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## The Role of Head Teacher Leadership in School Management

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### Abstract

*This research paper examines The Role of Head Teacher leadership in School management, focusing on identifying the current status of school management and solutions to challenges faced by head teachers. The study employed a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) and was conducted in 15 secondary community schools within Ratnanagar Municipality, Chitwan District. Participants included 60 purposively selected teachers and 15 school management committee chairpersons, totaling 108 respondents. Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources using questionnaires, focus group discussions, direct observations, and interviews, and analyzed in relation to established theories and literature. Findings revealed that all schools prepared annual work calendars, but annual work plans, unit plans, and daily lesson plans were only partially implemented. Daily schedules often failed to balance workload and teaching responsibilities, indicating weak planning practices. Head teachers faced difficulties in managing educational activities due to issues such as lack of discipline, political interference, strikes, financial constraints, inadequate training, and poor stakeholder coordination. In terms of physical resources, half of the head teachers had successfully mobilized resources to improve facilities, one-quarter were in the process of improvement, and one-quarter showed little interest. Academically, two-thirds of head teachers made significant efforts to improve educational quality, some made minimal efforts, and a few showed little concern. Organizationally, three-fourths contributed notably to institutional strengthening. Financially, three-fourths supplemented government grants with funds from organizations, donors, and agencies, while some relied solely on state funding. The study concludes that head teachers play a vital role in effective school management and should be skilled administrators, approachable, and community-oriented. Recommendations include preparing and implementing annual work plans, encouraging teachers to create and follow academic plans, maintaining stakeholder coordination, and promoting extracurricular activities to enhance overall school performance..*

**Keywords:** Head teacher leadership, School leadership, School management, Educational administration, School improvement.

### Introduction

A head teacher is the principal responsible officer who provides academic, administrative, managerial, and ethical leadership in a school. The head teacher is entrusted with

overall responsibility for school operations, the teaching learning process, human resource management, student development, enhancement of educational quality, and the effective implementation of educational policies.

According to the Education Act 2028 and the Education Regulations 2059, the head teacher is the chief administrator of the school, responsible for ensuring smooth school operation, management of teachers and staff, maintenance of discipline, creation of a conducive academic environment, and implementation of government policies. Similarly, the Education Act 2074 recognizes the head teacher as the central leadership figure of the school and establishes the position as a decisive authority in school improvement, quality education, accountability, and institutional development. On this basis, a head teacher can be succinctly defined as a legally recognized principal officer who provides academic, administrative, and managerial leadership to a school and ensures its overall development, delivery of quality education, and institutional good governance.

Based on the Education Acts, Education Regulations, head teacher training curricula, and educational policies, the role of the head teacher can be viewed in two major dimensions: as a leader and as a manager. As a leader, the head teacher functions as an instructional leader by formulating and clarifying the school's vision, goals, and objectives; motivating teachers, students, and parents toward shared goals; fostering a positive school culture and learning environment; promoting innovation and quality education; ensuring inclusive, equitable, and child-friendly practices; and exercising ethical and value-based leadership. In this sense, the head teacher bears responsibility for developing the school not merely as an administrative institution but as a learning community. As a manager, the head teacher's role is structural, administrative, and technical in nature. This includes managing school administration; overseeing teachers and staff through appointment, task allocation, evaluation, and motivation; managing financial and physical resources; ensuring effective curriculum implementation and educational planning; implementing the School Improvement Plan; operating monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems; and ensuring the effective enforcement of laws, regulations, and government policies.

Education is the foundation for the all-round development of a person. It is essential for basic literacy and for managing the daily affairs of life. On the basis of theoretical and knowledge-based education, people determine paths toward self-employment or employment according to their needs. Philosophical education fosters intellectual reasoning and the capacity to analyze knowledge, while technical and vocational education provides the professional skills and expertise required to handle practical life tasks. Therefore, to meet the needs of the majority, the state assumes responsibility for running various streams of education. However, the knowledge

gained in general schools forms the fundamental basis of all education.

Educational management is a concept that combines “education” and “management.” Education is the process of bringing out or manifesting an individual’s inherent qualities. To do this, formal, informal, and non-formal methods are applied. In ancient times, education was primarily acquired through formal means. From the 19th century onwards, formal systems of education began to develop, and with them emerged the process of planned and systematic educational management (Paudel, 2012).

In Nepal, the National Education System Plan of 1971 and its subsequent amendments have attempted to strengthen the school inspection system to improve educational quality. Effective inspection is considered vital for making school education effective, which is directly linked to the roles of head teachers and subject teachers (Law and Order Management Committee, 2009).

Educational management refers to the process of operating educational services effectively and successfully. It involves developing goals and policies based on teaching and learning, creating appropriate programs, managing staff and resources, and ensuring that investments in education are implemented efficiently. Without strong management, investments alone cannot yield results resources must be mobilized in an organized way. In schools, the head teacher plays the leading role in ensuring such management (Adhikari, 2010).

For education to be effective and meaningful, coordination among teachers is essential, with the head teacher facilitating cooperation and collaboration with teachers, social workers, and education supporters. The Seventh Amendment to the Education Act (2001) also highlights the role of head teachers in improving quality in community schools (Bhattarai, 2004).

Management, in essence, is about enabling individuals and groups to work collectively toward set goals, creating an environment for achieving objectives, and effectively mobilizing human, physical, and financial resources. In schools, educational management covers the administration of human resources (teachers, students, staff), physical infrastructure (classrooms, facilities), and overall educational activities to achieve predetermined goals.

Efficient management is essential for any institution to achieve its objectives, and in schools, the head teacher plays a critical role in providing dynamic leadership, enhancing teaching-learning activities, and strengthening overall management (Budhathoki, 2007). Educational management involves planning, organizing, staffing, executing, evaluating, motivating, coordinating, and innovating to maximize results and satisfy both providers and recipients (Paudel, 2012).

The head teacher must secure staff cooperation, delegate responsibilities

according to capabilities, and coordinate annual plans, resource management, classroom observation, evaluation, and examinations. Educational management harmonizes efforts and utilizes resources to develop human qualities and promote growth among students and staff (Adhikari, 2010). Historically, educational management evolved from religious, community-based, and head teacher-led systems to scientific, human relations, and behavioral approaches, and later incorporated modern concepts like change management, gender-sensitive management, and management by objectives (Paudel, 2012).

As the central leader, the head teacher must design effective plans, mobilize resources, manage diversity, inspire teachers, and act as manager, facilitator, and educator. They must continuously update their leadership and management skills and serve as a role model for teachers and other stakeholders (Educational Manpower Development Center, 2009).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study has the following objectives:

- a. to assess the current state of educational management practices in schools.
- b. to analyze the role and challenges of principals in the effective management of school education.

### **Research Questions**

- What is the current status of educational management in the school?
- What are the challenges observed in the school's educational management?
- What roles are being performed by the headteacher in educational management?
- Has the headteacher been able to deploy teachers and staff appropriately?
- How can educational management be made more effective?
- How can the problems faced by the headteacher in educational management be resolved?

### **Rationale of the Study**

A school is a social institution, and the principal plays a crucial role in its effective educational management. This study assesses the capacity, qualifications, and responsibilities of principals, examining their leadership and its impact on overall school management. It identifies strengths and areas for improvement, encouraging principals to enhance teaching–learning processes and guiding stakeholders in further research. The study provides practical insights for principals, teachers, school management committees, students, and education professionals, supporting effective use of resources, problem-solving, innovation, cooperation, and coordination. Additionally,

by examining principals' relationships with teachers, staff, SMC chairpersons, and the wider community, the study aims to promote uniformity and quality in school leadership nationwide, offering valuable data for future researchers, policymakers, and educational planners, while motivating teachers and benefiting all stakeholders involved in education.

### **Study Area**

Although this study broadly addresses the role of principals in educational management, due to time, budget, and resource limitations, it is confined to 15 schools in Ratnanagar Municipality, Chitwan District. The research focuses on evaluating the role of principals in educational management and providing appropriate recommendations.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-method research design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches, to effectively address the research objectives. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 16 secondary schools within Ratnanagar Municipality, from which 15 principals, 15 School Management Committee chairpersons, 60 teachers, and 1 education officer were chosen, totaling 91 respondents. Data were collected from primary sources through direct field visits using questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. Secondary data were gathered from school records, attendance registers, financial statements, official reports, and relevant publications. The researcher personally coordinated data collection by contacting schools in advance, conducting face-to-face interviews, facilitating group discussions, and filling observation forms based on both participant input and direct observations. The study is based on a mixed-method research design (qualitative and quantitative) and uses purposive sampling. Research tools include questionnaires, focus group discussions, direct observation forms, and interview schedules. Data collection involved visiting each sampled school and interacting with principals, teachers, SMC chairpersons, and relevant stakeholders. The conclusions are based on the available data, and the findings can only be generalized to other areas to a limited extent.

Data analysis involved categorizing and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative information according to the study's objectives, linking findings to established theories and prior research to draw conclusions. Ethical considerations were strictly maintained throughout the study, ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, respect for respondents, and the exclusion of any harmful or sensitive questions. Adequate time was provided for respondents to participate, and the research process upheld integrity and ethical standards.

## **Review of Literature**

For studying any subject matter, it is relevant to review past writings, compositions, and related research and analysis. To make this research effective, an investigative review on the role of the principal in school educational management is conducted here. In schools, the principal must perform various roles, such as teacher, administrator, coordinator, supervisor, etc. In the context of Nepal, defining the role of principals is complex. Principals are sometimes appointed from among teachers for a fixed period. According to Harv and Davis (1997), the work of a principal differs from that of other teachers because the principal is responsible not only for the classroom but for the entire school (Davis, 1997, cited in Khanal, 2062 BS). Smith and Andrid (1989) state that skilled principals are engaged in four key areas: as resource providers, academic resources, communicators, and problem solvers in the context of developing countries. One study found that principals spend most of their time on personal tasks (Andrid, 1989, cited in Khanal, 2062 BS). Principals should play an effective role in improving the relationship between the school and the community, ensuring smooth internal administration and information systems, implementing the plans directed by the education office, and fostering positive attitudes among teachers. Moreover, it is said that primary school principals should be given full autonomy to use their authority in improving teaching–learning activities and fulfilling responsibilities (Dhakal, 2061 BS). This research by Sudarshan Dhakal encouraged principals further in teaching–learning improvement.

Despite various committees, councils, advisory groups, and assemblies formed from 2018 to 2027 aimed at qualitative improvement in education, only quantitative growth occurred, with various discrepancies and distortions emerging. Education became a source of unemployment due to lack of policy implementation, unproductive traditional methods, excessive focus on theoretical knowledge, entrance of unqualified individuals into teaching, absence of scientific examination and evaluation systems, and centralized administrative hassles (Wagle et al., 2064 BS).

Principals who play an educational role must maintain social contacts, mobilize resources, assess the environment, and manage effectively. Educational management encompasses economic, academic, physical, and administrative aspects of a school. Qualities like cooperation, goodwill, and coordination are necessary in teachers. Principals in Nepal's school environment must engage with society to mobilize resources during educational management (Bhandari, 2069 BS).

One study on principals' role in school educational management states that those entrusted with principalship must establish themselves as skilled planners, coordinators, organizers, and administrators by adopting policies and guidelines mentioned in the Education Act and rules. To reduce gaps between government and private schools,

stakeholders must identify and implement necessary measures and give principals greater responsibility, accountability, and autonomy (Dhakal, 2061 BS).

A study titled "Problem Solving in Public Secondary Schools of Lalitpur District" identifies academic, economic, physical, and administrative problems and their solutions. It highlights reliance on the principal's capacity and efficiency. The study found poor relations between school administrators and teachers and weaknesses in secondary school management. Questionnaires were filled by parents, indicating that public secondary schools need better relationships with society. Periodic monitoring of programs is necessary, where the principal's role is crucial (Adhikari, 2059 BS).

In high-performing education systems, head teacher leadership is widely recognized as a key factor in effective school management and improved student outcomes. In Finland, head teachers function primarily as *pedagogical and instructional leaders* rather than bureaucratic administrators. They enjoy high professional autonomy and are responsible for fostering collaborative school cultures, supporting teacher professionalism, and ensuring equity and inclusion in education. Finnish head teachers emphasize trust-based management, shared decision-making, and continuous professional development, which contribute to sustained school effectiveness (Aho, Pitkänen, & Sahlberg, 2006; Sahlberg, 2011).

In South Korea, head teachers play a strong role as *instructional leaders and performance managers* within a centralized but reform-oriented education system. They are responsible for implementing national curriculum standards, supervising teaching quality, and promoting the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in school management and instruction. Leadership in Korean schools is increasingly focused on innovation, accountability, and data-driven decision-making, while also maintaining high academic expectations and discipline (Kim & Lee, 2010).

In Japan, head teachers (principals) act as *moral, organizational, and instructional leaders*. Japanese school leadership places strong emphasis on collective responsibility, school-based management, and character education. Head teachers coordinate lesson study (*jugyō kenkyū*), promote teamwork among teachers, and ensure alignment between academic goals and moral education. Their leadership style is often collaborative and consensus-oriented, reflecting broader socio-cultural values (Tsuneyoshi, 2013).

In China, head teachers are positioned as *strategic leaders and reform implementers*. They play a critical role in translating national education reforms into school-level practices. Chinese head teachers are responsible for instructional supervision, teacher evaluation, innovation in teaching methods, and integration of digital technologies. In recent years, leadership has increasingly focused on quality improvement, global competitiveness, and modernization of school management while maintaining strong organizational control (Hallinger & Liu, 2016).

Across these contexts, effective head teacher leadership in school management is characterized by a balance between instructional leadership, strategic management, ethical responsibility, and community engagement. Comparative evidence from these countries suggests that empowering head teachers with professional autonomy, leadership training, and accountability mechanisms significantly enhances school performance and educational quality.

Based on these studies, it is noted that the principal's management plays a vital role in the overall development and quality enhancement of any school by guiding teachers, offering advice, improving weaknesses, and enhancing work, duties, and rights. This has been reviewed in the present research.

### **Theoretical Framework**

A theory provides a systematic foundation of policies, rules, ideas, and assumptions to guide effective task execution. This study is based on Human Relations Theory and Scientific Management Theory to examine the role of headteachers in school educational management.

Human Relations Theory, developed by George Elton Mayo and Mary Parker Follett, emphasizes that productivity depends on both social and technical factors. Mayo highlighted leadership based on competence, motivation, coordination, communication, and valuing formal and informal organizational structures. Follett stressed understanding workers' feelings, resolving conflicts, and applying democratic and participative principles. Her four principles of coordination direct contact, early coordination, reciprocal relations, and continuous process underscore clear objectives, effective communication, and stakeholder motivation. These ideas support decentralized, collaborative, and participative leadership in schools, fostering harmonious relationships among principals, teachers, staff, students, and the community.

Scientific Management Theory, developed by F.W. Taylor, advocates systematic and evidence-based work practices to improve efficiency. In school management, principals applying these principles enhance teaching and learning through structured planning, training, and administrative effectiveness.

Additionally, this study incorporates policy provisions from Rule 93 and Schedule 13 of the Education Regulation 2059, which establish merit-based criteria for headteacher selection, including qualification (10 marks), experience (15 marks), training (5 marks), performance evaluation (20 marks), school reform work plan (30 marks), and leadership capacity (15 marks). These provisions align with theoretical principles, emphasizing leadership, strategic planning, decision-making, communication, and innovation.

Together, the theories and regulatory framework guide principals to involve all stakeholders, maintain effective communication, clarify roles, resolve conflicts, and

motivate staff, ensuring effective educational management and achieving school goals. Human Relations Theory, in particular, emphasizes understanding individual feelings, resolving psychological conflicts, and fostering harmonious relationships among all school stakeholders, supporting policy formulation and implementation in educational management.

## **Results**

This section presents the interpretation and analysis of data collected through direct meetings, interviews, questionnaires, and observation forms with principals, teachers, and School Management Committee (SMC) chairpersons during the study on the role of principals in school educational management. The findings are organized under various headings and subheadings as follows:

### **Status of Educational Management in Schools**

#### **Planning and Implementation Status**

The development, progress, success, or failure of any educational institution largely depends on the plans it adopts and how effectively these plans are implemented. For school development and improvement, it is necessary to prepare periodic and annual plans covering educational, physical, and financial aspects, as well as systematic teaching-learning activities through teachers' work plans, unit plans, and daily lesson plans.

Regarding the status of educational planning and implementation in community schools, data collected through questionnaires, discussions, and interactions with principals and teachers of the selected schools revealed the following: All 15 principals (100%) reported preparing an annual work schedule. However, only 40% of 60 teachers reported preparing annual work plans, while 60% did not. Similarly, 80% of principals prepared school improvement plans, and 100% of teachers prepared unit plans. Regarding daily lesson plans, all principals and teachers said they prepared them only occasionally.

An annual work schedule is a crucial plan guiding all activities throughout the year. When prepared under the principal's leadership with teacher participation, its implementation becomes effective, helping to achieve the institution's goals. When 60 teachers from 15 sample schools were asked if they assisted principals in preparing the annual work schedule, 60% said they did, while 40% said they did not. Those who assisted reported helping in weekly work schedules, exam management, extracurricular activities, and important school events. Those who did not help stated they were not assigned important responsibilities and thus had no chance to participate. Regarding principals' support in teaching plan preparation, teachers said principals helped ensure

timely completion of learning activities, solved problems encountered in planning, gathered educational materials, and provided support based on teachers' needs.

Overall, community schools appeared weak in understanding and promptly executing educational plans such as school improvement plans, unit plans, and lesson plans. Cooperation between principals and teachers in planning and implementation was found to be limited.

A strong organization is vital to strengthen school educational management. When asked about the formation of management committees, teacher-parent associations, and other subcommittees, all 15 schools had formed management committees and had good organizational deployment of teaching staff. Teacher-parent associations existed and operated well in 50% of schools, while the other 50% had weak operation despite timely formation. Regarding relationships among schools, teachers, parents, and students, 70% of principals, teachers, and SMC chairpersons said relationships were good, while 30% said relationships were only average and not fully developed.

Despite generally good organizational status, about 30% of schools lacked adequate interpersonal relationships. According to human relations theory, a school leader must maintain excellent relationships with all stakeholders and staff to achieve the institution's goals successfully. Continuous communication and transparent activities ensure successful and effective management.

### **Teacher and Staff Management**

Managing teachers and staff is essential in any school. All 15 principals reported notifying the municipality and advertising when teacher vacancies arose, selecting appropriate and capable teachers. Sometimes, teachers worked without benefits, and principals mentioned providing for such individuals. Regarding support staff, all principals stated such staff were arranged from private sources. When asked about attendance monitoring of teachers hired through teacher service commissions, 80% of principals confirmed they ensured attendance, while 20% did so selectively. None of the principals reported taking disciplinary action against teachers or staff violating education policies. Overall, the role of principals in staff management was found to be average.

According to human relations theory, principals should maintain good relations with stakeholders to effectively manage resources, prepare and implement educational plans, manage finances, and improve administrative arrangements.

### **Management of Physical and Educational Materials**

Proper management of physical and educational materials is critical for any educational institution. The success of schools depends heavily on this. Data collected

through observation checklists showed that among 15 community schools, 40% had buildings in good condition, and 60% in average condition. Classroom management was very good in 6 schools, good in 3, and average in 6. Many schools had students monitor classrooms, easing management. Furniture management was good in 40%, average in 40%, and weak in 20% of schools. Library management was good in 40%, average in 40%, and weak in 20% of schools. Playground condition was very good in 20%, good in 60%, and weak in 20%. Sports equipment was average in 80% of schools and weak in 20%. Despite annual sports programs, lack of sufficient equipment sometimes hindered their smooth operation. Water management was very good in 60%, good in 20%, and average in 20% of schools. Some used filtered water, others used direct sources. Toilet management was very good in 20%, good in 40%, and weak in 40% of schools. School environment and cleanliness were well managed in all schools. Science practical materials were well managed in 40% and average in 60%.

Quality education requires adequate physical and educational materials, with principals playing a key leadership role. Community schools are scattered in villages, settlements, and towns, sometimes leading to challenging physical and educational conditions.

Even though physical and educational materials were generally well managed, principals need to coordinate better with founders, SMCs, teachers, parents, and donors to improve facilities and provide quality education, following human relations theory. Improvements are especially needed in furniture, playgrounds, sports equipment, buildings, toilets, libraries, and science materials.

### **Budget Preparation and Implementation Status**

Proper financial management is the backbone of educational institutions, enabling appropriate resource use and goal achievement. Among 15 community schools, all principals reported preparing annual and periodic budgets. Seventy percent of principals said budgets were implemented as planned, while 30% faced difficulties due to various school problems. All principals were satisfied with their school's income and expenditure status. Salary expenses were the highest cost according to all principals. Most principals (80%) said they mobilize primary resources like government grants, inventory, donor support, and parental donations, while 20% said they rely mainly on grants and occasional assistance.

Financial management is critical for overall school development. While the financial status of community schools was moderate, much improvement is needed. Principals must take an active role in strengthening finances and investing in human, physical, and educational development.

## Summary

In about 80% of schools studied, stakeholders actively participated and maintained good relations, leading to effective educational management. The remaining 20% had average relationships and average management. This confirms human relations theory, emphasizing the importance of cooperative stakeholder participation and good relationships for successful and effective management. This applies not only in education but in other sectors as well.

## Challenges in School Educational Management

School educational management is complex, with principals bearing primary responsibility. Based on questionnaires, interviews, observations, and focus group discussions, challenges identified include:

- **Lack of Discipline:** With students from diverse communities, maintaining discipline is crucial. Seven out of 15 schools showed good discipline under strong principal leadership, while the rest had problems due to weak leadership. Poor discipline negatively impacts teaching and learning quality.
- **Political Interference:** Increasing political influence in appointments, transfers, and training affects school functioning. Teachers and principals reported political favoritism leading to unqualified appointments and weakening educational quality and leadership.
- **Financial Constraints:** Economic support is essential for teacher salaries, building maintenance, and educational materials. Most community schools rely on insufficient government grants, limiting quality improvements and posing challenges for principals.
- **School Closures and Strikes:** Political demands and conflicts cause frequent school closures and strikes, disrupting teaching days. Although some schools try to make up lost time, the overall quality suffers, posing a challenge to leadership.
- **Lack of Training:** Changing education systems require timely training, but many teachers and SMC chairpersons lack it, resulting in outdated teaching methods and management issues.
- **Lack of Coordination with Stakeholders:** Schools are small societies with diverse stakeholders. Poor coordination leads to a lack of support and resources. Principals and teachers noted that insufficient coordination hampers leadership development.

Overall, despite efforts, principals face issues such as discipline problems, political interference, financial shortages, strikes, lack of training, and poor coordination. According to human relations theory, these arise when stakeholders are not involved

early or continuously, and when administration and supervision are ineffective. Scientific management theory suggests adopting modern, efficient work methods to address these challenges. Proactively engaging stakeholders in planning and discussing potential challenges can help solve problems effectively.

### **The Role of the Principal in Educational Management**

During the course of the research study, data was collected using tools such as questionnaires, interviews, observation forms, and direct meetings. The information has been compiled and explained under the following subheadings.

#### **Details of the Principal's Qualifications, Abilities, and Experience**

Regarding the qualifications, skills, and experience of principals, the study gathered the following details during the research:

*Table 1: Details of Principal's Qualifications, Skills, and Experience*

Serial No.	Qualification and Experience	Number	Percentage
1	B.Ed. / B.A. / B.Sc.	3	20
2	M.Ed. / M.A.	12	80
Total		15	100

According to the above table, most principals (80%) hold an M.Ed. or M.A. degree, while 20% have a B.Ed., B.A., or B.Sc. degree. Therefore, since educational management relies heavily on the principal's academic qualifications, skills, and experience, the study found that the principals are well-qualified. Due to regulations requiring only competent and qualified teachers to become principals, all principals were found to have good qualifications, skills, and experience. Only principals with adequate capabilities can manage educational administration effectively. Thus, the study concludes that qualified, skilled, and trained principals manage educational administration comparatively better, and without these, management is less effective.

#### **Work Styles of Principals**

Principals adopt different work styles. During data collection, the following styles were observed and recorded:

##### **a) Leadership Style of the Principal**

The study of fifteen schools showed varied leadership styles among principals:

- Autocratic style: 20%
- Democratic style: 40%
- Participatory style: 20%

This indicates that autocratic leadership still exists, making school management less effective.

**b) Decision-Making Style of the Principal**

Information about principals' decision-making styles was gathered:

*Table 2: Details of Principals' Decision-Making Styles*

Serial No.	Decision Style	Number	Percentage
1	Traditional/Autocratic	3	20
2	Democratic	6	40
3	Participatory	6	40
Total		15	100

According to the table, among principals, 6 (40%) use democratic decision-making, 6 (40%) use participatory decision-making, and 3 (20%) use autocratic decision-making. Even now, principals have limited coordination skills with other teachers, and the practice of making decisions alone by the principal is common, which is an ineffective decision-making style overall.

**c) Style of Planning and Implementation by the Principal**

Information on principals' styles for planning and implementing was obtained as follows:

*Table 3: Styles of Planning and Implementation by the Principal*

Serial No.	Style	Number	Percentage
1	Democratic	9	60
2	Authoritarian	3	20
3	Independent	3	20
Total		15	100

Among selected schools, 60% use democratic planning and implementation style, while 20% each use authoritarian and independent styles.

**School Strategic Planning**

The study found the following about short-term and long-term plans made by principals, presented under these subheadings:

**a) Short-Term Planning**

Principals have prepared plans regarding teacher counseling, school cleanliness, teacher and student uniforms, extracurricular activities, and exam management. These activities energize the education sector and have been carried out positively. The programs are conducted as campaigns led by resource persons and focus on extracurricular activities, exam management, and teacher counseling.

## **b) Long-Term Planning**

Regarding long-term educational plans to be completed within 10 years, principals reported planning related to student enrollment rates, pass rates, classroom management, student learning, and educational material management. These plans were developed based on the economic situation and current conditions. Since this study only covered these 10-year plans in 15 schools, it shows that no activity can proceed without a plan.

## **Educational Planning of the School**

The principal acts as a planner, creating and implementing various plans such as annual programs, annual work plans, unit plans, daily lesson plans, and daily class schedules. According to questionnaire data, 80% of principals implement educational plans, while 20% do not. This neglect by some principals despite management training shows negligence in educational activities.

## **Implementation of School Improvement Plans**

Opinions on effective implementation of school improvement plans varied among principals of 15 schools. Some schools submitted accurate data, while others submitted false data due to corruption related to services, facilities, conditions, grants, and staff recruitment. About 80% of principals submitted accurate data.

## **Opportunities and Challenges in Educational Management**

Schools receive various opportunities as community assets, such as support from municipalities and organizations like the Red Cross. Trainings, workshops, seminars, and children's programs are conducted by resource persons. However, challenges include lack of skilled technicians, water shortages, illiteracy, and pressure groups, making work difficult. Principals reported that schools operate under challenging conditions.

## **Management of Educational Materials**

Educational materials are essential for teaching. Different types of materials were used, such as audio, visual, audiovisual, printed, and free local materials. Use of low-cost materials made teaching more effective. Using educational materials in all schools has helped achieve better results.

## **Monitoring of Teaching and Learning Activities by Principals**

Questionnaire data revealed that principals are responsible for monitoring teachers and staff. Among them, 40% monitor continuously, 20% occasionally, and 40% do not monitor at all. Causes include low presence, lack of responsibility, and failure to apply training.

### Rewards and Punishments for Students

Regarding the role of rewards and punishments to encourage positive behavior in students, 60 teachers (100%) agreed both are important. No one suggested either rewards or punishments alone are sufficient, showing both are necessary.

### Management of Extra Classes

Students come from diverse backgrounds, including varying knowledge levels, intelligence, and economic status. Regarding how schools manage this, data shows:

*Table 4: Arrangement for Problematic and Weak Students*

Serial No.	Description	Number	Percentage
1	Tuition and coaching	9	60
2	Inclusive teaching process	6	40
Total		15	100

60% of principals provide tuition and coaching for physically, mentally, and economically weak students, while 40% use inclusive teaching. No response on separating weak students in different classes suggests teaching methods are not fully appropriate, causing weaker students to fall behind.

### Measures to Ensure Teacher Attendance

Research on teacher attendance found these methods by principals:

*Table 5: Measures to Ensure Teacher Attendance*

Serial No.	Description	Number	Percentage
1	Fine imposed	3	20
2	Punishment	3	20
3	Rewards	9	60
Total		15	100

Most principals (60%) use rewards to encourage attendance, while 20% use punishment or fines. No response was recorded about informing parents or encouraging study. Relationship between Principal, School Management Committee (SMC), and Community Schools cannot operate without SMC and community support. Since the community is responsible for overseeing and controlling schools, principals must maintain close relationships with them. According to the study, 80% said relations were very good, and 20% said good. No one said it was bad. This close relationship helps the school run smoothly.

### **Educational Meetings**

Holding staff meetings regularly is necessary for planning and programs. According to principals:

*Table 6: Staff Meeting Details*

Serial No.	Description	Number	Percentage
1	Monthly meetings	9	60
2	As needed	6	40
Total		15	100

The study shows most schools hold meetings monthly (60%) or as needed (40%), with none holding semi-annual or annual meetings. Staff meetings help discuss problems timely.

### **Division of Work between Principal and Teachers**

Dividing tasks effectively among teachers is important. Regarding division of duties in sports, extracurricular activities, exams, and accounting, principals responded:

*Table 7: Division of Work between Principal and Teachers*

Serial No.	Description	Number	Percentage
1	Division by full competence	12	80
2	Division by lower competence	3	20
Total		15	100

Most principals (80%) divide work based on full competence; 20% do so based on lower competence. No one reported no division. However, due to irregularity or absence, 3 principals managed work without proper division, negatively affecting work quality.

### **Analysis of Principal's Role in Educational Management**

Physically, 50% of selected schools' principals have improved school infrastructure using various resources, 25% are trying to improve, and 25% pay little attention to physical management. Educationally, 70% try hard to improve teaching quality, 20% put moderate effort, and 10% neglect it. Organizationally, 80% play a significant role in strengthening organization, and 20% have moderate roles. Economically, 80% seek funding beyond government grants from organizations and donors, while 20% rely solely on government funding.

Following George Elton Mayo's Human Relations Theory, principals who lead according to their qualifications, identify teachers' weaknesses, coordinate and motivate, establish two-way natural communication, and involve all stakeholders achieve better educational management. Those ignoring these principles play only a moderate role. Thus, adopting George Elton Mayo's theory can help schools and organizations achieve their goals more effectively.

### **Solutions to Problems Faced by Principals in Educational Management**

Leaders face various problems, but must overcome them to succeed. Based on feedback from school inspectors, resource persons, SMC presidents, and teachers, the following solutions were suggested:

- **Maintain Discipline:** Success depends on discipline. Codes of conduct must be established and enforced for SMC, teachers, principals, students, and other stakeholders. Principals must coordinate with all stakeholders to counter political interference and pressure.
- **Financial Resource Arrangement:** Improving physical and educational quality requires funds. Principals should collaborate with teachers, students, SMC members, and parents to collect donations, seek support from donor organizations, and discuss fees amicably.
- **Protect Schools from Strikes and Closures:** Various groups may pressure the government through strikes affecting schools. Principals should coordinate with stakeholders to safeguard schools and adopt alternatives during disruptions.
- **Arrange Training:** Political influence often results in appointments based on nepotism rather than skill, lowering educational quality. Providing timely training to teachers, principals, and SMC members enhances skills and education quality.
- **Coordination with Stakeholders:** Schools are small societies with many stakeholders. The principal should maintain coordination through meetings, discussions, and parent gatherings. This enables smooth problem-solving.

According to Taylor's Scientific Management Theory, modern scientific methods help administrators succeed. If principals change traditional work styles to scientific ones, they can easily solve school problems.

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study reveal that while community school principals in the sampled area possess relatively strong academic qualifications most holding M.Ed. or M.A. degrees their effectiveness in educational management is uneven across different domains. In planning and implementation, although all principals prepare annual work schedules, the lack of consistent teacher participation and the irregular preparation of unit and lesson plans indicate gaps in collaborative planning. This suggests that while structural compliance exists, functional integration between principals and teachers remains limited, aligning with George Elton Mayo's Human Relations Theory, which emphasizes active stakeholder involvement for effective management.

Organizationally, most schools maintain well-structured School Management Committees and staff deployment, yet 30% still report weak interpersonal relationships. In teacher and staff management, the role of principals appears average, with insufficient disciplinary measures and inconsistent attendance monitoring. Similarly, management

of physical and educational materials shows moderate success, but deficiencies in furniture, libraries, playgrounds, and sports equipment remain significant barriers to quality learning environments. These shortcomings reflect both financial constraints and inadequate resource mobilization strategies.

Budget preparation is generally sound, with 70% of schools implementing plans effectively. However, reliance on government grants limits flexibility and hinders infrastructure improvement. Challenges such as political interference, lack of discipline, insufficient training, and poor stakeholder coordination persist, undermining leadership effectiveness. These findings are consistent with both Human Relations Theory and Taylor's Scientific Management Theory: while relational coordination is necessary, the absence of systematic, efficient practices leads to underperformance.

Leadership and decision-making styles vary, with democratic and participatory approaches more common than autocratic ones. Nevertheless, the persistence of unilateral decision-making in some schools reflects a traditional leadership mindset that may reduce staff motivation and engagement. Monitoring of teaching-learning activities is inconsistent, and while reward systems are more prevalent than punitive measures, their application is not systematic. The limited use of inclusive teaching methods for weaker students further indicates the need for pedagogical innovation and equity-focused interventions.

Overall, the study highlights that principals' qualifications provide a strong foundation for leadership, but effectiveness depends on their ability to integrate participatory planning, maintain discipline, mobilize resources, and adopt modern management practices. Strengthening collaboration with teachers, enhancing stakeholder engagement, securing diversified funding, and adopting evidence-based planning will be essential to improving educational management outcomes. By applying the principles of Human Relations Theory and Scientific Management Theory concurrently, principals can address both the relational and operational dimensions of school leadership, thereby creating an environment conducive to sustained educational improvement.

## **Conclusion**

The educational success or failure of any school depends largely on the role of the community. Community involvement, aware parents, clear educational policies, and leadership play a major role in achieving educational quality and outcomes. Principals who professionally lead, teachers engaged in teaching, and students involved in learning all wish to connect with excellent institutions and see schools as sources of satisfaction. Only leadership characterized by collective commitment, professional integrity, and transparency can achieve the expected results. Therefore, identifying problems, initiating solutions, and continuous self-assessment by stakeholders are essential.

Schools must continually engage in internal monitoring, protect and foster their strengths, reduce weaknesses, and identify various options to earn the community's trust. While implementing education management and leadership development at federal, provincial, and local levels, priority should be given to developing principals' leadership capacity according to the needs of their respective schools, alongside creating and enforcing appropriate laws and regulations.

The research reveals that while all schools prepare improvement plans and annual calendars, only some teachers develop detailed unit and daily lesson plans, resulting in poor implementation and challenges in enhancing education quality. Organizational conditions among teachers and staff are generally good, with average relationships with parents and proper filling of vacancies. Community schools have adequate physical and educational infrastructure overall, but key facilities such as classrooms, furniture, toilets, playgrounds, science labs, and libraries often fall below standards. Attendance and classroom management are satisfactory, and schools in market areas tend to have better financial status; however, only about two-thirds effectively implement their budgets. Discipline and political interference pose ongoing challenges. Although schools are financially stable in general, they lack sufficient resources for optimal physical and educational management. Frequent strikes disrupt school activities, and incomplete training among principals and teachers affects their performance. Poor coordination between principals and stakeholders hinders educational management, despite principals meeting required qualifications. Leadership is predominantly democratic, with decision-making styles varying between traditional, democratic, and participative. While short-term planning involves stakeholders, long-term strategic plans are mainly developed by principals. Most schools apply academic plans, but inaccuracies in data and plans in some schools cause implementation problems. Educational opportunities exist but are not fully utilized by principals. The management of educational materials is good, but supervision of teaching varies widely, with many principals not monitoring consistently. All schools maintain reward and punishment systems for students, yet management of human relations and grievances is weak. Child-friendly environments are fragile, and student evaluation relies heavily on written exams. Support for struggling students is inadequate, and classroom observation and school supervision are unsatisfactory. To ensure teacher attendance, most schools use rewards, supplemented by fines and punishments. Schools hold meetings as needed to discuss and address problems.

The study demonstrates that while principals in community schools are academically well-qualified and possess relevant experience, their capacity to translate these strengths into consistently effective educational management remains uneven. Collaborative planning between principals and teachers is limited, resource management is moderate with notable deficiencies, and leadership styles though often

democratic still include autocratic tendencies that reduce engagement. Persistent issues such as political interference, discipline problems, financial constraints, and insufficient training continue to hinder school performance.

These findings highlight that qualifications alone are insufficient for strong school leadership; effective management requires active stakeholder involvement, systematic planning, efficient resource mobilization, and adoption of modern management approaches. Integrating the relational principles of George Elton Mayo's Human Relations Theory with the operational efficiency of Taylor's Scientific Management Theory can help principals address current challenges and foster a more supportive, well-resourced, and high-performing educational environment. Moving forward, strengthening participatory decision-making, diversifying funding sources, improving teacher support systems, and enhancing stakeholder coordination will be essential to achieving sustainable improvements in community school education.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study faced several limitations, including time, financial, and resource constraints, which restricted the research to 15 schools in Ratnanagar Municipality, Chitwan District. Data were collected from headteachers, teachers, SMC members, and other stakeholders, which may reflect subjective perceptions. The use of purposeful sampling and the mixed-methods approach further limits the generalizability of the findings, making them applicable only to a similar context or region.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that no conflict of interest exists with this study research.

### **Author contributions**

SKS conceptualized and conducted the study.

KRS prepared draft and edited the manuscript, participated in revision.

All the authors did agree to submit this paper for publication.

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