

# Community School Management Related Educational Policy Provisions in Nepal: Perception from Implementers

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study was to explore the self-reflection and perception of the members of School Management Committee (SMC) of public schools on the policy provisions related to community school management in Nepal. The study explored the reflections of the education stakeholders who are at the level of community school management policy enactment. Therefore, the study reflects the perception of SMC Chairs, SMC members and Secretary of SMC. The study followed the phenomenological research design with an interpretive research paradigm. The high performing schools were sampled following the purposive sampling method based on the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) results of last three years. The study found that the SMCs of community schools are satisfied with the policy provision in terms of decentralization, planning, resource mobilization, community mobilization and improving transparency. They realized that there are enough provisions to strengthen and functionalize the community schools. However, the study identified that there are some reservations in the implementation. It was found that there was lack of consultation with the relevant stakeholders while developing the policy provision. On the other hand, it was identified that the government authorities do not consult with the SMCs while implementing the policies at the school level substituting the roles of SMCs of those clauses enlisted as the roles of SMC. Similarly, the study revealed, although the community schools are provided the significant responsibilities, but the schools are not able to implement all the provisions due to the inadequate budget allocated for school education.

**Keywords:** Policy, School Management, Leadership, Decentralization, Transparency

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## 1. Introduction

There are different aspects of policies and practices associated with the functioning of schools and other educational institutions. Among them, educational management and leadership are the aspects demanding equal priorities and prominence [1, 2]. The school leadership and management are the democratic practices for the school improvement, and which should be judged by their effect on the quality and standards of the school at all levels [3].

### 1.1. Locating the Concept

The key debate for more than 20 years has been whether educational leadership is a distinct field or simply a branch of the wider study of management. When the education can be received from other settings, educational leadership, and management have to be centrally concerned with the purpose

or aims of education. Therefore, the field of educational leadership and management is pluralist, with many competing perspectives [4].

Similarly, according to Grace, the term leadership was first used in the nineteenth century in moral terms and later it spread to other different sectors including education [5]. Leadership outlines the changing discourse of school management as it moves from preoccupations with social control to contemporary forms of market and finance management in education. In this way, educational leadership and management are distinguished by their meaning. Leadership means influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends whereas management means maintaining efficiently and effectively to current organizational arrangements. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others [2, 4, 6].

Locating the concepts of leadership and management, Bush and Glover have explained leadership as a process of

influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes whereas management as the implementation of school policies and the efficient and effective maintenance of the school's current activities [6].

## 1.2. Community School Management in Nepal

"Formal schooling in Nepal began with the establishment of the first school in Kathmandu in 1854" [7]. Although the first school established was Darbar School, the systematic reform and development of school education was so late [8, 9]. Nepal's educational development in Rana Regime beginning from 1846 to 1949 remained extremely limited, with a mere 2% literacy by the end of the Rana period [8, 10, 11].

After the collapse of the Rana regime, Nepal endorsed a comprehensive reform in education in 1956 in the awaken of newly materialized democracy. The government aimed at increasing public access to formal education, developed uniformity in curricula, teacher training, effective supervision and monitoring, community school management including infrastructure development [7]. After this reform, the communities were encouraged to contribute to the school foundation and management by themselves [7, 10].

The school management was started from Rana Regime when Prime Minister Junga Bahadur Rana appointed Mr Ross with managing and supervision role of Darbar School. Although the actual date of the first School Management Committee (SMC) formed is not scripted yet, we can say that there was provision of SMC before 1950. The evidence can be taken from Sharma where he has mentioned that "... the secretary of School Management Committee of Gokundeshwor High School, Dhankuta had brought the students ... (p. 153) to take participation in the first SLC examination [9].

Historically, school management in Nepal was highly centralized where the central government used to prescribe the roles and responsibilities and school management used to implement those circulars [12]. Similarly, there was no practice of developing the education plan and policies. Even when they were developed, there was only a very primitive kind of educational plan and policy [10].

The decentralization of the school management was practiced after the recommendation of Report of Education in Nepal, 2011 BS<sup>1</sup>. Although the recommendation was not implemented fully and there were minimum structural changes, it was a good start. By the role provided to SMC, it was acknowledged that school management cannot take on a passive role and the SMCs need to be engaged in the contextual needs of the students, teachers, and communities they serve [13].

The National Education System Plan (NESP) had recommended that the power should be delegated down to the implementation level or unit. Similarly, there was recommendation on managing a powerful headteacher in

each school whose appointment and functions should be as prescribed by the rules [13].

Although there were lots of recommendations for a strong and decentralized school management, the actual decentralization in education in Nepal was realized with the seventh amendment of Education Act in 2001 and emergent of Education Regulations in 2002 [14]. The Article 11Q of the Act includes the provision entitled "[m]anagement of school may be handed" to the School Management Committees (SMCs) and local level [15].

In this way, with the government structure from secular to federal, the Constitution of Nepal demands reorientation of the governance and management of the educational system and its delivery mechanisms. The Constitution of Nepal recommends for realigning the roles of school management committee as well [16]. The same provision was reflected on School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) as management and implementation of local school education systems was one of the key priorities of SSDP [16]. To practice the real leadership in schools, National Education Policy, 2019 has envisioned to strengthen school management developing the qualification, capacity, and performance contract of SMC and local level [17].

The government of Nepal has made efforts to improve the effectivity and efficiency of community school management. The local governments are authorized with the power to manage the schools up to secondary level [18]. So, the local governments have exercised the powers to frame policies including the school management on their own for the first time in history in the federal system of government aligning with the Education Act, 1971 [19].

The recent devolution of power to SMCs aims to enhance local control and accountability in school education. SMCs have been given authority to hire and fire head teachers, recruit teachers in new quotas and use block grants received from the government according to local priorities. Similarly, the government has endowed a headteacher with the leadership and management role [16].

Although the government has brought the policies and plans in the favor of community school management with decentralized power, the students' learning is still poor in terms of their achievement level because "...20% students in Nepali and 32% in Mathematics have achievements below the basic level. The level below basic means the students are not able to answer even very easy questions satisfactorily" [20]. There may be different reasons behind this result. One of the reasons behind the poor quality of public education in developing countries like Nepal is poor school management skills [21]. In addition to that the community schools in Nepal run without the school management committee for a long time due to unfair practices while selecting the chair of the school management [22].

Another issue is the lack of participation of the beneficiaries and stakeholders in the policy formulation and planning development process related to education. With the introduction of NESP, the participation of the educated people in policy formation is improved as compared to 1954 before the NEPC [10]. But still it is not enough, and nobody

<sup>1</sup> BS is known as Bikram Smbat which is the official calendar of Nepal. BS is 57 years ahead then AD.

is satisfied with the local level policy formulation process.

On the other hand, the government has provided decentralized authority to the SMC. The recent policy and plans have provided freedom to school leadership and management to plan, implement and monitor the school improvement plan for improving the learning performance of the children. But the result is against the expected outcome. Therefore, this article tried to analyze “How do SMC members of community schools perceive the educational policies from the perspective of provisions related to school management focusing to educational governance?”

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Education System in Nepal

After the implementation of School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) from 2019 to 2015, the government of Nepal restructured the school system effective from 2016 with the eighth amendment of Education Act, 1971 in June 2016. It was practiced with the implementation of School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) from 2016 to 2021. According to SSDP and Education Act, there are two levels of schools, namely basic education running from Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) to grade eight and secondary level consisting of grade nine to grade 12.

The school education system has been restructured with basic education consisting of grades ECED to eight for 4-12 years children and secondary education consisting of grades 9-12 with age 13-16 years [15, 23, 24].

### 2.2. Types of Schools in Nepal

In Nepal, there are two types of schools. They are community schools and institutional schools. The community schools are those schools that have obtained approval or permission and receiving regular grant from Government of Nepal. On the other hand, the institutional schools are those schools that have obtained approval or permission for operation on condition that they are not receiving regular grants from Government of Nepal [15, 23].

CEHRD describes four types of community schools. They are:

Community aided schools: Provision of at least one approved position of teacher by level, full salary and other expenses paid by the government.

Community managed schools: Provision of teachers' salaries and other expenses fully paid by the government, but the school's management responsibilities go to communities.

Teacher aided or partially aided community schools: Provision of no approved teacher quota but at least one *rahat*<sup>2</sup> teacher position with salaries fully paid by the government.

Unaided community schools: There will be no approved

and *rahat* teacher position, which receive limited financial support from the government [23].

Similarly, there are three types of institutional schools. Those formed through private trusts, through public trusts and running under the Company Act. Their teachers and non-teaching staff are privately funded and almost all expenses form the different fees i.e. tuition fee, textbooks and others students bear by the parents [23].

There are 35,055 schools in Nepal. Among them, 28,849 are community schools and 6,206 are institutional schools [23, 25].

### 2.3. Legal Provision of School Management in Nepal

Education Act, 1971 has provisioned the SMC for both communities as well and institutional schools. Similarly, the Education Act and the Education Rules have envisioned the functions, rights, and duties of SMC of both types of schools.

Clause 12 of Education Act mentions that there shall be a School Management Committee consisting of the following members to operate, supervise and manage every community school:

- a) Four persons, including two women selected by the parents among/by themselves – Member.
- b) One selected person either the ward chair or member of ward committee by the ward committee where the school located – Member.
- c) One person nominated by School Management Committee from amongst the founders, local intellectuals, educationists, person contributing school from ten years, person supporting schools one million or more cash or kind – Member.
- d) One person selected by the concerned schoolteachers from amongst themselves – Member.
- e) Headmaster of the school – Member Secretary.

The chairperson can be selected from the members in the sub-clauses above a, b, and c by themselves. Similarly, the Act has provisioned for at least 50% members of SMC must be from the parents of Children with Disability (CWD) of special education schools. For promoting inclusiveness within SMC, the Act has provisioned at least one member representing from people with disability. The Act has provisioned different 11 functions, rights, and duties of the School Management Committee for the Community Schools and the additional functions, rights, and duties are provisioned in the Education Rules, 2002.

With the federal practice, the power to formulate education policy, acts, regulations, procedures, etc. including formation and mobilization of the SMC is provided to local levels [18]. Therefore, the local levels are formulating the policy and developing the local Education Act as per their power. By the result, the SMC formation modality and the number and types of members are varied based on the polity and act of local level.

### 2.4. Educational Policy Provisions in Nepal

Decentralization has not been a new strategy for Nepal in

<sup>2</sup> A type of teacher which is for the certain period only with full salary but not other facilities

spite of its latest trend in the policy arena, but rather, one that has played an ongoing role in the national policy discourse since the arrival of modern political, economic, and social institutions in the early 1950s [26]. The country's contemporary return to decentralized education policy began with the implementation in 2002 of the Seventh Amendment to the Education Act, 1971. The Seventh Amendment set forth the critical elements that were needed to bring about a notion of community schools [26]. Specifically, the amendment renamed all government supported schools as community schools, established parameters for district level oversight of schools via District Education Offices and District Education Committees and provided guidelines for membership in SMCs. It also empowered SMCs with increased responsibilities, including the school's operation, supervision and management, oversight of school budgets and mobilization of resources for the school [27]. In addition, the eighth amendment established parameters for involving communities in school management by specifying that at least four of the members of an SMC should be parents of children who attend the community school [15]. This decentralization policy contributed in building trust among the stakeholders and strengthening networks by growing the social capital.

With the beginning of the implementation of School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP), the decentralization in school management has been reinforced and that is continued by the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP). These interventions in community school reform further informed the role division of SMC and PTA as well as dividing the community schools in terms of community-managed and just community schools. This created additional responsibilities to the local stakeholders for the better management of community schools. This has implications for the school effectiveness and improvement by further strengthening social networks.

Within a nationally defined framework, schools retain their autonomy in making pedagogical choices and managing personnel and financial matters to improve school governance. Educational management has been a shared responsibility between school communities and the Government of Nepal since the very beginning. SSRP emphasized educational governance as a shared responsibility between central and local governments [28]. The establishment of Education Review Office (ERO) to ensure accountability and quality has been another milestone regarding the educational governance in the local level [29].

Community schools in Nepal are often criticized as inefficient, characterized by poor academic performance. Some of the reasons for this low performance include the following factors: poor quality of education, insufficient resources, lack of teacher commitment, weak leadership, inadequate support from the government and, most importantly, weak school management [30]. The Education Act (Eighth Amendment) provides guidelines for the SMC and the head teacher on their roles and responsibilities in managing the affairs of the school.

However, it has not followed up properly with results in many schools experiencing resource mismanagement and poor academic performance of students. The policies adopted were found with poor results in many community schools and there might have been room for further improvement [15].

SMC's roles and functions have been felt to be reviewed and reformulated whereby each member of the SMC may require to be assigned with specific task such as student enrolment, early dropout, school infrastructure, teacher management, learning achievement, school-community relationships, and school environments, school's day to day management among others. Similarly, good teacher management is taken as a precondition for improvement in classroom performance and internal efficiency of overall school education system of Nepal [31].

The Local Government Operation Act, which is already in practice, has provisioned managing school education through local governments [18]. Still there are gaps and confusions in implementation of policies at the local level. However, the policies based in the federal context and the related practices have strengthened the local capacity to manage the schools properly at the local level. These policies are likely to determine the demarcation of the quality of any particular school in achieving consistently better performance. The newly set local governance structures have to be empowered in the cross-cutting issues mentioned here, including school safety, equity, inclusion and skill-based learning and teaching so that there would be intellectual as well as social capital growth for school effectiveness and improvement.

In reviewing the policies, it has been realized that there is frequent change in education policies for community management. Sometimes the government centralizes the authorities and sometimes it decentralizes them. The Local Government Operation Act, 2017 has fully authorized the local government to rule over the school management. There seems ambiguity of powers among different stakeholders and shared responsibilities on governance. There is also a lack of grant policies for managing financial as well as physical resources. The safety aspects of schools have not been addressed in the educational policies including social violence, disaster and psychosocial as well as nutritional health aspects of safety. The curriculum has been structured but remains implemented for a decade with only minor changes. There seems gap on assessing accountability as well as recognition of parents' involvement. The SMC roles and responsibilities have not been found to be reviewed and updated for a long time. There are weaknesses on redeployment of teachers, teachers' career development and effectiveness of licensing. The state restructuration and existing policy may be fit or unfit, which has been questioned for ensuring quality management in community schools for school effectiveness and improvement.

The below table shows the summary of the educational policy provision in Nepal:

*Table 1. Existing Policy Provisions Related to School Management in Nepal.*

| SN | Types   | Major Provisions  |
|----|---|---|
| 1  | National Education Policy, 2019                     | The policy has envisioned to ensure compulsory and free education to all. It has provisioned policy to improve school governance ensuring public participation, promoting transparency, ownership, and responsibility to the school. It has envisioned to strengthen the role of SMC and head teacher for improving school. |
| 2  | Education Act, 1971                                 | Education Act has also defined the School Management Committee (SMC). Similarly, it has provisioned SMC in each community school. It has also provisioned the roles of SMC, invitee members, tenure, and mandatory meeting in each two months.  |
| 3  | Act Relating to Compulsory and Free Education, 2018 | The act is being enacted to ensure the constitutional rights of the children to get basic education. To ensure all the school age children are enrolled at schools, the act has provisioned roles to the SMC and head teachers with the provision of rewards and punishment to make them accountable.                       |
| 4  | Education Regulations, 2002                         | The Education Rules has provisioned the roles and responsibilities of the SMC. Similarly, it has provisions to make the SMC accountable and promote transparency like social audits.  |
| 5  | School Sector Development Plan (SSDP)               | The SSDP has provisioned to strengthen SMC harmonizing identification and response to capacity building intervention and training. Similarly, the SMCs are envisioned to managing fund for the school's improvement.  |

Source: My illustration.

## 2.5. Functional School Management

Educational management is considered as a field of study and practice concerned with the operation of educational institutions. According to Bush, educational management is centrally concerned with the purpose of quality education. These purposes provide the crucial sense of direction to understand the management of educational institutions including schools. He also added that many countries have a national curriculum, and these often leave little scope for schools to decide their own educational aims. For improving the educational aim, the curriculum is the path to follow [4]. In this regard, Abisaki emphasized the equal importance of three dimensions of curriculum: formal that is known as cognitive, non-formal that is known as manipulative and informal for effective learning for the holistic development of a child which need to manage by each school [32]. The key issue here is the extent to which school managers, the head teachers and SMC team can modify and develop alternative approaches based on school level value and vision [4]. In this context, the role of Nepalese school managers seems to be limited.

Traditionally, educational management has been associated with school administration, whereas today its role has changed as a field of study and practice concerned with the operation of educational organizations. Bearing educational management in mind, Bush proposes three models of educational management such as bureaucratic model, flexible model, and market mechanism model. In a bureaucratic model, the educational system is centralized at a higher managerial level in which decisions are made at the top level. In flexible model the individual takes more control. And in market mechanism model, students and parents are like the customers who choose from a range of providers [33].

Similarly, the educational management practices vary significantly across and within countries and are strongly linked to pupil outcomes. The findings again suggest that improving management could be an important way of raising school standards and giving broad support to foster greater autonomy of government schools. They further claim that autonomy alone may not deliver better results. Alongside,

improved governance and motivated principals should lead to better standards [34].

Shonubi cites various scholars to emphasize on the relation and distinction between leadership and management in the context of school effectiveness [35]. On the one hand, scholars like Huber believes that both good leadership and good management are required for schools to be effective [36]. Bush and Bell acknowledge that two concepts, leadership, and management, overlap and that both are essential for success of an organization. They believe that any dichotomy drawn between leadership and management is false and dangerous because an effective school requires good leadership and good management [37]. For the school effectiveness and continuous improvement, there is need of quality school management in which successful leadership of the head teacher is one of the most effective factors [38].

The study conducted by Kanana shows that the head teacher's managerial skills positively and significantly influence academic performance of a school. The study says that a teacher's participation in school management positively and significantly influences the academic performance of pupils in public schools. The same study also reveals that successful head teachers contribute to the improvement of pupil academic achievement through their attributes and contributions in public schools [39].

Additionally, Shonubi claims that the interrelatedness of exceptional leadership and management practices by the school. According to him, school leadership and management is a consequence of the culture of the school that has been built and maintained over the years and thus influence its climate in contributing to school effectiveness [35].

Mestry has claimed that school management team plays significant role in managing schools successfully and effectively for improving learner performance. The school management team of these schools are actively involved in pedagogical matters that directly impact on learner performance [40]. For achieving the good performance of the schools with effective management Reynolds and McKimm have provided six strategies. They are – i) focusing middle management leadership, ii) promoting powerful leadership strategies, iii) adopting leadership and management rather than

the one size fits all, iv) adopting thought leadership, v) updating leadership practices based on the new directions, and vi) updating the concern of leadership reality [41].

In recent years, Ministry of Education and local authorities in developing countries, like Nepal, are encouraging SMC to adopt autonomous management -- a trend of moving administrative powers to the local communities. Nepal's present federal model is in line with empowerment of local government for the school education that includes school governance [42].

SISM explains that most of the schools think that school management committee plays a role in providing feedback from parents to school for the planning process. Also, SMC can help for the interaction between school/teacher and parents. Therefore, the SMC is functional as a bridge to connect school and parents in a school. In addition to that, SMC is accountable for improving learning environment which is considered as the effectiveness of school and can be measured through formal assessment of students, and measurement of students' progress. In the context of Nepal, District Level examination focusing to grade eight (that is now shifted to local level examination), Secondary Education Examination (SEE), examination of grade 11 and 12 that is administered by the National Education Board (NEB) are the major bases for assessing performance of schools and the students [43].

In addition to SEE results and other examinations, achievements on enrollment rate, collection of the fund which is the major attraction for being the SMC member; lead school in the community, expansion of the level, running the technical stream in the schools, etc. are expected by the parents and students themselves, have also been vital in measuring success and failure of the schools [43, 44]. In this context, Reeves claims that students' participation in some form of extracurricular activities help them to perform better than those who do not participate in any [45]. Leadership and management of a school in the Nepalese context may also have been playing a major role for contributing to the effectiveness and improvement in the schools. This is equally supported by arguments of scholars like Bush, who considers leadership and management as being distinct but complementary and equally important in ensuring school effectiveness and improvement [1].

### 3. Methodology

The qualitative research approach was used in this study to develop, describe, explain, report, creating of key concepts [46]. The researcher gathered and analyzed the findings through qualitative methods using the interpretive research design. The population comprises the SMC chair, SMC

Secretary (head teacher) and SMC member of four high performing public secondary schools of Surkhet district in Nepal. The schools were sampled based on the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) results of last three years which have SEE results of most of children with C and C+ GPA. The researcher used purposive sampling having the experience of more than five years in their roles.

The semi-structured interviews for each participant were conducted using the same questions with the same format and words to ensure the trustworthiness of the study [46, 47]. The researcher reassured to the participants that the aim of the research was not to judge or evaluate their knowledge and skill on school leadership and management but to determine their experiences in respect of their leadership and management role following the policy and provisions.

The data was analyzed making the themes following the characteristics of governance in education. The data was then linked with the research objective and research question to establish if these had been achieved. Similarly, the study followed to strict ethical requirements. Informed consent was obtained from the participants before the interview. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time during the study if they were no comfortable to respond.

## 4. Findings

To achieve the objectives of this study, the study attempted to answer all the re-search questions. The findings of this study were presented in themes later discussed in the discussion section. The themes outlined below were materialized from the findings of the study.

### 4.1. Decentralization

One of the objectives of the study was to analyze how the policy provisions are decentralized and the power is delegated to the SMC. During the discussion, all the participants mentioned that the educational policies, laws, and by-laws have provided ample power to the SMC. The respondents 101, 103, 107 and 109 shared that they have authority to formulate the plan, execute it and monitoring the implementation. Similarly, the respondents 102 and 105 added, "We have even the power to recommend for the upgrading / promotion to the teachers although we don't have power recommending for increasing the grades as per the Education Act". Additionally, they added that although the policy provisions are in favor to the SMC, there are lots of challenges. The summary of the challenged are presented below.

*Table 2. Responses on Challenges that Hinder SMC from Performing their Duties.*

| Sub-themes                       | Issues / challenges   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Transferring teachers            | Decide by the federal and local government where there is limited consultation with SMC |
| Rewarding and penalizing teacher | Political issue   |
| Role and duty of the SMC members | Political influence during the SMC member selection                                     |

Similarly, while developing plan, all the respondents perceived that they set the vision and goals in the

participatory way. The respondent 102, 103 and 109 described that they ensure participation from the children, parents, teachers, and SMC jointly assess the school indicators. They also added that, based on the findings, the vision and goals of the schools are set for developing the five-years plan. All the respondent headteachers shared that the school's development or improvement depends upon the relationship between SMC chair and head teacher.

#### 4.2. Teacher Mobilization / Capacity Development

Although the SMC has the decentralized role, they have limited roles for the teacher mobilization. All the respondents informed that the SMC is not provided the role for enquiring to the teachers if they are irregular for the long as this role goes to the administrator who is the head teacher. The respondents are happy to share that the SMC endorse different plans the teachers have developed. Similarly, the respondents 101 added, "We jointly with the teacher form different sub-committees like subject, examination, sanitation, monitoring, etc. assigning each teacher in the sub-groups" which was agreed by respondents 102, 104 and 108.

In this way, all the respondents from SMC chair explored that they are appointing the assistant head teacher, although there is no provision of the position in the Education Act. Therefore, based on the need and practice, they are mobilizing the teachers making the teachers accountable to them.

#### 4.3. Community Mobilization

All the respondents realized the various scope of the community participation for school development. They explored that there is provision of Parents Teachers Association (PTA) with more participation of the community

people. The respondent 106 shared, "The schools are forming different committees and sub-committees based on the need. If there is participatory and inclusion in each committee and sub-committee, there will be more community mobilization".

Similarly, the respondents 105 and 107 mentioned that they are mobilizing the community promoting participation in planning process, social audit, public audit, annual function and decision-making process for the resource mobilization. In addition to this, all the respondents agreed that there is challenge on mobilizing the community. The respondent 102 said, "There is not possible to mobilize or promote community participation in the schools of urban setting. The children of the catchments area go to another schools (private schools or out of district) and the children form another districts and communities come to study there. Hence, the parents will not be available at the time the schools need."

#### 4.4. Resource Mobilization

All the respondents reflected that the policy provisions have on favor to them for the resource generation and mobilization independently. They have freedom for the budgeting and planning, implementing, and causing different audits. The schools receive the conditional grants from federal, province and local government. Similarly, they receive the grants from the different organizations, private sectors, and contributions from parents. The respondents 109 added, "The income is also from the fare received from the infrastructure in the urban setting."

Being not satisfactory with the provision of grants from the government and resource generation by themselves, all the head teachers reflected that there are three types of schools mentioned in the table below:

*Table 3. Types of Schools Based on the Resource Generation and Mobilization.*

| Types of schools | Bases/criteria   |
|------------------|--|
| Prosperous       | Having regular income source   |
| Struggling       | Effort paying for the additional grants  |
| Silent           | Satisfied with the grant whatever received; no effort for additional grants collection |

Similarly, the respondents 102 and 108 shared the good practices for mobilizing the resources. According to them, the schools prepare the budget plan in six areas, a) Developing educational human resources, b) Infrastructure development, c) Educational infrastructure, d) Student welfare program, e) Capacity development of teachers, and f) Coordination/collaboration with stakeholders.

#### 4.5. Transparency

Maintaining transparency in each intervention is one of the roles of the SMC as per the policies provisions. "If the SMC is not transparent, there will be conflict among them. Therefore, maintaining transparency is our prime role", said the respondent 102 in the interview. All the respondents expressed that there are various ways for maintaining transparency in the schools. They enlisted social audit, public

audit, parents meeting, general meeting, etc. are the functions to share the financial transparency.

On the other hand, the respondents are not familiar with the way to maintain the transparency even they have not practiced for improving transparency of the academic performance including the teacher's performance. But it is different in some schools. Adding on this, the respondents 106 and 109 shared that the schools are practicing declaring the attendance of the teachers, SMC members and children in each quarter. The respondent 108 said, "Due to the strong transparency mechanism, we have been able to collaborate with private sectors for generating funds for the school improvement".

#### 4.6. Learning Performance of Students

All the respondents realized that the learning performance

of the students has not been improved as expected. The respondents explored, "The learning achievement depends upon the students, teacher and parents' effort." They also added, "The role of SMC is to plan, manage, resource mobilization, human resource development and monitoring. Therefore, to improve the learning performance, the teachers and students should be committed."

But the SMC found doing lots of efforts to improve leaning performance of the students. The respondents 105 shared, "We have a practice of sharing, analyzing and discussing the learning achievement of each quarterly exam." They also added, "The teachers present the learning performance in the SMC meeting, which is discussed and identified the way forward to improve the learning performance of the children." The respondents 102, 105, 106 and 108 shared that they have a practice of rewarding the teachers annually based on the average marks obtained by the students in their subjects they teach.

## 5. Discussion

"We have not given more priority to improve the learning achievement as our role is to plan, manage resource and monitor. The role goes to the teachers to be accountable for improving the learning performance", SMC chair.

"The motto of the SMC is to improve the learning achievement of the children from the different interventions, managing resources, strengthening teachers' capacity, mobilizing and promoting participation of parents in the decision-making process", Headteacher.

From the above responses from the respondents, the SMC members are not well clear on their power, roles, and regulations. National Education Policy, 2019 envisioned that the SMC will play the key role to improve the learning performance of the students. More consultative, participatory, inclusionary perspectives with the stakeholder are crucial [4]. Based on the above finding, it lacks consultation with stakeholders and beneficiaries while formulating the education related policy provisions in Nepal.

Similarly, the Education Regulations, 2002 has provisioned the PTA for improving quality in school's environment with the major objective [48]. Hence, the PTA should be considered as the part of school management. But the reality is that most of the community schools have not formed the PTA. Even the PTA is formed by some of the schools, they are not active and functional a required.

On the other hand, the capacity development interventions to the SMC are required to make them aware on their roles and responsible [49]. Similarly, the SMC members should be participated in the exposure visits to learn for the schools where there are good practices being performed by the community school management. Building the capacity of the authority is important for implementing the policy in practice [50].

The respondents agree that the policy provisions are in favor of the SMC in terms of decentralization but there is challenge in the implementation. By the result, the SMCs are found breaching the law. They stated:

We are satisfied that we are provided the various kinds of roles. But we are facing the problems for implementing the roles delegated by the policy. Although the role is assigned to us, sometimes the upper-level breach the rules. Although the schools need the available teachers, the teachers are transferred to another school without consulting with us. By the result, we need to hire the locally managed teachers collecting fee from the children that is against the law.

The school improvement depends upon the grants provided to the schools. If there are not adequate grants, the school cannot perform as planned. The schools need the additional flexible budget for organizing the interventions for quality improvement [51]. Otherwise, as the SMC will be like a cook of hotel as stated by the head teachers. They further shared, "Whatever provided in the kitchen, the cook manages and prepare the dish. Some of the cook manage it and make varieties of food whereas some of them prepare the limited food by the available limited materials in the kitchen."

## 6. Conclusion

This paper has unfolded the provision and practices of educational policy provision, laws and by-laws related to community school management. Analysis of the policy shows that the SMCs have provided the authority to plan, budgeting, executing, monitoring, managing for improving the quality school's environment for improving learning performance of the students. But the government practices in some cases are against the policy. The government should increase allocating more budget for school education as per the national and international commitment. Similarly, it is recommended to conduct further study on why some of the schools are silent on generating and mobilizing financial resources.

Similarly, the study identified and analyzed the good practices that community school management is following in terms of resource mobilization, promoting participation, ensuring transparency, and improving. The good practices are the areas for learning to the other community schools. The good practices of the schools should be scaled up by the local and federal governments. Based on the findings and gaps, it is suggested that the policy makers who wanted to transform the community school management, can construct a policy that actually became an instrument to strengthen community school management. They should properly consult with the stakeholders while developing policy and provisions.

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