IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) AND SCHOOL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SSDP) IN NEPAL

(CIVIL SOCIETY EDUCATION REPORT)

NCE NEPAL

National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE-Nepal)

Foreword

National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE Nepal) is a national network of 339 various organizations including that of I/NGOs, teachers, journalist group, community based organizations, parents and other organizations working for equitable, inclusive, quality and lifelong learning opportunities for all in Nepal. Focusing on evidence based policy advocacy in achieving equitable, inclusive and quality education and lifelong opportunities for all, NCE Nepal since 2003 has been working in promoting rights to education for all. It is a civil society movement whose mandate has been expanded to raise the voice of voiceless so as to guarantee quality education in an equitable basis.

In this regard NCE Nepal has made an effort to examine the implementation status of (SDGS) and (SSDP) in Nepal to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all by 2030 which is the ultimate agenda of SDG goal 4. In line with the aim to unfold the current status of SDG and SSDP in Nepal, Civil Society Monitoring was made. This Civil Society Education Report is a result of data obtained from the monitoring process.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who engaged in the research of Implementation Status of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) in Nepal. I express my special gratitude to the overall research team of NCE Nepal who organized series of the workshops with the local stakeholders to develop questionnaire and piloting the tools. I also appreciate the technical input from Dr. Suresh Gautam, Dr. Indra Mani Rai, Gunjan Khanal and Ganesh Khatiwada for organizing and processing data with their inputs of report writing process.

Furthermore, I would also like to acknowledge with much appreciation the crucial role of the staff of District Education Offices of the research areas who gave suggestions to select schools of the research site. Special thanks goes to the member of the district coalitions which closely work together to collect quantitative and qualitative data from the selected school.

Likewise, I would like to extend my gratitude to all head teachers, teachers, SMC members, PTA members who directly and indirectly participated in the research and expressed their concerns to improve public education in Nepal. Lastly, I would also like to thank NCE Nepal board members, all the member organizations, journalists, as well as NCE Nepal secretariat team involved for the success for this research work.

Thank you
Kumar Bhattarai
Chairperson

Executive Summary

Ministry of Education (MOE) has developed the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) which has set to implement from 2016 and to 2023 to improve the overall school education of Nepal. SSDP aims to mainstream the SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. In such context, this research aimed to assess the implementation status of SDGs and SSDP in terms of the indicators identified through participatory process. The questionnaire for this study was developed by NCE-Nepal and data was collected through the coalition organizations from 21 districts of Hill and Terai in Nepal. The head teachers of 143 schools were the key respondents. Moreover, the reflection of enumerators was also used as the source of data which was qualitative in nature.

The following are the major findings of the research

- Schools are less likely to make participatory policy and plan formulation and decision making process. Though the head teachers are familiar with the process of making SIP participatory but they hardly practice participatory approaches of making SIP. Therefore, they faced challenges to implement SIP in schools. Likewise, SMC, PTA, and other parents and stakeholders less engaged making SIPs in schools.

- The access of schools for many disable poor and marginalized students has not been ensured yet. One of the reasons of not ensuring the access of students in school was the geographical locations. Most of the head teachers reported that many students had to walk for half and more hours to reach schools.

- Participatory policy formation process of the school was determined by the way schools communicated to the parents. 69% of schools disseminated the information related to the school activities through written form of the notice. Likewise, more than fifty percentages of schools (52%) used suggestion box to collect information from parents and teachers. However, these practices were less effective in terms of disseminating information of schools to the stakeholders because they hardly prioritize the school activities. None of the parents were interested to drop their suggestions in the box, though they preferred to communicate orally to the HT and teachers of the school.

- Each school has SMC and PTA but their meaningful participation has not been reflected in monitoring of the school activities. Though the quantitative data showed PTA's

presence in the school was frequent, PTA hardly played role to initiate activities in school. They just attended meeting where they were called to the school.

- Political activities were taking place in school premises and majority of schools remained closed due to political strikes which hampered the teaching learning activities of children. This was the direct violation of School as Zone of Peace (2011).

- Despite the educational decentralization, most of the schools depended to the central government for the budget. Though the Government of Nepal has a provision of free and compulsory education, around 75% of the people pay for education directly or indirectly to the school. It was reported that there were leakage in the channel of budget flow which is manifested in the scholarship programs. Though the schools developed SIP but the expenditure of the schools hardly matched with the proposed activities of the SIP it showed that SIP were made to be submitted to the District Education Office for the budget release.

- The problem of safe drinking water, girls' toilets, availability of sanitary pads for girls, well ventilated room, proper furniture were the major challenges in the schools. Safe learning environment is another challenge for enhancing learning of the students. Moreover, there was not regular health check-up programs of students as envisaged by the policies.

- Majority of head teachers reported that there were libraries in schools. But the distribution and use of learning/reading materials were not satisfactory. The teachers focused on classroom lecture rather than making the students independent learners.

- There were still higher numbers of out-of-school children from disability, dalits, economically poor and landless children.

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List of Acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEO	District Education Office
DOE	Department of Education
EFA	Education for All
GON	Government of Nepal
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCE	National Campaign for Education
PMEC	Prioritized Minimum Enabling Condition
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
SGD	Sustainable Development Goals
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SSDP	School Sector Development Program
SSRP	School Sector Reform Program

The Context and Purpose of the Study

The campaign of Education for All (EFA) was started from the World Conference of Jomtein in 1990 following by World Education Forum on Education for All (EFA) in 2000 held in Dakar, Senegal. Nepal commited and worked for achieving the six major goals of Dakar Framework of Action by 2015 through National Plan of Action and School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP). Efforts were made to achieving six goals including universal primary education and gender equity in primary and secondary education affirmed by Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Further, Nepal has also demonstrated its commitment on achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and hence it has placed education at the core. Education is not only one of the seventeen goals, but has emerged as a central one for achievement of most of the remaining 16 goals.

The SDGs aim at making education systems not only more accessible but more relevant to address the need of human and earth (UNESCO, 2016). The goals, unlike the MDGs, are no longer to get every child in school and to achieve gender parity in educational attainment; the goals are to educate all students so they can develop the skills, the knowledge and the dispositions to advance the actions necessary to have sustainable development and to empower them to do so. Accordingly, Nepal has also heralded its steps for the mainstreaming of the SDG into School Sector Development Plan (SSDP). On the one hand, it is the first year of the SSDP implementation which is being completed in a few months, whereas, on the other hand, we can clearly observe the undermining of public education and government responsibility for the right to education, arising from the growing influence of increasingly aggressive actors from the private sector.

In this scenario, monitoring of the plans and progress of the government against the set indicators of SDG and SSDP accounts most. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Nepal, as a strong watch dog is the key sectors of the effective and efficient monitoring of the plans and progress of the government against the set targets. As accordingly, these organizations have been sending reports so as to picture the real educational scenario. In this context, the major purpose of this study is to assess the status of the SDG and SSDP implementation in Nepal in terms of the set indicators.

Analytic Framework

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) has targeted to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education (Goal no.4). Specifically, the targets includes to ensure all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes and the elimination of gender disparities in education and equal access to all levels of education. Nepal is committed to ensuring that all children have access to free, compulsory, and good-quality basic education. Measures have been taken to increase access to education, particularly for the poor and other disadvantaged groups.

Sustainable Development Goal - 5 has targeted to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Specifically, this target includes to (i) end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; (ii) eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation; (iii) eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage; (iv) recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work; (v) ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life; and (vi) ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. This study intends to analyze the implementation status of School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) based on the key indicators it has put forward. The SSDP has focus on strengthening the school education sector in its core dimensions, through a number of key result areas within and across these dimensions, in order for the SSDP to achieve its goal, these dimensions are equity, quality, efficiency, governance and management and resilience. First, SSDP aims to ensure that the education system is inclusive and equitable in terms of access, participation and learning outcomes, with a special focus on reducing disparities among and between groups having the lowest levels of access, participation and learning outcomes. The second dimension is the quality. In this regard, it stresses to increase students' learning through enhancing the relevance and quality of the learning environment, the curriculum, teaching and learning materials (including textbooks), teaching methods, assessment and

examinations.

The third dimension of SSDP is to strengthen and reorient governance and management systems in the education sector to make them robust and accountable to local governments while assuring agreed overall minimum standards in teaching and learning processes and the learning environment.

And the fourth dimension is to accommodate the political and administrative restructuring of the education sector in line with the identified needs and the federal context and to ensure sustainable financing and strong financial management by introducing a cost-sharing modality between central, provincial, and local governments.

Methodology

This research is based on mixed method approach in which quantitative methods was dominant for objective measurement of the SDGs and SSDP implementation. Quantitative approach helped to analyze the status of SDGS and SSDP which indicated public schools approach of implementing SDGs and SSDP. Likewise, qualitative approach supported to understand and uncover HTs, teachers, SMC and PTA's belief and opinion of implementing SSDP in schools. In so doing, the quantitative data collected by the field enumerators selected by the member organizations of NCE-Nepal and the reflective account of the enumerators collected by themselves engaging in the field. The research study based the mixed method would be more meaningful as it captured both objective and subjective realities and interpretations.

Study Area and Sampling Procedure

The study areas were selected purposefully by the member organizations of NCE-Nepal. In so doing, twenty one districts were selected with maximum schools (11%) from Dhanusa and minimum schools (2%) from each of Chitwan and Syangja (2%). The districts selected for this study were from Terai (8) and Hills (13). Figure 1 showed that three schools were selected from the most of the districts.
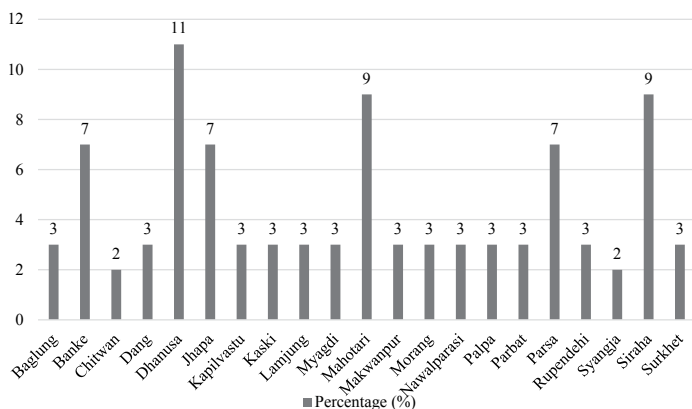
Figure 1: Study areas and selection of respondents

The research covered the districts of all the different provinces have been where NCE Nepal has its district coalitions and its nearby district. The schools are categorized in terms of rural and urban geographical setting for making the research more generalizable. Moreover, the selection of the schools carried out in collaboration with the District Education Offices (DEOs) of the respective districts.

Questionnaire Design

The participatory approach was employed to design the questionnaire of the research. In doing so, NCE Nepal had conducted a workshop with major stakeholders from local and central level whereby the participants were informed to the indicators of the SDGs and SSDP. The workshop oriented participants from 20 districts on the various issues of education, basically in terms of equity, inclusion, financing, quality, governance, teacher's management, information dissemination and the issues of human rights provisions in education. Participants shared the situation of community schools in their respective districts in the workshop. The workshop identified the priority issues of the research. The workshop developed the indicators in regard to equitable, inclusive, and quality education in their respective districts based on the SSDP indicators. Then

after, selected indicators were regrouped by the experts and for the final questionnaires.

The questionnaires were subject to the pilot test to find out its appropriateness, adequacy, and coverage of content or indicators developed to measure, logical order and language difficulties. The tool was refined making it simple, short, and quick to respond for the respondents. After the pilot test, it was then used as a research tool in the entire sample schools covered under this research work.

Data Collection/Generation Procedure

After pilot test, questionnaires were sent to the respective districts with the help of the collaborative partners of the NCE, Nepal. The group of enumerators were trained to collect quantitative data with maintain the ethical standards. Likewise, the enumerators employed open interview schedule (open guideline) which was more flexible, allowing the participants to change the course of the conversation so that they could not be preconceived (Axinn & Pearce, 2006) for the qualitative purpose. The research used the reflective notes of enumerators as the sources of qualitative information.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

First of all, the data were managed by editing, coding, and decoding process manually. Secondly, the data were entered through the Statistical Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) program. Then the data were tabulated and presented using descriptive statistics. Further, the reflective notes that were collected from different districts were more detail representing the status of implementation status of SDGs and SSDP. The information or reflective notes prepared by the enumerators were used to support the quantitative information to substantiate the quantitative findings. The information from the reflective note complemented the information for enhancing the validity of the findings of this research.

Quality Assurance

For assuring the quality of this research, NCE-Nepal employed clearly defined processes of research reviewing of the policy documents for designing research tools. The indicators for the research were finalized through the participation of key stakeholders. NCE-Nepal also organized piloting the tools in the schools of

Kathmandu and made necessary changes for making the instrument more accurate to measure the identified variables. In addition to the NCE-Nepal discussed about the research project with the education experts in the review meetings.

NCE-Nepal oriented the enumerators for making selection of schools appropriately and to ensure the participation of the respondents. In doing so, it was ensured that the two enumerators engaged in a school whole day. They were responsible for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. Likewise, they collected their reflection and observation. They also developed filed notes from their qualitative observation and interviews.

Findings and Discussion

The study concentrated on analyzing implementation status of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) on key indicators identified through the participation of key education stakeholders such as teachers, parents, policy makers, and education activists. In so doing, the study has measured the key variables of governance, equity, inclusion, financing, quality, teacher management, and performance of students. Thus the subsequent sections deal with the findings on the status on the identified indicators.

Status on Governance

School governance includes the participatory planning practices for improving school operation. It is believed that the planning through shared decision making can enhance the ownership and effective implementation of the plan. Thus School Improvement Plan (SIP) is a general practice that the schools need to have for systematic operation of school activities. In this regard, the study identified the status of making SIP in selected public schools.

School Improvement Plan
The table (below) shows that 56% of schools have developed School Improvement Plan (SIP). Further, 40 % of schools did not have SIP and 4 % of school head teachers did not report whether they developed SIP or not. Thus still 44 % of the schools did not have SIP in their schools. The situation of noteworthy a number of schools which were functioning without School Improvement Plan raises several questions on the participatory governance in the school education.

Table 1: Status of School Improvement Plan

	Yes	No	Missing	Total
School Improvement Plan (SIP)	(80) 56%	(57) 40%	(6) 4%	(143) 100%

The SIP is supposed to be mandatory in schools as envisaged by School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) unless otherwise the schools did not get the budget without fulfilling this requirement. SSDP has envisioned improving school governance through making strategic planning of school. School Improvement Plan is one of the major indicators of SSDP to govern school. SSDP has envisaged that the school improvement planning process could be a critical tool for integrating the various quality inputs in schools and translating them into effective teaching and learning outcomes. It is used as mechanisms for allocating funds and improving the physical environment of schools and for more transformative activities including improving teaching and learning. However, there were many schools in the study areas which did not have SIPs. Nevertheless, the head teachers reported that they attempted to make SIP formation process participatory.

Table 2: Percentage of Head Teachers Reporting the SIP Making Process

Participation	Percent
Head Teacher	11.9
Head Teacher and Teacher	23.1
Head Teacher, Teacher and School Management Committee	64.3
Take Reference from Other School's SIP	0.7
Total	100

The table 2 showed that the SIP formation process was participatory and followed bottom up approach. The SIP manual guidelines developed by Department of Education have a provision of making it more participatory with parents, social worker, educationist, students, and teachers. However, most of the head teachers confessed that SIP formation was the sole responsibility of the head teachers in the interview. However, about 12% of Head Teachers alone developed SIP which contradicts with the process of SIP formation. Likewise, 23.1% Head teachers made SIP with collaboration with teachers in the sampled schools. 64.3% respondents reported that head teachers, teachers and members of SMC engaged in the SIP formation process. Only 0.7% schools took support from the sample of SIP from other schools.
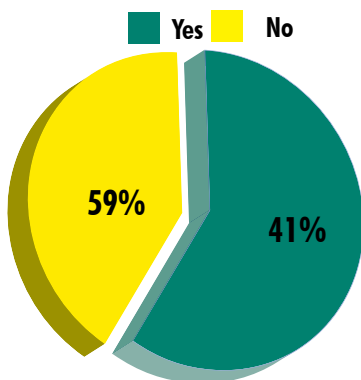
Figure 2: SIP in School

This situation indicated that majority of schools made School Improvement Plan (SIP) through the participatory approach inviting SMC members, PTAs and parents. But the participation of the teachers and SMC members largely seemed passive. The reflective note of the enumerators mentioned that the head teacher and chair of the SMC were more influential on decision making while preparing the School Improvement Plan. Rest of the stakeholders (teachers and parents) hardly participated in the process of SIP formation. There was tokenistic participation of teachers and parents which could not be influential for the effective implementation of the plan. Thus, it is essential to promote the meaningful participation of all stakeholders in the process of decision making whilst developing school improvement plan and its operation. Still, 59% of the schools formed SIP without proper guidelines because these schools did have participated in the SIP formation program. This shows that the majority of schools hardly followed the guidelines developed by the Department of Education.

Regular Meetings in School
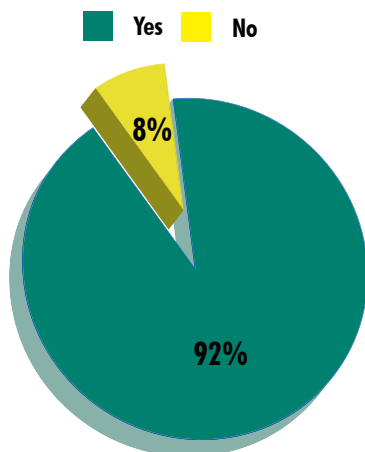
Figure 3: Regular Meeting in Schools

The school governance depended on the regular sharing and discussion session held in the schools. In this regard, the figure 3 showed that in 92% of schools, the head teachers and teachers organized regular meeting whereas 8% of schools did not have such practices. The data indicated that head teachers and teachers almost shared school governance related issues in the meeting. The figure 3 showed that the head teachers were conducting

meeting regularly as envisaged by Education Rules (2002) at least once a month. They were likely to discuss on the school related matters and to maintain records. The regular meetings of head teachers and teachers might be contributing to create environment of mutual co-operation among teachers and other working staff. But the reflective note prepared by the enumerators showed that the teachers (particularly the permanent teachers) seemed to be less interested in the meetings. The head teachers were less likely to monitor the effective implementation of decisions made in the meetings.

Suggestion Box in the School

Suggestion box is an important management tool for schools in Nepal. Parents, social workers and educationist could offer suggestions confidentially in the written form to the school administration to improve the teaching learning and managerial issues in the school. But the chart shows that about half of the schools did not have suggestion box. The data shows that about half of the schools had

Figure 4: Suggestion Box

suggestion box at the schools. Sadly, the stakeholders in half of the schools had no access of suggestion box and hence were denied to express their views through the suggestion box. The 36% of head teachers reported that they used suggestion box in their schools but they also shared that the suggestion box was not used by stakeholders. It indicated that the participation of the stakeholders in interaction and participation in policy formulation, policy sensitization and decision making process of the school was not as effective as SSDP envisioned.

Information Sharing Process
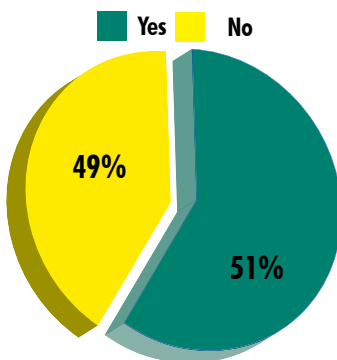
It was expected to share all activities to the students, parents and teachers for its accountable and transparent functioning in the schools. In this regard, schools adopted several strategies to share information to its stakeholders.
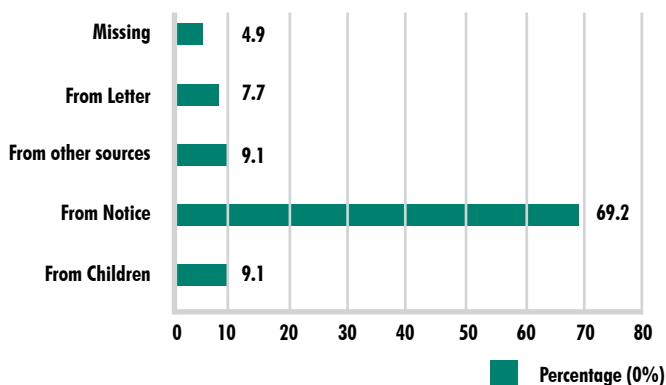
Figure 5: Medium of Information Dissemination

The figure 5 showed that around 70% of schools used notice as a medium of sharing information to the stakeholders. Moreover, the figure 5 showed that 7.7% of the schools provided information through letters, 9.1% of schools provided through other sources, and 9.1% provided through children. However, dissemination of information through notice was less effective to make known all the concerned school stakeholders. According to the interview record collected by enumerators many students and parents were unaware of the information disseminated by the schools. And many parents hardly could read and written notice and the information displayed in the notice boards. Thus, the right to information of parents did not seem to be practiced.

School as a Peaceful Sector

The Government of Nepal endorsed a directive declaring all schools, (including school buses) as Zones of Peace in 2011. The purpose of the directive was to ensure that schools remain a safe haven for children and where teaching and learning could continue unhindered in an atmosphere free of violence and interference. However, schools could not be free from the political activities taking place in schools.

Table 3: Conduction of Political Activities in Schools

	Yes	No
Political Activities	61%	39%
Closing Schools	58%	42%

The table 3 showed that 42 % of the schools did not remain close during such political strikes. But majority of head teachers (61%) reported that the schools allowed political activities in the schools. Moreover, the majority of schools remained closed in political strikes. These acts were against the spirit of what School as Zone of Peace Directive (2011) which stresses on avoiding political activities within the school premises and teachers› involvement in political activities. As a result, regular teaching learning activities got disturbed by strikes.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Engagement

PTA is supposed to be an active institution in schools to monitor the learning outcomes, school authorities and school budget. Education act 8th amendment envisioned active PTA in each school; however, it is almost not functional in many of the schools in the research areas. Table 4 indicated that Parents Teacher Association (PTA) involvement in monitoring outcomes of learning, school authorities and school budget was quite low.

Table 4: Involvement of Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

Activities	Yes (%)	No (%)
PTA Involvement in Monitoring Learning Outcomes	26	74
PTA Involvement in Monitoring Outcomes of School authorities	28	72
PTA Involvement in Monitoring School Budget	14	86

Majorities of Head Teachers reported that the PTA were not involving on monitoring learning outcomes of students, monitoring school authorities and monitoring school budget. The PTAs had less roles of monitoring school activities. The major monitoring role of PTA was envisaged by the Education Rules, 2059 (2002) for maintaining quality education and other academic activities in schools were weaker.

Education Financing

At government level, different Ministries are involved in the funding of the Education system. The Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for formulating and implementing policy pertaining to education in Nepal at the different levels including early childhood, primary, secondary and higher secondary education (NCE,
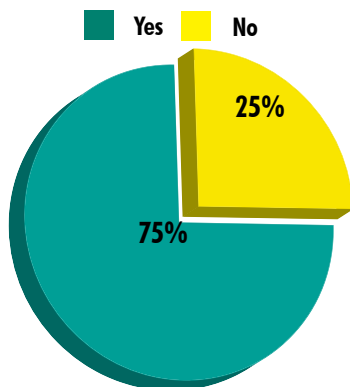

Yes   No

25%

75%

Figure 6: Parents Payments

Nepal, 2015). Though the constitution of Nepal (2015) has a provision of free and compulsory education but still parents paid certain amount of money to the school. In such condition, 75% of the parents paid certain amount of money directly and indirectly to the school. Despite the government has made school level education free, but many schools were found to have collecting fees from the students (NCE-Nepal, 2014) in different heading. The amounts paid by the parents in schools might be nominal. But it has raised the issue in relation to the effective implementation of the government›s policy of free and compulsory school education.

Table 5: Status of Utilization of Budget

Status of Utilization		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Fully Utilized	113	79
	Half Utilized	14	9
	Not Utilized at all	16	11
	Total	143	100

The table 5 showed that 79% of the head teachers reported that their schools utilized the budget fully. However, one fifth of the head teachers reported that the public schools utilized either only half budget or not utilized at all. The budget utilization seemed to be quite high in most of the schools in the research areas. However, it does not tell whether the fund is efficiently or effectively used or not.

Equity
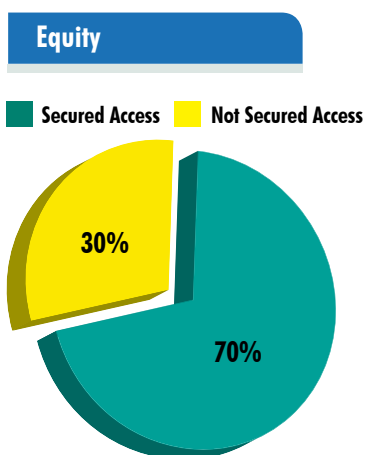
Secured Access Not Secured Access

30%

70%

Figure 7: Access to students

Equity measures the access, participation and outcomes of the students in the school, though the previous educational report indicated that access of the students in the school has been increased in the recent years. In this regards, the figure 7 showed that 70 % of head teachers reported that the students had secured access of schools whereas 30% of them responded that the students did not have access of schools. One of key causes of inaccessibility of schools of many students was the long distance of schools from their homes. The time taken to reach the schools from homes determined the access of schools. The government

attempted to ensure the access, participation and learning outcomes of students through consolidated equity strategies (2015). However, the access of the students in school has not been achieved yet.

Table 6: Time Taken for Going to School

Time	Frequencies	Percentage
Less than 30 minutes	17	11.9
30 Minutes	66	46.2
One hour	41	28.7
More than 1 hour	18	12.6

This table 6 showed that time taken by students to go to their school from their home. Majority of head teachers reported that the students took 30 minutes and more time to reach their schools. This showed that the geography was one of the barriers of accessing schools for the students (Department of Education [DoE], 2015). Moreover, among 143 head teachers 55% shared that all ages of school going children did not enroll in the school, whereas 45% of the head teachers shared that all ages of school going children enrolled in the school.
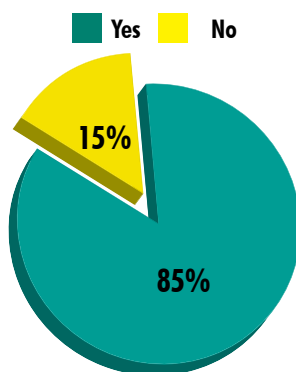

Figure 8: Ethical Values in Schools

Regarding participation of the students in the school, head teachers reported that school maintained the ethical guidelines to encourage the students to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities. In this context, 85% of the head teachers reported that they made ethical values and principles for teachers and students to ensure the participation of the students in the classroom and outside of the classroom. In this context, 85% of the schools singed the ethical principles whereas 15% school did not sign the ethical principles. Still many schools were on the way of promoting inclusive participation of the students in the school. This shows that the teachers and head teachers were ready to present in school regularly in the prescribed time and sign on attendance register mentioning time of coming in and going out and be obedience, discipline, good faith, co-operation, morality, sympathy, patience and good conduct as envisaged by Education Rule (2002). However, the code of conduct was not made and applicable in about one fourth of schools.

Learning Environment

The important aspect of the SDGs is to promote learning in the safe school environment. This study focused on identifying the status key areas of learning environment of children in public schools such as situation of toilet, sanitary pad, classroom situation, disaster prone schools were assessed. Learning environment of the school was determined by proper toilet and drinking water provision. Government of Nepal (GoN) has committed to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all in Nepal by 2017. SSDP showed the commitment to increase access to the students and achieved the retention of the students by prioritizing and promoting child and disabled friendly services and menstrual hygiene management in schools. School Sector Reform Plan 2009-15 (SSRP) envisages minimum enabling conditions in all schools that cater for the diverse needs (physical and learning environment) of students. National framework of Child Friendly School 2010 has set the minimum standards for promoting learning to the students. In such situation, the table showed the situation of toilet in the research school.

Toilet Facilities

Separate toilets for boys and girls in schools with adequate water facilities are important for promoting safe and secure environment for children. The separate toilets facilitate particularly to the girls for maintaining their menstrual hygiene. Accessibility of toilets supports for reducing sexual violence against girls. The table below shows the toilet facilities in selected public schools.

Table 7: Situation of Toilet Facilities

Situation	Frequency	Percent
No Toilet	14	9.8
There is toilet but not usable	59	41.3
There is toilet but not adequate	58	40.6
There is toilet but not separate for male and female students	12	8.4
Total	143	100.0

The above table 7 showed the situation of toilet in schools. According to the table, 9.8% school didn't have any toilets, 41.3% school had toilet which were not usable, 40.6% school had toilet but not were not adequate, 8.4% school had toilet but not separate for male and female students. The evidences indicated that pitiable conditions of toilets in the public schools in the research areas affect the teaching learning activities. The wretched conditions of toilet facilities raise critical questions such as safety and security of girls, violence, and hence the drop out of children. This situation in selected public

schools was less in line of what National Framework of Child-friendly School (2010) envisages having safe and clean toilets separate for boys and girls.

Situation of Sanitary Pads

Girls during the period of menstruation remained absent in the school which became one of the barrier to the access to the education to the girl's education. Lack of access to sanitary pads and proper school bathrooms caused the girls to skip school. The figure 9 showed that only 50% of female toilets had sanitary pads for the girls. 42 % of schools had very good conditions in terms of availability of sanitary pads and 14 % of schools were in good conditions. But, 24%

Figure 9: Availability of Sanitary Pads

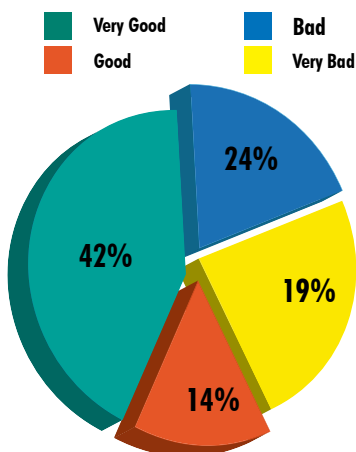of schools were in bad conditions and 19% of schools were under very bad conditions in terms of availability of sanitary pads. This situation indicated that half of the public schools were still had no sanitary pads in toilets. This condition was against what School Sector Development Plan (2016- 2023) which envisaged to have functional water and sanitation facilities that are environmentally sound and user-friendly for children, boys and girls and differently-able students. It was against what the SSDP emphasizes to minimize the drop-out rate of adolescent girls by fulfilling their privacy and menstrual hygiene management related needs.

Provision of Pure Drinking Water

Provision of pure drinking water is one of the factors that affect the health of the students. Among 143 schools only 42% of the school had the facilities of pure drinking water to the students whereas 58% of the schools did not have proper management of the pure drinking water. This showed that majority of children were under susceptibility of diseases due to lack of pure drinking water in schools. In this sense, they were under unsafe and
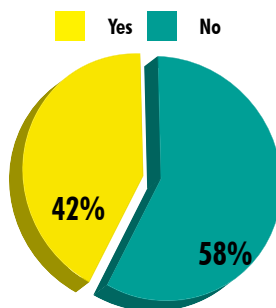

Figure 10: Provision of drinking water

insecure conditions in terms of health and hygiene. The condition was against the provision of Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 24), Constitution of Nepal, 2015, and School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) of protecting the children from providing clean drinking water to combat diseases and promoting sage and secure learning environment. Moreover, National Framework of Child-friendly School (2010) also reflects the provision of clean and safe drinking water in schools.

Regular Health Check Up

As students did not get the facility of pure drinking water in the school, it was assumed that they got sick but the schools hardly organized health check up activities in the school. The situation of the health check up in the school was worse. Only 13% schools among 143 organized health check up activities in the school. Maximum schools are not conducting regular health check up in schools which were against the School Sector Development Plan (2016-2023) that aims to increase health and nutrition
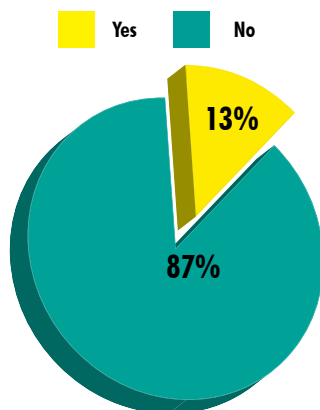

Figure 11: Regular Health Check Up

services in schools, including the provision of deworming, micronutrient supplementation and malaria treatment as well as vision and hearing screening. Moreover, National Framework of Child-friendly School (2010) also attempts to mitigate health related problems through ensuring to have health check-up of children at least twice a year and to maintain the health profile of students. It stresses on providing first aid in schools. This necessitates making provision for conducting immunization programs against different diseases to protect children with the cooperation of the health posts in the community as well as health workers.

Situation of Classroom

SSRP focused that school meet the Priority Minimum Enabling Conditions (PMEC) which mainly focused on the enabling conditions to promote the learning of the students. One of the indicators of PMEC was the classroom. In this situation, among 143 schools, it was yet to work on maintain the classroom. Classrooms depending upon the number of students (including light, air and appropriate shape). Here, 71.3% school condition is very good in terms of

condition of classroom, 9.1% school condition is good. Further, 10.5% school classroom condition is bad and 9.1% school data is missing. This situation is against what National Framework of Child-friendly School (2010) envisions the healthy and safe school classrooms. It emphasizes to take special precautions appropriate lighting arrangements, air, and so on in the classrooms for making conducive learning environment.
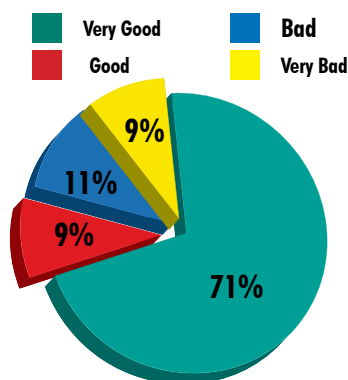

Very Good   **Bad**
Good   **Very Bad**

9%
11%
9%
71%

Figure 12: Situation of Classroom

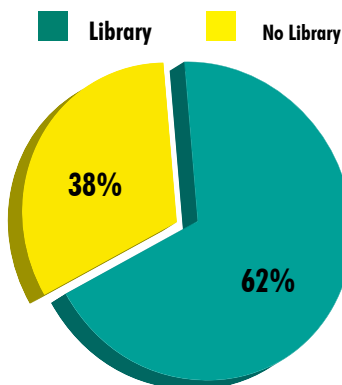
Library   **No Library**

38%
62%

Figure 13: Library in Schools

Library in the School

Library is one of the aspects of the Priority Minimum Enabling Conditions (PMEC) to facilitate the students developing in their reading habits. Among 143 schools, 62% school had library, and 38% school didn't have library in school. It was thus there were libraries in majority of public schools. But the reflective notes of enumerators indicated that the students were not getting books for reading at homes. The students were less engaged in library reading rather the teachers engaged more on classroom teaching focusing on accomplishing courses through lecture methods. This raises questions on meaningful teaching learning activities in the schools. The teachers were less enthusiastic on promoting students learning through providing self-learning materials.

Out of School Children

Out of school children was one of the major concerns of SSDP to bring out-of school children into schools which is guided by ethos of the constitution of Nepal. The global initiation such as EFA and MDGs has further led to pay greater attention to participation and completion of the primary school level education in the developing

world. One of the international goals and commitments of the developing countries is to reduce the number of out-of-school children in order to get development cooperation from donor communities. Here, this table talks about the students who are not enrolled in school. According to the table, 18.2% are dalit children, 0.7 % is children with disabilities, 7.7% are economically poor, 3.5% are landless children and 4.2% are from other background. These facts indicated that many children from marginalized and deprived groups such as Dalits, economically poor, and different able children were out of schools. These findings confirmed the data facts of lowest access of Dalit children in education presented in the consolidate equity strategies of Department of Education, 2072.
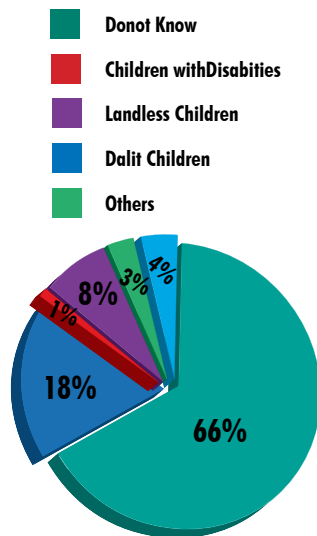

Figure 14: Out of School Children
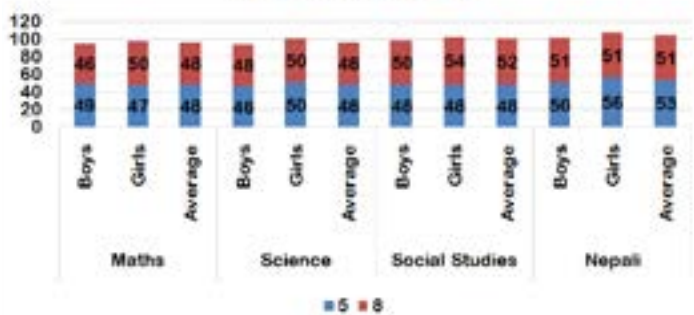
Students Performance

Figure 15: Students Achievement

Access to quality education of all children was the key concern from the very beginning of 2000, World Education Forum on Education for All (EFA) which was held in Dakar, Senegal. Ensuring quality education is the continuous focus of government and non-govenmental organizations providing teacher training and learning materials.

But the National Assessment of Students Achievement (NASA) report of 2011 shows that the achievement of students of grade five and eight less than 50%. Similarly, the figure 15 showed that the student achievement was around 50%. However, the girls in both the grades were performing better than boys.

Key Insights

- Despite the effort of the Ministry of Education, the implementation process of School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) has been gradually strengthening in the schools of Nepal. Schools attempted to align with inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. However, the research indicated several areas to improve for achieving the 2030 goals of SDGs in Nepal.
- Still schools were not able to make participatory policy and plan formulation and decision making process. Though the head teachers are familiar with the way of making SIP participatory which was not reflected in the SIP, thus they faced challenges to implement SIP in school. But there was less meaningful participation of stakeholders whilst making SIPs in schools.
- Schools were not accessible for many disable poor and marginalized students. This was due to the geographical locations. Most of the head teachers reported that many students had to walk for half and more hours to reach schools.
- Majority (69%) of schools used written notice for disseminating information and maximum schools (52%) used suggestion box to collect information from parents and teachers. However, these practices were less effective in terms of making aware to the stakeholders due to their illiteracy and inaccessibility. The notice based information dissemination was one way and collection of suggestions and feedback were very less.
- Each school has formed SMC and PTA but their meaningful participation has not been reflected in monitoring the school activities. Though the quantitative data showed PTA's presence in the school was frequent, reflection note of the enumerators showed that PTA hardly played role to initiate any activities in school. They just attended meeting where they were called in the school.
- There were political activities conducting in schools and majority of schools remained closed due to political strikes hampering the learning activities of children. This was the violation of provisions stipulated in School as Zone of Peace (2011).

- Despite the educational decentralization, most of the schools depended to the central government for the budget. Though the Government of Nepal has a provision of free and compulsory education, around 85% of the people pay for education directly or indirectly to the school. It was reported that there were leakage in the channel of budget flow which is manifested in the scholarship programs. Though the schools developed SIP but the expenditure of the schools hardly matched with the proposed activities of the SIP it showed that SIP were made to be submitted to the District Education Office for the budget release.
- The problem of safe drinking water, girls' toilets, availability of sanitary pads for girls, well ventilated room, proper furniture were the major challenges in school. Safe learning environment still was challenged off. Moreover, there was no regular health check-up of students as envisaged by the policies.
- Majority of head teachers reported that there were libraries in schools. But the distribution and use of learning/reading materials were not satisfactory. The teachers focused on classroom lecture rather than making the students independent learners.
- There were still higher numbers of out-of-school children from disability, dalits, economically poor and landless children.

Specific Recommendations

- Most of the selected schools prepared School Improvement Plan (SIP) but the plans were prepared with less meaningful participation of all stakeholders such as teachers and parents. Thus the meaningful participation through which the perspectives of multiple stakeholders should be valued in the process of developing School Improvement Plan in public schools
- The right to information of all stakeholders should be ensured through effective information dissemination strategies. Mere notice displayed in schools may not be effective for all the concerned stakeholders to be notified. They may not access the notice. The information dissemination is also linked with the accountability of schools. Thus information should be disseminated through understandable local language using local traditional institutions.
- Proper and separate toilets facilities for boys and girls with sanitary pads, regular health check-up, clean and safe drinking water and classroom management seem poor in most of the schools in the selected schools. Thus it is necessary to promote these aspects for making conducive learning environment ensuring safety and security of children in the schools.
- The library facilities should be enhanced and the teachers should be trained for making meaningful use of library materials to the students so that they are able to develop themselves through self learning practices.
- Political activities are hampering the learning of students in the selected schools. Thus effective monitoring and improvement is needed taking initiatives by the SMC members and head teachers.
- There are still many out of school children from marginalized and deprived groups such as Dalits, disables, and economically poor. Thus, the government has to manage the opportunity cost of the children who are out of school due to poverty.
- Achievements of students in public schools are still not desirable. Thus focus should be given for enhancing performance of the students through strict monitoring of teachers engagement in the teaching activities in schools.

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NCE Nepal: Introduction

Along with the national and international wave of celebrating the Global Action Week 2003, Global Campaign for Education (GCE) Nepal, started with the collective efforts by small group of people and the resources, got its way forward for carrying out the advocacy interventions in Nepal's education system. In the process of initiating the educational advocacy and campaigns as a loose network till 2009, all the coalition members of GCE Nepal felt that there was a need to register the organization as a legal entity for carrying out advocacy interventions in education. As a result, NCE-Nepal was established on 5th April 2010 to succeed the GCE Nepal.

NCE-Nepal now is a civil society movement whose mandate has been expanded to raise the voice of the voiceless so as to guarantee quality education in an equitable basis. Being a national member of GCE, NCE-Nepal reflects the voice from the grassroots level to the national and international community by acting locally, regionally and internationally. Currently, it has 339 members including those from International and National non-government organizations, federation, education media organizations, teachers› community as well as the grassroots institutions working in the field of education and child rights. NCE-Nepal is therefore a platform for sharing experiences and learning among the members who have common issues of concern.

NCE-Nepal mainly focuses on holding the government agencies accountable for their educational commitments made in the national and international forums for the public education strengthening. Similarly, NCE-Nepal critically engages with the government and its agencies involved in education for ensuring the quality, inclusive, equitable and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

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