IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON TEACHING LEARNING PROCESS IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Conflict is abundantly present in every society. The nature and types of conflicts that emerge in school vary from school to school. The common types of conflicts usually occur between the students on one hand and school authority on the other. Other forms of conflicts include intrapersonal conflict among teachers as well as students regarding the causes of different norms and values, desires and selfishness. If conflicts are not resolved in time, they have destructive impacts in teaching learning, and it may lead to violence. This article highlights the causes of conflicts among students and teachers and its effects on teaching learning process in school.

Key words

Conflict; Intrapersonal; selfishness; destructive; impacts

Introduction

The term 'conflict' has no single meaning, much of the confusion has been created by scholars in different disciplines who are interested to studying in conflict in spite of the mutual disagreement between two or more people with regard to any subject which brings disparity, hostility, violence, war etc. among them. In the organizational area, Adomi & Anie, (2005) consider conflict is an expression of hostility, antagonism and misunderstanding between the staff members.

Plunkett & Attner (1989) explain that the sources of conflict includes- shared resources, differences in goals, perceptions and values, disagreements in the role requirement, nature of work activities and individual approaches. Another definition of conflict is a process of social interaction involving a struggle over climes to the resources, power and status, belief, and other preferences and desires (Reichers, 1986).

Similarly, Billingham & Sack (1987) consider conflict as a breakdown in the mechanism of decision making. So that an individual or group experiences difficulty in selecting an alternative. Another definition of conflict is a type of behavior which occurs when two or more parties are in opposition or battle as a

result of perceived relative deprivation from the activities of or interacting with another person or group (Litterer, 1966).

Adomi & Anie (2005), Plunkett & Attner (1989), Reichers (1986) Billingham & Sack (1987) and Litterer (1966) have defined conflict on different perspective of his/ her experiences and findings. However, all of these authors and researchers consider conflict to result from incompatibility or opposition in goals, activities, or interaction among the social entities.

Upreti (2062 BS) mentions some of the causes or sources of conflict within organization. These include inadequate information, role conflict/collision and differences in goals, values and competition for limited resources, responsibility personnel, space tools and equipment, access to superior. In this way the conflict appears within a person, between persons, between the groups and also between the organizations. Thapa (2068 BS) pleads that the interpersonal conflicts are characterized by people not liking each other, not agreeing with one another expression of hostility to another exaggerating the weaknesses of one to the other. Sometimes it makes the daily life difficult and even creates the war between the two powers.

Hanson (1991) suggests administrators' awareness of various tactics of management whereas Thomas (1976) proposes five management styles: avoidance, compromising /sharing, accommodation, collaboration/ integration identified may be effective depending on the situation. In organization such as a school, a number of these sources of conflict could be applicable to school head and class teachers. Such situations disturb the climate of school and ultimately the performance of head teacher and class teachers as well as teaching learning process is negatively affected. Thapa (2013) suggests that proper communication, encourage of students practice high level of maturity and training in conflict management is an

essential in effective management of conflict at schools level. Further he suggests that head teacher, class teacher, peer group and parents can play the vital role of conflict management in schools.

Most importantly, the present study differs from the prior studies by sources and causes of conflict in school from the perspective of students. In a report on conflict management in school of Nepal (Thapa, 2013) mentioned that conflicts were seen in the form of feeling of superiority and inferiority on the basis of caste and minority group as well as feeling of local students vs. outer students and social discrimination. He further argued that the students perceived that the local students (s/he has been staying permanently surrounding the schools) tried to dominate the outsiders' (s/he has not been staying permanently surrounding the schools) and couldn't provide the opportunity to participate in any extra-curricular activities of outsider students, because they had the feeling that local community recognize them.

A school environment has diverse values, beliefs and attitudes making it inevitable for conflict to occur among and between students, parents, teachers and non-teaching staff (Achka, 1990). This supports Whitaker (1996) who asserts that 30-40 percent schools Head's time is spent on preventing or resolution of conflict in school. Similarly, Makaye & Ndoferepi (2012), argues that teachers and head teachers may conflict over certain issues on daily, weekly and /or monthly basis. Reason for such conflicts was allocation of class/classroom, unfair allocation of teaching and learning resources such as charts and stationery.

They focus that most conflicts at school are resolves at school level with the head teacher playing a conflict resolution in classes where s/he is involved. Students at the same have various influences internal, our observing the surrounding and apply in their day to day to life that creates a big problem even some

psychological reasons. It's proved that conflict can occur at any level and various polices can be made to solve it.

This study focused to teachers' perspective. Teachers perceive educational conflicts and observed their consequences in teaching learning was the major concentration of this study.

Methods

The samples of the study consisted of chairmen of school management committee (SMC), chairpersons from parents' teachers association (PTA), one resource person (RP), 24 teachers, 48 students and 12 parents of eight community schools located in Birgunj. In order to collect information from the field, different tools such as questionnaire, interviews were adopted and focus-group discussions were held. The data were collected during the months of September- October, 2015.

Results and discussion

The results have been presented on current situation of conflict, causes and sources of conflict and impacts of conflict on teaching learning process in schools:

Current situation of conflict in school

School is the School is the academic institution where the children belonging to various communities, religions, cultures, languages and tradition step on to have knowledge. If there is no effective teaching, the object of it cannot be gained. There must be qualified, skilled, honest, disciplined, dedicated and responsible.

On the top of that the environment must be congenial for effective teaching learning. If there is no congenial, peaceful, democratic environment, teaching and learning don't happen in a right way. In course of running the institution, various kinds of barrier arise which hamper the system, due to which teachers themselves cannot present positively. The current situation of conflict has been presented as follows:

i.   *The recruitment of teachers:* The process of recruiting of hiring teachers in school is becoming the burning issue in creating conflict in school itself .Nepotism and favoritism was the major hurdle in creating this type of situation in school.

ii. *Interference of union:* Politicization in school has been major part in school. They do not come regularly to have the class due to political power. Most the teachers from the school were fed up with the interference, they were blaming on their colleagues.

iii. *Communication gap: E*ffective and proper communication makes the system faster and advanced. If there is no communication, nothing worthwhile can be achieved. One of teachers said "Due to communication gap, teachers and staff are not being able to maintain coordination. These gaps created problems in the class running and conducting regular meeting, internal programs, and interaction for students."

iv. *Traditional teaching methods:* There is no creativity among students and teachers, they both are in the same boat which gives the parents dissatisfaction and creates the situation of conflict. Once a parent expressed his dissatisfaction that his son was not able to answer the question what he had asked him. "So new method, discussion, interaction in the class must be held", he said.

Causes and sources of conflict

These are some of the causes and sources of conflict which were identified:

i.   *Politicization:* Politicization in school was one of the major sources that create educational conflicts in schools. It was found

that politicization enhanced teachers' absenteeism. During the course of interview one teacher said, "Those teachers who are acting 'as political workers' more often became absent in school". In this situation, if school head ordered to the teachers to take an extra class it rather enhance conflict. In this respect, one respondent teacher as clearly said "it is too much tedious for me if I have to take 'extra classes without facility".

ii. *The feeling of local teachers vs. outsiders:* Generally, local teachers tried to dominate the outsiders, because they had the feeling that community members recognize them, they can interact with them in any time. Likewise, they had the feeling that they own the school and outsiders must be careful in every activity. For instance, one outsider teacher said, "more often local teachers become absent, they show negligence towards teaching and often come late and leave early." In the case of outsiders, they take long leaves while they go for leisure. Therefore, local teacher counts the number of days the outsiders take leaves and the outsider counts the number of hours and frequency of leave of the local teachers. Due to the majority and domination from the local teachers, outsiders often remained salient.

iii. *Hierarchical position:* The structural hierarchy of the school was creating educational debate and dilemmas among the teachers. The secondary level teachers were considered higher level teachers in school. Due to the level wise educational qualification, salary scale, and level wise teaching, teachers had the feeling of superiority. Such feeling was creating obstacle to establish close relationship among them. In this respect, one respondent teacher from the primary level expressed her experience in this way.

iv. *The social values:* Particularly in Nepal the social values that were created by the century, long tradition of Hindu caste system had significant influence to educational conflicts. More specifically, it was observed that the lower caste teachers were facing many problems in schools to establish relationships among the teachers on the one hand, and the problems of minority cast.

v. *Selection of teacher:* It was identified that there was confrontation between community and school while selecting the temporary teachers. The School Management Committee had full authority to select the temporary teachers. In this context, one teacher said, "Even the teachers did not know about the vacancy and selection procedure. They only knew when the selected teacher started to teach in the school." Over politicization in education is the root cause of educational conflicts in school. In every schooling activities such as appointment of teachers, appointment of head teachers, nomination of School management Committee chairpersons and its' members, transfer of teachers, and even reward and punishment to the teachers are influenced by politics one-way or the other. Misuse of power in administering educational activities by the school authority is another important source, which has significant role to educational conflicts in school.

Effects of conflict in teaching learning process

The effects of conflicts in teaching learning process have been presented as follows:

i. *Lack of co-operative learning:* It was observed that in a conflicting situation, teachers and head teacher lost trust among each other. They did not have respect to other teacher and they did not believe that school head made fair judgment. One respondent teacher has said: "Nowadays, almost all of the teachers

have changed their morality, as they did not take any moral responsibility towards their work, they did not take accountability to the students' achievement because they have already lost their shyness. They often prefer to criticize the superiors." These immoral characters are the major responsible factors for educational conflict. This view of the respondent indicated that teachers were not accountable to their works.

ii. *Development of frustration:* It was found that individual teachers had their own drives, motives, goals, or expectation from the schools. They were frustrated because they did not fulfill their interests from the school. For instance, during the course of interview one respondent teacher said, 'I have seen that there is always conflict in school. I have devoted my whole life in school, I am working in school as a teacher, but I have not recognized yet at least by a single prize. Neither I do have a chance to organize and manage school.' This experience showed that there were conflicts in distributing the rewards. They were often faced conflict in school while organizing teaching learning activities. Thus, they had no interest to their jobs, to the change and innovation of school those eventually hamper the teaching learning process.

iii. *Lack of professional motivation:* When teachers working in a conflicting situation, they may lose professional motivation. In such situation, teachers had to face problems with the teachers themselves, with the head teacher and with the community as well. It was observed that due to conflict in schools, the teaching profession was becoming problematic. The profession itself has been devaluated in the society and teaching job is being more reutilized and stressful.

Different types of educational conflicts in school have negative consequences due to the development of culture of individualism in teaching among the teachers; the sluggish environment because of teacher–teacher and teacher- head teacher conflict in school, there was a crisis of confidence within the school community. They had problems to establish close relationships among each other. Poor teaching techniques make teacher feeble to give quality, Teachers are supposed to be the guide and adviser for students who show the right paths.

Conclusion

The study conclude that conflict in school, misuse of power and authority, conflicting government policy, socio-cultural values and culture are the major sources of educational conflict in school. The identified consequences of these conflicts in teaching learning were the development of individualist culture in teachers, lacked teachers' creativity, initiation, encouragement, commitment, devotion and respect to the profession that have significant impact on quality education.

So, the government should make and hard rule and regulations to take an action against the teachers involved in political activities in schools. From local level, school management committee selection process should be rigging free, open parents involvement process should be according their quality not property and teachers. If there happens any kind of misunderstanding, teachers themselves should hold a meeting and try to sort out the problem. Head teacher and teachers should ensure that there is equity and transparency in the distribution of resources as well as justice and fairness in resolving conflict at the school.

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