Communication					
I feel clarity in communication made by my SMC.					

There is transparency in communication made by my SMC.					
My SMC disseminates the information to all the stakeholders equally.					
My SMC makes written communication more than verbal one.					
I feel easy access to get message disseminated by my SMC.					
My SMC has good sense of communication for conflict resolution.					
Focused Area: Effectiveness and Efficiency					
My SMC is able enough to achieve desired outcomes.					
My SMC has set clear goals for the development of school.					
My SMC makes the concerned people well equipped to accomplish the goals.					
My SMC fulfills its promises in time and wants our job to accomplish in time.					
My SMC uses technology to improve efficiency in performance.					
Focused Area: Network Management					
My school's network with society, organizations and stakeholders is nice.					
My SMC's internal networking is very good.					
My SMC's communication is effective for maintaining network.					
My SMC's communication channel is effective so that the information comes in time.					
My school organizes knowledge sharing program among the departments and among other schools.					
My SMC manages network in a proper way when some conflict arrives.					
My SMC engages the stakeholders properly while resolving the conflict.					
Focused Area: Monitoring					
My SMC has given us key performance indicators for our monitoring.					
My SMC time and again comes to us for data collection for the monitoring process.					
My SMC has given us baseline and target point for our jobs.					
My SMC provides constructive feedback to us after monitoring.					
My SMC provides corrective feedback to us after monitoring.					

Appendix 3
Questionnaires Translated in Nepali Language
SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

आदरणीय शिक्षकज्यू,

मेरो नाम कुलदिप न्यौपाने हो । म त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय, ग्याजुएट स्कुल अफ एजुकेशनबाट “SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT” विषयमा विधावारिधि शोध गर्दैछु ।

तल राखिएका प्रश्नावलिहरु शिक्षक र प्रधानाध्यापकका लागि तयार गरिएका छन् । यस शोधपत्रको उद्देश्य शिक्षक र समुदायले व्यवस्थापन समितिको भूमिकालाई कसरी हेर्नु र बुझ्नु भएको छ भनेर अनुसन्धान गर्नु हो । अनुसन्धानको नैतिकतामा रहि हजुरको जवाफ पुर्ण रुपमा गोप्य राखिने छ ।

प्रश्नावलिका प्रत्येक कथनका लागि ‘पुर्ण सहमत’ देखि ‘पुर्ण असहमत’ सम्म गरि पाँचवटा विकल्पहरु दिईएका छन् । कृपया तपाईंको व्यक्तिगत अवलोकनका आधारमा प्रत्येक कथनका लागि कुनै एक कोठामा ठिक चिन्ह लगाउनुहुन अनुरोध छ । हजुरको इमान्दारितापुर्ण जवाफले सहि विश्लेषण गर्न मद्दत गर्नेछ ।

कृपया खालि ठाउँ भर्नुहोस् अथवा ठिक (✓) चिन्ह लगाउनुहोस्:

तपाईंको नाम (ऐक्षिक): लिङ्ग: पुरुष ☐ महिला ☐

शैक्षिक योग्यता: सेवा अवधि:

तपाईं अध्यापनरत विद्यालय:.....

कृपया उपयुक्त कोठामा ठिक (✓) चिन्ह लगाउनुहोस्:

विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको नेतृत्व पक्ष					
	पुर्ण सहमत	सहमत	थाहा छैन	असहमत	पुर्ण असहमत
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: निर्णय बनाउनु					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि निर्णय गर्दा हामी शिक्षकहरूसँग छलफल गर्ने व्यवस्था गर्छु ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गरेका निर्णयहरु हामीलाई जानकारी गराइन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने निर्णयहरुमा सदस्यहरुको व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थ भल्कन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने निर्णयहरुमा सुझाव, पृष्ठपोषण वा मतको माध्यमबाट मेरो सहभागिता रहन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति कुनैपनि निर्णय गर्नु अघि विभिन्न पक्षहरूसँग प्रसस्त छलफल गर्छु ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने निर्णयहरुमा सदस्यहरुको व्यक्तिगत र साँस्कृतिक स्वार्थ भल्कन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि निर्णय गर्दा विभिन्न माध्यमबाट मेरो मत लिन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गरेका निर्णयहरुमा कुनैपनि जातिय, साँस्कृतिक वा सामाजिक स्वार्थ भल्कंदैन ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले सहि समयमा सहि निर्णय गर्न ढिलाई गर्दैन ।					
मलाई लाग्छकि विद्यालयको विकासका लागि मैले मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको निर्देशन अनुसार चल्नुपर्छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: सहभागिता					

मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले छलफलमा आमन्त्रीत गर्दा मलाई भाग लिन मन लाग्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि छलफल गर्दा समुदायका सबै पक्षलाई समेट्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले जानकारीहरु समुदायका सबै पक्षलाई समानरुपमा सम्प्रेषण गर्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि कार्य सम्पादनमा समाजका सबै पक्षको सहायताको लागि आह्वान गर्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले सधैं मलाई छलफलमा सहभागी गराउँछ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले प्रजातान्त्रिक तवरले निर्णय गर्ने र उक्त निर्णय लागु गर्ने गर्दछ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले लाई कहिलेकाहि निर्णय गर्न गाह्रो पर्दा म पनि मत दिन सहभागि भएको छु ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले अह्वान गरेको बैठकमा भाग लिँदा सम्मानका साथ व्यवहार भएको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हाम्रो सहभागितालाई भारको रुपमा लिएको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनै विषयमा मसंग परामर्श गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले मलाई सहभागिताको लागि भारा टार्न सूचित गरे जस्तो मात्र लाग्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले आह्वान गरेको बैठकमा सहभागि हुँदा पुर्ण सङ्लग्न भएको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले समय समयमा संपूर्ण सरोकारवालाहरुलाई छलफलको लागि बोलाउने गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामीलाई सामुहिक रुपमा छलफलको लागि बोलाउने गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले छलफलको लागि विभिन्न समूहबाट प्रतिनिधि चयन गरेको छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: जिम्मेवारी र जवाफदेहिता					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विध्यालय विकासका लागि तोकिएका कार्यहरु समयमा सम्पादन गर्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति विध्यालय विकासका कार्यहरुमा केन्द्रित रहन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति कुनैपनि कार्यको नतिजामा केन्द्रित रहेको देखिन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कार्य सम्पादन प्रतिवेदन सार्वजनिक गर्दछ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कार्य सम्पादनबाट आएका सकारात्मक नकारात्मक दुवै नतिजाको अपनत्व लिन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनै कार्य सम्पादनको लागि विशेष कार्यदल बनाउने गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति आफ्नो कार्य सम्पादनमा कर्तव्यनिष्ठ देखिन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिका सम्पूर्ण पदधिकारीहरु विध्यालय विकासमा जिम्मेवार देखिन्छन् ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले शिक्षकका आशाहरुलाई राम्ररी बुझेको छ ।					

मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कार्य सम्पादनबाट आएका सकारात्मक नकारात्मक दुवै नतिजाको जवाफदेहिता लिन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षकबाट के चाहन्छ भन्ने कुराको सञ्चार राम्रोसंग गरेको छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: सामाजिक जवाफदेहिता					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि निर्णय गर्दा सामाजिक नैतिकतालाई प्राथमिकता दिन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विध्यालय विकासमा कहिले पनि व्यक्तिगत स्वर्थलाई प्राथमिकता दिएको देखिन्न ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने निर्णयमा सरोकारवालाहरुमा पर्ने वृहत असरको ध्यान दिएको देखिन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने प्रत्येक निर्णय दिगो र वातावरण मैत्रि हुन्छन् ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि निर्णय गर्नु अघि सबै सरोकारवालाहरुसंग छलफल गर्ने गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने गरेका कार्यहरु सामाजिक दायित्वलाई ध्यानमा राखेर गरेको देखिन्छ ।					
समुदायले प्राय मेरो विध्यालयमा स्वयंसेवा गरेको देखिन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले प्राय समुदायको लागि स्वयंसेवा गरेको देखिन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालयले समय समयमा समुदायको लागि स्वास्थ्य चेतना सम्बन्धि कार्यक्रम गर्ने गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालयले समुदायको लागि प्रौढ शिक्षा कार्यक्रम लागु गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिका क्रियाकलाप र निर्णयहरु परदर्सी हुन्छन् ।					
मेरो विध्यालयको आर्थिक क्रियाकलाप र खातापाता पारदर्सी छन् ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिका सदस्यहरु हाम्रा लागि प्रेरणाका श्रोत हुन् ।					
मेरो विध्यालयले समुदायसंग राम्रो संबन्ध स्थापित गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षकहरुको माझ का म गर्ने सकारात्मक वातावरण सिर्जना गरिदिएको छ ।					
विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको व्यवस्थापन पक्ष					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: लक्ष प्राप्त					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले स्पष्ट लक्ष्यहरु तय गरेको पाएको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले लक्ष्य प्राप्त गर्दा विध्यालयको उद्देश्य अनुसार काम गरेको पाइन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले लक्ष्य प्राप्तिका लागि राम्रो तयारी गरेको पाइन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिलाई लक्ष्य प्राप्तिका लागी आफूसंग उपलब्ध रहेका श्रोत साधनको राम्रो जानकारी भएको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कार्यहरु गर्दा लक्ष्यमा केन्द्रित भएको पाइन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिसंग लक्ष्य प्राप्तिका लागि सधैं वैकल्पिक योजना भएको पाएको छ ।					

मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले लक्ष्य प्राप्तिका क्रममा प्राथमिकताका आधारमा काम गर्न जानेको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले मानव तथा अन्य श्रोत साधन बुद्धिमत्तापूर्ण तरिकाले परिचालन गरेको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले मलाई विद्यालयमा काम गर्न सधैं प्रेरणा दिन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालयको लक्ष्य प्राप्तमा मलाई पनि ठोस सदस्यको रूपमा परिचालन गर्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालयमा काम गर्ने सकारात्मक वातावरण सिर्जना गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालयका क्रियाकलापमा हामी शिक्षकसंग सहकार्य गर्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कार्य सम्पादनका क्रममा आइपरेका समस्याहरु हल गर्न हामीलाई पनि बैठकमा बोलाउने गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षकहरुको निरन्तर विकासमा राम्रो ध्यान पुऱ्याएको छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: सम्बन्ध स्थापना					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षक समुदायसंग दोहोरो सहयोगको सम्बन्ध स्थापित गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षक समुदायसंग सहकार्य सम्बन्ध स्थापित गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षक समुदायसंग धेरै कार्यहरुमा समन्वय गर्न गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति हामी शिक्षक समुदासंग सधैं सम्पर्कमा रहन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षक समुदायको आवश्यकता बुझि शैक्षणिक क्रियाकलापमा हामीलाई राम्रो वातावरण सृजना गरिदिन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षकहरुको कुराहरुलाई सुनिदिन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षक समुदायमा सम्मान र सहानुभूति राखेको पाइन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले प्रभावकारी कार्य सम्पादनको लागि हामी शिक्षक समुदायलाई गरेको वाचा पूरा गर्दछ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षक समुदायसंग बेलाबेलामा छलफल कार्यक्रमहरु आयोजना गर्ने गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षक समुदायसंग आफ्ना व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थका लागि सम्बन्ध स्थापित गर्ने गरेको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षक समुदायसंग विद्यालयको संस्थागत स्वार्थका लागि सम्बन्ध स्थापित गर्ने गरेको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी शिक्षक समुदायसंग दिगो सम्बन्ध स्थापित गर्ने गरेको छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: संचार					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गरेको सञ्चार म पूर्ण रूपमा बुझ्दछ ।					

मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले प्रभावकारी सञ्चार गर्ने गर्दछ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामीले बोल्दा ध्यानपूर्वक सुन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले सञ्चारको क्रममा सम्मानका साथ हाम्रो सुनुवाई गर्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने सञ्चारमा पारदर्शीता महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामीले दिएको सुझावलाई सकारात्मक रूपमा अंगीकार गर्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले सरोकारवाला सबैमा समान तवरले सञ्चार गर्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले मौखिक भन्दा लिखित सञ्चार बढि गर्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गरेको सञ्चारमा मेरो सजिलै पहुँच रहन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिसँग द्वन्द्व व्यवस्थापनमा प्रभावकारी सञ्चार गर्ने क्षमता छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिसँग हरेक मुद्दामा सहमति बनाउन प्रभावकारी सञ्चार गर्ने क्षमता राम्रो छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि मुद्दामा ध्यानपूर्वक पुर्ण जानकारी लिन्छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: प्रभावकारीता र दक्षता					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति चाहना अनुसारको प्रतिफल प्राप्त गर्न सक्षम छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति सहि समयमा सहि कार्य सम्पादनमा केन्द्रित देखिन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालय विकासका लागी स्पष्ट लक्ष्यहरु तय गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले लक्ष्य प्राप्तिका लागि सम्बन्धित व्यक्तिलाई आवश्यक सरसामान उपलब्ध गराउँछ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालय विकासका लागि रणनीतिक योजना बनाएको छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले लक्ष्य प्राप्तिका लागी कहिले काहीँ आफ्ना योजनाहरु बदलेको मलाई थाहा छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले आफ्ना प्रतिज्ञाहरु समयमा पुरा गर्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कार्य क्षमता बृद्धिका लागि प्रविधिको प्रभावकारी प्रयोग गर्ने गरेको छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: नेटवर्क व्यवस्थापन					
मेरो विद्यालयको समुदाय, संघ संस्था तथा सरोकारवालाहरूसँग राम्रो नेटवर्किङ छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले समय समयमा शिक्षक र विद्यार्थी संग अन्तरक्रिया गर्ने गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको आन्तरिक नेटवर्किङ राम्रो छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको नेटवर्किङ व्यवस्थापनमा राम्रो सञ्चार हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको सञ्चार च्यानल राम्रो भएकोले जानकारीहरु समयमा प्राप्त हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिमा समुदायका विविध जातजातीको प्रतिनिधित्व छ ।					

मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले द्वन्द्व व्यवस्थापनमा नेटवर्किङको प्रभावकारी प्रयोग गर्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले द्वन्द्व व्यवस्थापनमा सबै सरोकारवालाहरूको प्रभावकारी संलग्नता लिन्छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: अनुगमन					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले समय समयमा हाम्रो कार्य अनुगमनमा आउनेछ भनि हामीलाई खबर गरेको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हाम्रो अनुगमनका लागि Key Performance Indicators दिएको छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति विध्यालय विकास अनुगमनको क्रममा डाटा संकलनार्थ समय समयमा हाम्रो सम्पर्कमा रहन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विध्यालय अनुगमन गरी हामीलाई निर्माणात्मक पृष्ठपोषण दिन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विध्यालय अनुगमन गरी हामीलाई सुधारात्मक पृष्ठपोषण दिन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी माथि के अनुगमन गरिरहेको छ भन्ने हामीलाई थाहा हुन्छ ।					
मेरो विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हाम्रो लागि लक्ष तय गरिदिएको छ ।					

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

आदरणीय अविभावकज्यू

मेरो नाम कुलदिप न्यौपाने हो । म त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय, ग्याजुएट स्कूल अफ एजुकेशनबाट “SCHOOL GOVERNANCE: ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT” विषयमा विधावारिधि शोध गर्दैछु ।

तल राखिएका प्रश्नावलिहरू शिक्षक र प्रधानाध्यापकका लागि तयार गरिएका छन् । यस शोधपत्रको उद्देश्य शिक्षक र समुदायले व्यवस्थापन समितिको भूमिकालाई कसरी हेर्नु र बुझ्नु भएको छ भनेर अनुसन्धान गर्नु हो । अनुसन्धानको नैतिकतामा रहि हजुरको जवाफ पुर्ण रुपमा गोप्य राखिने छ ।

प्रश्नावलिका प्रत्येक कथनका लागि ‘पुर्ण सहमत’ देखि ‘पुर्ण असहमत’ सम्म गरि पाँचवटा विकल्पहरू दिइएका छन् । कृपया तपाईंको व्यक्तिगत अवलोकनका आधारमा प्रत्येक कथनका लागि कुनै एक कोठामा ठिक चिन्ह लगाउनुहुन अनुरोध छ । हजुरको इमान्दारितापुर्ण जवाफले सहि विश्लेषण गर्न मद्दत गर्नेछ ।

कृपया खालि ठाउँ भर्नुहोस् अथवा ठिक (✓) चिन्ह लगाउनुहोस्:

तपाईंको नाम (ऐक्षिक): लिङ्ग: पुरुष ☐ महिला ☐

शैक्षिक योग्यता:

पेशा:

तपाईंको बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत कक्षा: तपाईंको बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत

विध्यालय:.....

कृपया उपयुक्त कोठामा ठिक (✓) चिन्ह लगाउनुहोस्:

विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको नेतृत्व पक्ष					
	पुर्ण सहमत	सहमत	थाहा छैन	असहमत	पुर्ण असहमत
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: निर्णय बनाउनु					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि निर्णय गर्दा हामी अविभावकहरूसँग छलफल गर्ने व्यवस्था गर्छु ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विध्यालयको व्यवस्थापन समितिले गरेका निर्णयहरू हामीलाई जानकारी गराइन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने निर्णयहरूमा सदस्यहरूको व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थ भल्कन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने निर्णयहरूमा सुझाव, पृष्ठपोषण वा मतको माध्यमबाट मेरो सहभागिता रहन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गरेका निर्णयहरूमा कुनैपनि जातिय, साँस्कृतिक वा सामाजिक स्वार्थ भल्कँदैन ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले सहि समयमा सहि निर्णय गर्न ढिलाई गर्दैन ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: सहभागिता					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले छलफलमा आमन्त्रीत गर्दा मलाई भाग लिन मन लाग्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि छलफल गर्दा समुदायका सबै पक्षलाई समेट्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विध्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले जानकारीहरू समुदायका सबै पक्षलाई समानरूपमा सम्प्रेषण गर्छ ।					

मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले प्रजातान्त्रिक तवरले निर्णय गर्ने र उक्त निर्णय लागु गर्ने गर्दछ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिलाई कहिलेकाहि निर्णय गर्न गाह्रो पर्दा म पनि मत दिन सहभागी भएको छु ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले अष्टवान गरेको बैठकमा भाग लिँदा सम्मानका साथ व्यवहार भएको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हाम्रो सहभागितालाई भारको रुपमा लिएको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामीलाई सामुहिक रुपमा छलफलको लागि बोलाउने गरेको छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: जिम्मेवारी र जवाफदेहिता					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालय विकासका लागि तोकिएका कार्यहरु समयमा सम्पादन गर्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति कुनैपनि कार्यको नतिजामा केन्द्रित रहेको देखिन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कार्य सम्पादन प्रतिवेदन सार्वजनिक गर्दछ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति आफ्नो कार्य सम्पादनमा कर्तव्यनिष्ठ देखिन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले अविभावकका आशाहरुलाई राम्ररी बुझेको छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: सामाजिक जवाफदेहिता					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालय विकासमा कहिले पनि व्यक्तिगत स्वर्थलाई प्राथमिकता दिएको देखिन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने प्रत्येक निर्णय दिगो र वातावरण मैत्री हुन्छन् ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि निर्णय गर्नु अघि सबै सरोकारवालाहरुसंग छलफल गर्ने गरेको छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने गरेका कार्यहरु सामाजिक दायित्वलाई ध्यानमा राखेर गरेको देखिन्छ ।					
हाम्रो समुदायले प्राय मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालयमा स्वयंसेवा गरेको देखिन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालयले समय समयमा समुदायको लागि स्वास्थ्य चेतना सम्बन्धि कार्यक्रम गर्ने गरेको छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालयले समुदायको लागि प्रौढ शिक्षा कार्यक्रम लागु गरेको छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिका क्रियाकलाप र निर्णयहरु परदर्सी हुन्छन् ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालयको आर्थिक क्रियाकलाप र खातापाता पारदर्सी छन् ।					
विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको व्यवस्थापन पक्ष					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: लक्ष प्राप्त					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले स्पष्ट लक्ष्यहरु तय गरेको पाएको छ ।					

मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले लक्ष्य प्राप्त गर्दा विद्यालयको उद्देश्य अनुसार काम गरेको पाइन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले मानव तथा अन्य श्रोत साधन बुद्धिमत्तापूर्ण तरिकाले परिचालन गरेको महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालयका क्रियाकलापमा म संग सहकार्य गर्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कार्य सम्पादनका क्रममा आइपरेका समस्याहरु हल गर्न हामीलाई पनि बैठकमा बोलाउने गरेको छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: सम्बन्ध स्थापना					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी अविभावक समुदायसंग सहकार्य सम्बन्ध स्थापित गरेको छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति हामी अविभावक समुदासंग सधैं सम्पर्कमा रहन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी अविभावक समुदायको आवश्यकता बुझि शैक्षणिक क्रियाकलापमा शिक्षकहरुलाई राम्रो वातावरण सृजना गरिदिन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी अविभावक समुदायमा सम्मान र सहानुभुति राखेको पाइन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी अविभावक समुदायको आवाजको सुनुवाई गर्दछ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामी अविभावक समुदायसंग बेलाबेलामा छलफल कार्यक्रमहरु आयोजना गर्ने गरेको छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: संचार					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले प्रभावकारी सञ्चार गर्ने गर्दछ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामीले बोल्दा ध्यानपूर्वक सुन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले गर्ने सञ्चारमा पारदर्शीता महसुस हुन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले हामीले दिएको सुझावलाई सकारात्मक रुपमा अंगीकार गर्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले सरोकारवाला सबैमा समान तवरले सञ्चार गर्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिसंग हरेक मुद्दामा सहमति बनाउन प्रभावकारी सञ्चार गर्ने क्षमता राम्रो छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कुनैपनि मुद्दामा ध्यानपूर्वक पुर्ण जानकारी लिन्छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: प्रभावकारीता र दक्षता					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति चाहना अनुसारको प्रतिफल प्राप्त गर्न सक्षम छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति सहि समयमा सहि कार्य सम्पादनमा केन्द्रित देखिन्छ ।					

मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालय विकासका लागि स्पष्ट लक्ष्यहरु तय गरेको छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले लक्ष्य प्राप्तिका लागि कहिले काहीं आफ्ना योजनाहरु बदलेको मलाई थाहा छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले आफ्ना प्रतिज्ञाहरु समयमा पुरा गर्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले कार्य क्षमता बृद्धिका लागि प्रविधिको प्रभावकारी प्रयोग गर्ने गरेको छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: नेटवर्क व्यवस्थापन					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालयको समुदाय, संघ संस्था तथा सरोकारवालाहरुसंग राम्रो नेटवर्किङ छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको नेटवर्किङ व्यवस्थापनमा राम्रो सञ्चार हुन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिको सञ्चार च्यानल राम्रो भएकोले जानकारीहरु समयमा प्राप्त हुन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिमा समुदायका विविध जातजातीको प्रतिनिधित्व छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले द्वन्द्व व्यवस्थापनमा नेटवर्किङको प्रभावकारी प्रयोग गर्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले द्वन्द्व व्यवस्थापनमा सबै सरोकारवालाहरुको प्रभावकारी संलग्नता लिन्छ ।					
केन्द्रित क्षेत्र: अनुगमन					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समिति विद्यालय विकास अनुगमनको क्रममा डाटा संकलनार्थ समय समयमा हाम्रो सम्पर्कमा रहन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालय अनुगमन गरी हामीले गर्नुपर्ने सहयोगको बारेमा पृष्ठपोषण दिन्छ ।					
मेरो बाबु/नानी अध्ययनरत विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिले विद्यालय अनुगमन गरी हामीले हाम्रा बाबु/नानीको पढाईमा गर्नुपर्ने सहयोगको बारेमा पृष्ठपोषण दिन्छ ।					