

# Quality School Education in Nepal: Dilemma and Reality



**National Campaign for Education Nepal**

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## PREFACE

National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE Nepal) is a national level network working towards ensuring the right to education and lifelong learning of children and adults in Nepal through advocacy, lobby and campaign activities. Established in 2003 as a Nepal Chapter of Global Campaign for Education (GCE), NCE Nepal also holds the status of UN ECOSOC organization. Along with capacity enhancement of civil society organizations, advocacy through research and evidence is one of the priority works of NCE Nepal. It is provisioned in Nepal's constitution that the state should provide free and compulsory basic education and free secondary education. With the growing influence of private institutions in the education sector of Nepal, it is necessary to monitor and regulate these private institutions as well as strengthen the public schools.

Even in the context of COVID-19, where many schools are shut down, some public schools are providing quality education through alternative teaching and learning strategies. It is important to value and recognize their work as well as share it with the public. Therefore, this research has been conducted by NCE Nepal to recognize the successful public schools and analyze their individual cases to explore the framework of successful schools. This may be the reference document for replicating the success in other public schools of Nepal too. Along with that it may serve as a reference document to support policy makers, civil society organizations and government while developing the public school narrative and documenting best practices for the evidence generation.

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Regards,

**Dilli Ram Subedi**

President

## Abbreviations

BS	Bikram Sambat
CwD	Children with Disabilities
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DP	Development Partner
EFA	Education for All
Etc.	et cetera
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoN	Government of Nepal
ICT	Information Communication Technology
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NCE	National Campaign for Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRC	National Human Right Commission
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEE	Secondary Education Examination
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SZoP	School as a Zone of Peace
ToR	Terms of References
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nation Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	The United State Agency for International Development

## Executive Summary

The major issues that build the foundation of this research in quality school education in Nepal are lack of clear framework for successful schools and clarity for quality education which are developed based on the evidences from the ground, and lack of narrative on successful schools. Despite the commitments of government to quality public education, there is a lack of perception and framework to ensure quality school education. There are several evidences and practices available globally on how quality education can be promoted in schools. However, there is a narrow perception on the quality school education in Nepal. This study analyzes the indicators of successful quality education which support to measure the performance of successful quality schools and explore the narrative of public schools in Nepal.

The study has been carried out using qualitative research design, especially using empirical analysis of successful quality schools and case study methods. Firstly, the empirical study of relevant literature related to quality school education has been done to draw the findings for indicators for defining or measuring successful schools. Secondly, the case study method analyzes the cases of seven successful public schools of seven provinces of Nepal. The evidences coming out from the successful schools reviewed, classified, summarized, and presented into themes in a cohesive manner, and linked those themes with the indicators of successful quality schools to validate the findings. Based on the findings, the narrative of public schools has been developed.

Public schools in Nepal have been providing quality education through learner-centered pedagogy with innovative, creative and self-motivated learning; they are not broken and someone is not needed to fix them rather they are performing excellent to ensure good governance and accountability to meet the diverse needs and expectations of children and parents with their own initiatives; teachers, school management and leadership are very serious to improve quality education and they can do it with the support from parents and community; language is just the means of instruction and quality lies on what child learns especially about knowledge and skills that they gain which are meaningful to them and the society they live in; public schools are successful enough to change the perception of parents and have attracted parents and students which resulted in enrolling the significant number of students from renowned private schools; they are continuing education using alternate solutions to meet the needs of various learners even during COVID-19 pandemic; and finally the learning outcomes of the public schools are outstanding and far higher than national average.

Based on the narratives, policy recommendations have been made to develop policy framework and indicators to measure successful schools in Nepal. It has suggested the government to promote positive narrative of public education with clear guidelines, and the findings of this research will be a good tool for the government to promote public education. The recommendations also include sharing good practices, allocating resources, building capacity of local actors and schools to implement the government commitments to strengthen public education for child rights to quality education. National Campaign for Education (NCE) Nepal will use this research as a tool for policy advocacy to strengthen public education in Nepal.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Context Setting

Developing narrative for successful quality public schools within the quality school education framework has been the agenda of this research. Quality school education is internationally accepted phenomenon, which has been recognized globally as the central dimension in education. As per the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, (United Nations [UN], 2015), “163 states committed to a world with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels” (p. 7). The focus of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)4 has been developed based on the review and progress made on the Education for All (EFA) goals. So, SDG4 has been developed considering the learning of Millennium Development Goals on education which promotes quality public-school education. According to Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2015), “the heart of SDG4-Education 2030 lies at the national level. Governments have the primary responsibility to deliver on the right to education, and a central role as custodians of efficient, equitable and effective management and financing of public education” (p. 57).

The concept of quality school education covers the overall development of learners with transformative and inclusive practices. UN (2017) states “the SDG4 looks beyond school enrolment and looks at proficiency levels, the availability of trained teachers and adequate school facilities to maintain equitable and quality education at the school level” (p. 5). Hence, as per SDG4, responsibility of state doesn't end just by enrolling the children in schools; rather providing quality education is the demand of the 21st century.

The attention given to quality education is not sufficient and there is a need of providing intentional efforts to address barriers in education to achieve the targets of quality education. UNESCO (2020), highlights that the barriers to quality education are still too high for many learners and recommends that effective monitoring systems should be in place to achieve quality school education. So, preparations of states including being clear in policies and having monitoring systems and mechanisms in place are prerequisites to quality school education.

Government of Nepal (GoN) has adopted the goals and targets of Education 2030 agenda by developing national framework. The framework commits to ensure the transformative process, effective and efficient delivery of public education, and it highlights that the government takes the responsibility of regulating standards improving quality and reducing disparity, (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2019). The National Framework for SDG4 has been developed to ensure quality education for all at all levels using a right-based approach, there is a full commitment on the quality education agenda at global and local levels (Ibid). To realize this agenda in practice, it is expected to promote promising practices and support for the full implementation with ownership and participation of local actors.

Recently, the government of Nepal has started declaring some public schools as the model public schools with additional supportive schemes such as financial support for the infrastructure development based on School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) Eligibility and Selection Criteria for Model Schools – 2073 (MoE, 2016). However, Upadhyaya & Khanal (2020) see the negligence in supervision by the government in the performance of schools like collecting success stories, positive examples, best public education policies, financing, and implementation from States as per the human rights perspective. On the contrary, the private schools' narratives are strong in terms of added facilities of English medium, extra-class, preparing students for tests by charging fees, as well as advertising to attract more students (Ghimire & Koirala, 2019). The influence of private actors in education is growing in the country regardless of ensuring inclusion, equity, and rights of children to education due to their presence at the parliament.

Although there are high criticisms, some of the public schools have maximumly enrolled children, have to screen the enrolment through an entrance test, do not have to struggle for survival, and parental support is always at the high gear (Khatry, 2020). Even in the COVID-19 pandemic, some public schools have used alternative learning strategies like project based assignments, promoting community learning centers, learning through household activities and other solutions including lifelong learning to continue learning of children such as engaging the children in personal sanitation, working with parents to clean dishes and interaction with community people, and so on. Phyak et al. (2020) explore that teachers of the low resourced public schools are engaging students in fieldwork, observation, reporting, communicative activities, speaking, household, and collaborative skills to promote students' participation, motivation, and self-regulated learning. Such exemplary initiations of public schools can inspire other public schools to do better for the enhancement of quality education in Nepal.

## 1.2 Problem Identification

The major issues that build the foundation of this research in quality school education in Nepal are lack of clear framework and clarity for successful quality schools which are developed based on the evidences from the ground, and lack of narrative on successful schools. Despite several evidences and practices available globally on how quality education can be promoted in schools, there is a narrow perception on the quality school education in Nepal. “Quality school education often centers on the debate of public versus private provision of education” (Aslam, 2009 as cited in Koirala, 2015, p. 3). Many researchers have stated that effective learning and quality education can be attained through the mother tongue instruction. However, “schools in Nepal have started to switch their medium of instruction to dominant, particularly English language to convince parents that they too can deliver “quality” education just by making that switch” (Gyawali & Khadka, 2016, p. 19).

Public schools in Nepal have achieved progress on quality education to meet the needs and demands of contemporary society. According to Khanal et al. (2019), public schools have mapped out where the schools aimed to go and how the schools would achieve their objectives which would foster both excellent teaching and learning environment where students thrive. However, public schools in Nepal are mistreated as they are not promoting English as a medium of instruction. Bitterly, public schools are

assumed to provide low-quality education, which has been a major reason for parents' choice to private schools thinking as successful schools, Neupane (2019). The good practices in Nepal are mostly behind the curtain due to lack of efforts sharing them to schools and poor or nonexistent mentoring, review, and supervisory practices from governmental as well as non-governmental agencies in Nepal, Subedi (2018). In this backdrop, there is a lack of clear framework for successful quality school education, hence, the study is exploring the framework for successful schools and the narratives of quality public schools in school education system of Nepal.

According to Smith (2019), public education as an entity tends to reinforce often-negative narrative about schools in America which are broken and need to be fixed; public schools are doing great work of preparing students for an innovative, fast-paced, and constantly evolving world. Despite the hard work and improvements in quality education made by public schools, they don't gain trust and their work is not valued by parents and stakeholders.

Researches have shown that public schools are capable to deliver quality education. However, they have faced challenges of gaining trust and acceptance from parents and communities. In the study of Munnik & Smith, (2019) parents of South Africa expressed their view that there was a lack of stimulation and teacher support to promote the educational achievement of the children. Despite the roles of various stakeholders to promote quality education, parents are worried due to their perception of teachers in public schools.

Mexico shares one of the largest borders with the United States of America, perceives the importance of foreign language, specifically, English (Millan & Basurto, 2020) and promotes it from the early grades not excluding other local languages to get a quality education.

Although linguists and language activists understand language as the rights of people to learn in their mother tongues, teachers are forced to use either language of majority or English as the medium of instruction in some cases in Nepal (Gyawali & Khadka, 2016). The reinforcement of the dominant language in practice, some of the linguistic minority students are compelled to get an education through the language of the majority. This raised important issues of child rights to accessible and free education and dilemma of people of Nepal on public education and public schools who do not necessarily deliver lessons in English as a medium of instruction.

Above literature show that the successes of public schools face challenges due to the pre-occupied mind set of parents and stakeholders on public education as people establish their understanding based on what they hear from others even if there are no evidences; people think that public education is broken, and needs fixing up; the teachers of public schools are not capable and trustworthy; and public schools do not use English as a medium of instruction, hence have poor quality education.



### 1.3 Objective of the Study

The study analyzes the indicators of quality education which support to measure the performance of successful quality schools and explore the narrative of public schools in Nepal. Specifically, this study strives to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyze the indicators of successful quality schools based on the evidences and global practices through empirical analysis of related literature.
- To Explore the narrative of public schools analyzing the cases of successful public schools of Nepal through case study method.
- Develop policy recommendations based on the findings for further engagement of NCE Nepal in policy advocacy for strengthening public education.

### 1.4 Identifying Rationale

The Government of Nepal has developed policy instruments promoting public education after its commitments at the national and global forums to provide free, quality, and inclusive education to its citizen. Furthermore, equitable access to quality education has been declared as the fundamental human rights in the Constitution of Nepal. Despite the commitments of government to quality public education, there is a lack of perception and framework to ensure quality school education.

The successes of public education are overshadowed by its overly publicized failures, and the involvement and influence of private actors in education system and policy is growing at an exceptional pace; however, the growth of private education has raised important questions about its implications on social justice, human rights, social cohesion, and the role and future of education (National Campaign for Education [NCEN], 2016). Promoting narrative of successful quality public education can be a good solution to address these issues.

In the COVID-19 context, most of the schools including private in Nepal are facing challenges to continue learning but narratives of private schools in this context are illogically strong for supporting children to continue learning (Dawadi et al., 2020). Even in the COVID-19 pandemic, public schools have made their efforts to support learning in their schools. However, the narrative of public schools has not been documented and publicized.

The above backdrop has rationalized the needs of conducting credible research which contributes promoting quality public school education in Nepal. This research brings up the narrative of successful public schools collecting success stories, positive examples and best practices and analyzing those successes which will be validated with the established framework for quality education.

## Chapter 2: Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

The study has been carried out using the qualitative research design, especially with empirical analysis and case study methods. The study attempted to seek the answers of these questions: a) How are successful quality schools defined or measured? and b) How are public schools performing to enhance quality education in Nepal?

To get the response to the first question, an empirical study of relevant literature related to successful quality school education has been done to draw the findings. The information coming from the review of related literature have been reviewed, classified, summarized, and presented into themes in a cohesive manner, and then turned into major indicators to define or measure successful schools.

The second question attempted to be answered through case study method analyzing the cases of successful schools and the evidences gathered from the schools have been validated by linking them with the indicators of successful quality schools drawn from the empirical assessment. Based on the findings from the first and the second questions, the narrative of public schools has been developed.

### 2.2 Sources of Data

The study has used both primary and secondary sources of data. The informants like teachers, Head Teacher (HT), students, School Management Committees (SMC), Parent-teacher association (PTA), parents, and community members from the purposively sampled schools were the sources of primary data. Secondary data were collected by reviewing related theoretical and empirical literature like books, journals, articles, research reports, and legal documents.

### 2.3 Sampling and Sample

Purposive sampling has been used to select the districts and schools which are representative enough to maintain geographical representation in the seven provinces of Nepal. Seven schools, one from each province, have been selected for the study using the following criteria:

- Seven schools in total - one school from each province.
- The selected schools represent rural, urban, and semi-urban areas in Terai, Hill, Mountain and Kathmandu valley.
- Schools which are not part of special projects or short-term interventions supported by donors. However, where possible, the schools which involve CSOs to promote quality education has been considered.
- The school leading reforms and system changes are driven entirely by government through local ownership.
- The schools, preferably model schools which are declared by the government of Nepal, which have also received positive perception of public that they are doing good to promote quality education. This has been verified through consultation with community and government agencies.

Using the above criteria, following processes were applied during the selection of successful public schools from the different local governments of Nepal. The validation processes include a) Seven Community Interaction – community members of short-listed schools were consulted to check their perception on those schools performing good; b) Seven Virtual Focus Group Discussion with local government representatives, teachers, Head teachers, some educators in those area to check on how those schools are performing; c) News and Publication reference published online as well as printed news looking at the website and official Facebook page of the respective schools; and d) Seven Telephone Inquiry with Headteacher, teachers, SMC members to get information.

**Table 1: The details of the sample schools:**

Provinces	Sampled districts by geographical status of local governments		Selected Schools (pseudonym)
	Geographical status	District	
Province One	Terai (Urban area)	Morang	Panchakanya Secondary School
Province Two	Terai (Rural area)	Mahottari	Janahit Secondary School
Bagmati Province	Valley (Semi-urban)	Kathmandu	Kamana Secondary School
Gandaki Province	Hill (Rural area)	Baglung	Gyan Secondary School
Province Five	Terai (Semi Urban)	Rupandehi	Shandesh Secondary School
Karnali Province	Hill (Urban area)	Surkhet	Janakalyan Secondary School
Far-Western Province	Mountain (Remote area)	Bajura	Mamata Secondary School
Total		7	7

## 2.4 Tools for Data Collection

To gather the required information from the sample schools, in-depth interviews, and Focused Group Discussion (FGD) have been carried out during the study despite the limitation posed by COVID-19 pandemic. Field visit was organized in the sampled schools of Bagmati and Gandaki provinces maintaining physical distances and minimizing health risks. During the field visit, face to face semi-structured interview was conducted to gather information from the key informants. As field visit was not possible in the cases of province one, two, five, Karnali and Far-Wester province, the data from these areas were collected through virtual meetings and telephone interviews.

## 2.5 Delimitations of the Study

The limitation to study included as follows:

- All the FGDs and in-depth interviews in the sample schools were not done face-to-face due to COVID-19 pandemic which had a difficulty in reaching out to community people. The face-to-face meetings were conducted only in the schools in Gandaki and Bagmati Provinces.
- The study is concentrated on exploring the public-school narrative in seven public schools of Nepal.

## Chapter 3: Quality School Education: An Empirical Analysis

### 3.1 Positive Perception of Public Education at Global Level

The quality education is gaining momentum after the implementation of SDGs for five years globally. There are a lot of advocacy efforts at national and global level to fund and transfer systems for quality public education like country level budget advocacy, influencing policies at national level, Global Partnership for Education replenishment campaign, fund the future campaign, and so on. The developed countries like Finland has been successful in quality education by promoting public school education. The contributing factors of its success are transferring of authority to municipalities and the schools themselves, improving educational quality and access for greater social equality, inspection to self-evaluation of the profession, and, so on (Jordan, 2019).

In China, the socio-economic status of parents are considered based on their achievements on quality education (Hu & Wang, 2019) and the state makes policies to upgrade the socio-economic status of the citizens through education. For the promotion of the overall public education, Singapore, primarily focuses on the primary education and has been "expanding primary schools through investments in the physical infrastructure of schools" (Kent, 2017, p. 2). So, the developed countries have taken public school education as the gateway to develop their countries and upgrade the status of citizens.

In Kenyan public schools, human resource management especially teachers is taken comparatively significant (Jonyo & Jonyo, 2017) to enhance public education and maintain systematicity in the appointment and investment. Kenya assumes investing in teachers can promote effective quality education. In South African context, the government has provisioned the human right based education in the constitution and other education-related laws and transferring the teachers as the practitioner of humanitarian approach for the quality education (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018).

India is also making policies to ensure minorities, Dalits and marginalized groups from remote areas have access to quality education (Malkani & Rose, 2018). India is found to realize the equal participation of minorities to establish quality education in the nation is crucial.

It shows that both developed, developing and under-developing countries have good examples and the public schools are also perceived as quality schools which are foundation for development and recognized to take human right based approach to address the barriers. However, these examples are not promoted and publicized.

### 3.2 Human Rights, Policy Instruments and Quality School Education in Nepal

Equitable access to quality, inclusive and lifelong education has been accepted by the member states signing the 2030 agenda of sustainable development, as the fundamental human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, is the first international legal instrument that recognizes education as a human right. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child consider the right to education as cross-

cutting right. The Abidjan Principles, (2019) focuses on ten overarching principles including right to education, free education, parents' choice for their children's education, and education is the states' responsibilities. Furthermore, these principles emphasized strengthening public school and regulating private institutions by the state. The true intention of these policies and provisions is to implement education as a fundamental human right of the citizens in the world.

Nepal is one of the signatories to education as the fundamental right of the citizen. The right to education for every citizen regardless of their diversities is declared as a fundamental human right in part 3, article 31 of the Constitution of Nepal (Government of Nepal [GoN], 2015). The constitution further guaranteed that the Dalits, the citizens with disabilities including visually impaired and the economically indigent citizens shall have the right to get free higher education under the law with different additional supportive strategies like mother tongue-based education (Ibid). Based on the constitutional provisions and global commitments, Nepal has developed policy instruments to fulfil its commitments.

The Government of Nepal has developed policy instruments to materialize the global and national/constitutional commitments. Nepal has enacted the Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2018 upholding the right to education as an enforceable sacrosanct human right. This Act envisions to ensure easy and equal access and continuity of all to education and to make education universal, useful for life, competitive and qualitative, and every citizen shall have the right to acquire free education up to the secondary level from the state (MoEST, 2018). As provisioned by the free and compulsory Act, different governments, particularly some local and provincial, are shouldered with a duty to provide school education within two kilometers walking distance from children's residents (Jha, 2019). This is one of the good initiations, however there are a lot of other attempts to be initiated to ensure the free and compulsory education as envisioned in the Act.

Education Act, 1971 with its 9th amendment provisioned different arrangements and flexibilities that can be made in curriculum, textbook, teaching-learning and assessment system for children with visually impaired, low vision, hearing difficulties, autism, intellectual disability, and hearing-impaired children (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2017a). However, there are some debatable issues around this Act for fulfilling the constitutional commitments and aligning it with the new federal structure of Nepal. Implementation of this Act includes appointing resource teachers and providing them training related to inclusive and special education (Thapaliya, 2016). Although the numbers are not sufficient, resource teachers in public schools are supporting children with disabilities for their education.

The seven-year strategic plan, School Sector Development Plan (SSDP: 2016–2023) is in the implementation phase which aims to increase the participation of all children in quality school education. The SSDP focuses on strategic interventions and new reform initiatives to improve equitable access, quality, efficiency, governance, management, and resilience of the education system (MoE, 2016). Although there are many issues in the school education system of Nepal, the provisions of SSDP include making school education more relevant, contextualized, and place-responsive gradually (Wagle et al., 2019). To develop and promote public education in Nepal, SSDP envisages the establishment and operation of several Model Schools to demonstrate improved teaching-learning and learning outcomes. It is estimated that about 1,000 existing secondary schools will evolve into model schools in a phased

manner during the 7-year SSDP period in the state (MoE, 2016). Out of the total to be declared, 167 secondary schools have already been declared as the model school in 2017 (MoE, 2017b).

National Child Friendly School Framework for Quality Education 2010 encourages the children to enroll in school without any discrimination based on caste, ethnicity, sex, financial status, physical and mental frailty, and treat without discrimination both within and outside schools (MoE, 2010). Similarly, the GoN has implemented School as a Zone of Peace (SZOP) National Framework and Implementation Guideline, 2011 which has focuses schools and educational institutions throughout the country to remain peace zones (MoE, 2011). The development of these policies and guidelines shows full commitment of the Government of Nepal to quality education with equity, equality, and peace as a fundamental right. However, the government has not given strong attention to the implementation of these policies.

Currently, the Education policy 2019 has been formulated with the slogan ‘educated, civilized, healthy, and competent human resources: social justice, transformation, and prosperity (MoEST, 2019). This policy has expected that the unsolved issues in the field of public education and unaddressed everyday problems by the education Act and education regulation would be addressed by the federal education Act. However, the policy is silent about private sector which gives space to private sector to influence the system in their favor as there is a good number of policy makers from private sector in the parliament.

### **3.3 Empirical Assessment of Successful Quality Schools**

Quality education covers several parameters as it is linked with different stakeholders from students to central government. As in a generic term, it covers all activities that ensure the fulfillment of quality policy, quality objectives and responsibilities, and implements them through quality planning, quality control, quality assurance, and quality improvement mechanisms (Fadeeva et al., 2014, p. 2). As a fundamental human right of the citizens, quality education requires systematic and quality education policies with their thorough implementation. Current educational development discourse is characterized by the SDG4 entitled 'Quality Education' (United Nations 2015, as cited in Bhowmik, 2017, p. 191) and focusing on the equal access to quality education.

Different factors contribute to quality education. Students and parents are expected to work as co-educators with teachers (Amunga et al., 2020) for the better educational achievement of the school. With strong parents and community support, the leadership capacity of the school principal should be enhanced and empowered to effectively deal with challenges faced in the 21st century (Mestry, 2017). Similarly, proper attention should be given to the needs and interests of children to ensure the rights of children to quality education. Gordon (2018) explored the positive relationship between what children know and perceive about their rights and subjective well-being, understanding of children’s perceptions of their rights can support efforts to ensure that these are embedded in various contexts of their everyday lives. It is very hard to find the uniformity on the part of the learners in terms of social, economic, physical as well as cultural aspects. Since education is the leading factor for the development of the whole country, especially of ethnic minority groups, implementing SDG4 among ethnic minorities and enforcing human rights is an unavoidable task for the government and its educational institutions like public schools (Do et al., 2020).

Torres & Weiner (2018) emphasized, to be a successful school, it is necessary to foster teacher autonomy, professional accountability, and collaboration. Along with the principal, teachers are the key stakeholders and play a determinant role to promote learning, foster quality education and establish mutual collaboration among learners, parents and teachers in schools. Good quality teaching involves teaching students to value principles such as cooperation, tolerance, unity, integration, equality, civic respect, cultural identity, and fairness which are the necessary criteria of the quality education (Ferguson et al., 2018a). Teachers have important role to take these principles to actions.

The school leadership is equally responsible to achieve quality education. Transparency, professional accountability, and consistent systems of delivery are the other parameters to assure the quality school education. Chaikoed et al., (2017) state "quality education requires collaborative school administrators and educational leaders" (p. 304), so that school can effectively and smoothly be managed and administered. It is also important to establish collaborative and inclusive systems and mechanisms which allow participation of education stakeholders. "The notion of education for all includes exercising greater flexibility and transformability when encountering the diverse needs of pupils, consequently promoting teamwork" (Ferguson et al., 2018b, p. 43). In this way, the flexible, systematic, collaborative, and inclusive policies and practices are prerequisites to quality education.

Maponya (2020) finds, "the delegation of principals in curriculum responsibility, the culture of teamwork, commitment, and healthy competition is likely to be created among staff members who might aspire to perform more than expected" (p. 191). The school principals can inspire children for better learning and teachers and staff for their professional accountability. Besides this, effective managerial skills can be demonstrated through the leadership of the principal for the effective management of all elements to create an effective leadership style to achieve the expected school vision and mission, and to produce qualified graduates (Kempa et al., 2017). Thus, to get success in learning achievement, effective school management, teamwork, and resource mobilization, the role of the school principal is crucial.

Curricular and co-curricular activities that the schools promote for quality education, determine the success. Particularly, innovative, creative, and leadership skills promote quality in schools. "Parents' involvement, academic affairs, build on student-teacher relationships in more concrete and significant, profound ways while enriching peer and community relationships" (Mozhgan et al., 2011, as cited in Grigoropoulos, 2020, p. 66). Promoting the leadership skill of students fosters peer learning, group work, community support and classroom management lead to better academic attainment.

"Inclusive practices in the schools are the best way to combat discrimination and to achieve the vision of education for all" (UNESCO, 1994 as cited in Ferguson et al., 2018a, p. 43). This also support children to value their feelings and aspiration and support schools to promote inclusive systems to meet the needs of all learners. Those schools can serve quality education that can accept democratic values and social justice by constantly negotiating across differences to fulfill the particular needs of individuals rather than homogenizing their need according to a false standard of normalcy (Portelli & Koneeny, 2018). So, valuing the diversity of the learners and supporting them to expose their creativities and hidden capabilities not only support the individual learners, but also the schools to achieve equitable quality education.

"Free education is not only to provide 'education' at free of cost but to provide equitable access to every child irrespective of the demography, exploit the individual strengths and cultivate good values to become a law-abiding citizen" (Jayawardena 2013, as cited in Alawattegam, 2020, p. 2). Furthermore, positive attitudes of teachers and school family and additional support lead to better results of learners. Positive attitudes of the school teachers are associated with environmental variables, including the availability of teaching assistants, the perceived adequacy of supports, the perceived confidence in attaining supports and the low workload expectation following an inclusive placement (Saloviita, 2020) that create the humanitarian environment in the school. Such initiations of schools contribute to the vision of free and accessible education of the nation and create a peaceful and safe school environment for all learners thriving to quality learning.

For the quality school education, an effective and proper school financing system plays a determinant role. According to Itegi (2016), "the planning team needs to possess requisite management skills to oversee the process to success, allocating specific responsibilities to key stakeholders, and availing necessary resources coupled with effective communication to enhance meeting set timelines "(p. 955). The collaboration of stakeholders especially parents and communities to support for school financing is very important to promote equality, inclusion, and quality education in schools. Basson and Mestry (2019) highlight, by cultivating and sustaining collaborative relationships between members of school governing bodies and school management teams, the school certainly contributes to effective financial management. Strong school financing is equally important to continue education in difficult circumstances exploiting different options and using ICT to reach out to the marginalized children. According to Bigirwa et al. (2020), it has a moderate positive statistically significant relationship between school financing and e-learning adoption to promote quality education.

From the above empirical assessment, it can be summarized that the successful quality schools can be measured or defined based on the following indicators. These indicators have also been used to validate the evidences coming out from the case study schools of Nepal in the subsequent section.

- Learning achievements: This includes teaching-learning activities, extracurricular activities, and learning outcomes.
- School governance and accountability: This includes responsive and transparent school governance which conducts periodic social audits and ensures the rights of children to quality education, community participation, teamwork, and institutional leadership.
- Inclusion and equity: increasing access of children coming from diverse backgrounds and gender and responding to their needs with sufficient provisions in schools.
- Continuation of learning in difficult circumstances: This includes developing plans and alternative options to continue education in any disasters and pandemic.
- School financing: This includes effective school financing management through engagement of parents, community, and other relevant stakeholders to generate resources for equitable quality education.



## Chapter 4: Performance of the Public Schools in Nepal

This chapter covers the analysis of cases of successful schools in Nepal. The evidences coming from the case study schools are framed under the themes which are validated with indicators of successful quality schools established in the sub-chapter 3.3 above.

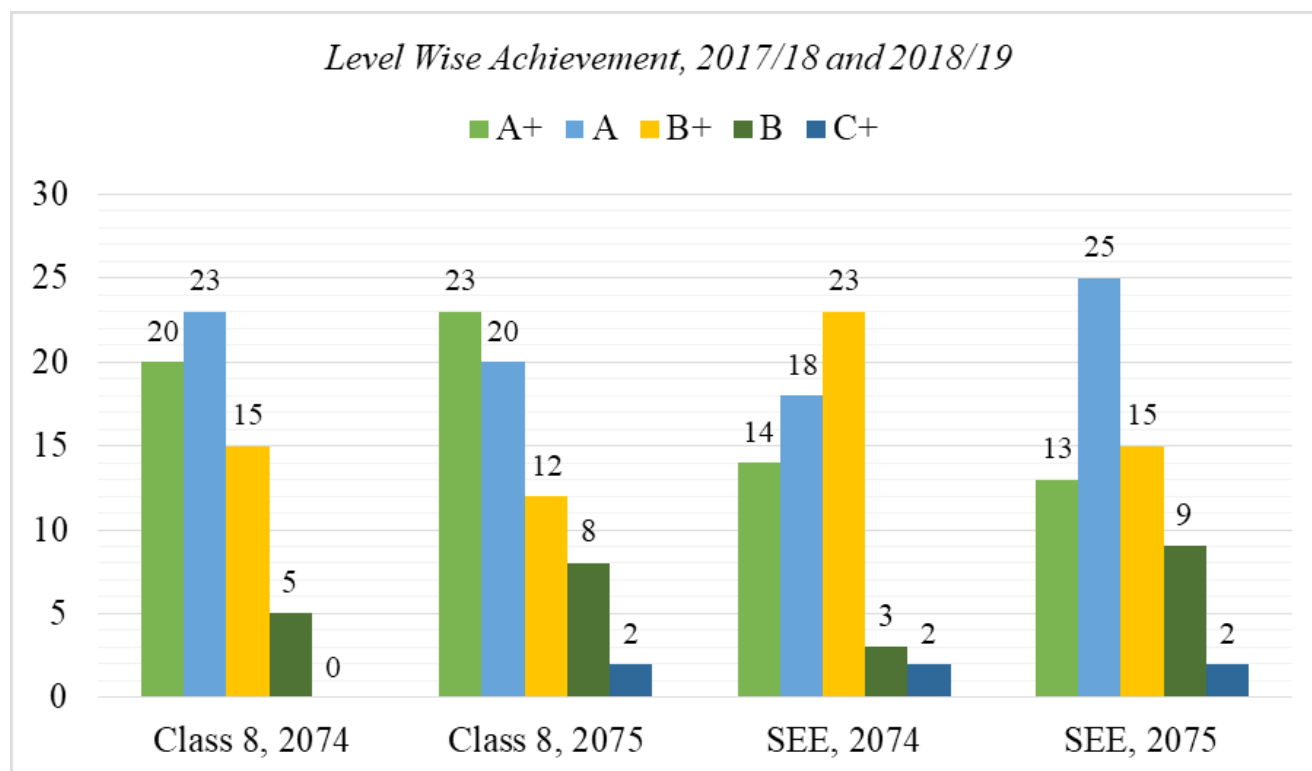
### 4.1 A Case of Gyan Secondary School

Gyan Secondary School (pseudonym) is a public school located in the Hill area, Gandaki Province. It has been running classes up to grade 12 with 46 teaching/staffs (27 male and 19 female). Among them, 28 teachers are paid form the internal source of the school. In 2019, there were 807 students (330 girls and 477 boys). Although the school is located in the village area, 40 new students were enrolled in the school from the private schools in 2019.

#### A. Learning Achievements

Although it has not been declared as the model school from the government (up to the time of data collection), it was honored by the government getting the first position in the region and the third position nationally out of the community schools in Nepal in the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) result in 2015/16. Similarly, it has got the second position at the provincial level in 2018/19 achieving greater result in SEE. For the evidences of learning achievement, the results of last two years (2017/18 and 2018/19) for grade 8 (basic level) and SEE is presented in the graph below:

Figure 1: Level Wise Achievement in 2017/18 and 2018/19.



(Source: School record 2020)

As presented in the figure above, the educational achievement in both academic years for both levels - basic level examination (grade 8) and SEE are found fully satisfactory. Most of the students have secured A+, A, and B+ grades which are regarded as higher grades. None of the students were found securing the grades below C+. Regarding the queries about effectiveness of learner-centered activities, a teacher as a coordinator of extracurricular activities reflects:

*"We promote students to organize and conduct different activities like morning assembly, sanitation campaign, wall journal publication, etc. We only facilitate and observe their performance. The respective committees themselves collaborate with other students and present their activities. We inspired them to take the leadership in different committees on the rotation basis."*

The student-oriented activities including extracurricular activities help them express their hidden abilities and skills which are part of quality education. As explained by a SMC member, to provide maximum opportunities for the learners' creativities, two school assemblies, one at the beginning and one at the end of the day, have been practicing. At the end, the class performing excellent is declared as the best class. Parents and SMC members praise the excellent class of the day and inspire other classes for better performance. According to the head teacher, the students themselves manage their leisure classes with different innovative activities like subjective quizzes and storytelling. In this way, along with regular teaching, the school implements learner-centered teaching and extracurricular activities for learners' overall development which has supported to enhance the learning achievement of the children.

## **B. Governance and Accountability**

For effective school governance, a single effort of one aspect is not sufficient. It is necessary to contribute equally from the side of teachers, parents, and students. The same experience is found in this school. Krish (pseudonym), Headteacher explains:

*"The present educational achievement is not the contribution of Head teacher alone. I have been getting sufficient supports from teachers, parents, and students to maintain smooth school administration. When teachers provide constructive feedback regarding students' performance to the parents, they immediately support their children for further improvements. Students as well cooperate and take it positively as suggested by teachers and parents. I openly appreciate the diligent teachers for their delivery of quality education and supportive hands in the school administration."*

Like the Headteacher, parents have similar responses. They found school system and management fully supportive to their children's education. From the observation of different meeting minutes at the school, it was found that there was a good participation of students, teachers, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), SMC, and advisory board of school management. The issues discussed at those meetings are relevant to quality education, examples of the issues discussed in the meetings are - needs of children, organizing extracurricular activities, participation of parents, scholarship for needy children, and so on.

The school strategy has provisioned the participation of students in SMC and PTA meetings. Students responded that they experienced their meaningful participation in different decision-making process like formulating annual programs and scholarship distribution decision. According to PTA members, the agenda of meetings are fixed after the participatory consultation with its members. As responded by the PTA and SMC members, the school has been adopting the systems of monthly parents' visit which

has created opportunity to discuss the monthly progress of students, monthly financial situation of the school to hold school management accountable and other issues raised by parents. The school also creates opportunity to discuss on the education acts, regulations, and guidelines circulated by federal, provincial, and local governments. They also divide roles in a participatory manner and each member takes responsibility to the tasks assigned to them. These examples show that the school has applied good governance and accountability in practice.

### **C. Continuation of Learning in Difficult Circumstances**

During the visit, parents were found involving their children in household tasks like caring and watering the vegetables, though the country was in lockdown. Regarding this, Pramila (Pseudonym), a parent says:

*"Our school has requested us to engage our children in different household activities according to their level. So, we should support and follow the schools' guidelines for children's education. My kids are very happy to work in the field with me."*

From the response given by Pramila, it is realized that parents have mutual trust in the services provided by the school. During lockdown, the school was found dividing its catchment area into ten learning centers and supporting the children's learning. Some teachers were also found facilitating in the learning center keeping distance. In the learning center, Rajesh (Pseudonym), a student of class 10 expresses:

*"Our school is regularly supporting us. We are learning in this center since last Sunday. Although we are not in school, we are practicing quizzes, speeches, today's news, today's thought, and amazing facts regularly as we did in the school."*

From the above evidences, it is found that teachers, school management and students of the school are equally responsible for continuation of learning during these difficult circumstances created by COVID-19. The general assumption about the students is that they feel bore from the regular class and expect holidays. But the students of this school are found more enthusiastic and motivated to learn which directly symbolizes them as responsible learners besides difficult circumstances.

### **D. Inclusion and Equity**

Most of the practices and systems applied by the school are found positive as per the spirit of equity and inclusion. SMC and PTA have been formed as per rules including female representation. During the field visit, most of the infrastructures such as toilets, classrooms, libraries, computer labs, etc. are found satisfactorily inclusive. There are separate toilets for girls, boys, and staff. The school has disable friendly entrance. Classrooms have been decorated with proper furniture and whiteboard as per the students' level. Although the researcher could not observe the real classroom due to COVID-19 pandemic, as per the teacher response, the school has been supporting children with disability by giving priority seat, giving them additional time during class and exam time as per their request and writing large letters on the board for the visually impaired students.

The school has kept learners at the center of the activities in practice. Additional scholarship and free hostel facilities are provided to the needy students from the school's internal resources. Similarly, as

written in the teachers' meeting minutes, students' representatives were compulsorily invited to attend so that they could address the needs of students. It shows that they have inclusive decision-making process. During the observation, it was found that list of students' committees like Junior Red cross Circle, Eco Club, English Club, *Kopila* Child Club, etc. were on the wall of classroom and staff room, and there was equal balance of boys and girls in those committees. For developing the leadership skills and capacity of the students, the school has promoted the idea of school captain, class captain, and vice-captain from both girls and boys. These are few examples of inclusion and equity in the school. However, this has greater role to promote inclusion and equity in school and communities.

## E. School Financing

The communities of Gyan Secondary School are found more positive for the overall development of the school. Furthermore, they are found responsible for the quality enhancement, and committed to continue their regular efforts for better educational achievement raising resources for schools. Narjung Shrestha (pseudonym), SMC member and elected member of ward committee explains:

*"Because of the quality education provided by the school, community people are committed to collaborate with school for every initiative of the school. We have collected a fund of Rs. 3,52,00,000 voluntarily. The interest of this fund is used to manage extra-classes, the hostel for needy children, and scholarship for the marginalized and disadvantaged students. Ward and Municipality have not allocated any separate budget for this school."*

The work done by community is so much inspiring and praiseworthy to address the needs of students coming from diverse background. Gagan Rana, (pseudonym), Education Officer of the respective municipality expresses:

*"The municipality has not given any additional support for quality education this year. This school is getting regular financial support from the province and federal government for its success from past years. We have not circulated any specific guidelines for the best result producing school but the school with the help of the community and other stakeholders has been able to explore a lot of creativity including extracurricular activities, self-regulated innovative learning, students participation in the meeting, and promotion of students' leadership, and so on."*

All the members of SMC and PTA were found actively involved in managing and raising resources for school to improve quality of school and each member has at least one specific responsibility to support the school. As responded by the district education officer, the school is self-sustained, and they need limited support from the government as communities are very active to raise resources for the school.

## 4.2 A Case of Panchakanya Secondary School

Panchakanya (pseudonym) Secondary School is the model public school located in the Terai area, Province One. There are 55 teachers and staff (31 females and 24 males) up to the secondary level. Among them, most of them are trained and 7 are appointed internally. Students from communities like *Janajatis*, *Madheshi*, *marginalized communities* and *Dalits* are studying in this school. There were 2200 students (1134 girls and 1066 boys) in the school in 2019. Among them, 400 newly admitted, 350 were from the renowned private schools, and 103 from the marginalized communities.

## **A. Learning Achievements**

Educational achievement of the school is found satisfactory. In the previous academic year (2018/19), about 40 percent of students secured A+ grade in the SEE exam which is far better than national average of 3.8 percent. Rest of the students secured B+ and B grades and less than 5 percent scored C+. The SEE result of this year is better than previous year (2017/18). The learning achievement of rest of the classes is also satisfactory as there is cent percent pass rate in the last two years. Teachers using ICT, creativity, and learner-centered teaching techniques as per the needs and interests of students, additional classes and visiting their home and assisting them periodically have played greater role for the success of the school.

As the school has achieved greater results, 350 students from renowned private schools have been transferred in this school in 2019. The dilemma of parents on the public education has been changed by the school's overall performance and the physical facilities like buildings, classrooms, toilets, furniture, and so on. The interest of parents sending their children to this school has been increased. However, school has not been able to enroll all the students due to its limited infrastructure and capacity.

## **B. Governance and Accountability**

After the discussion community members and others, this school is found accountable to its community and their demands. As said by the school supervisor of this school, the performance was not good four years back. The entire school family with the leadership of SMC and PTA developed strategy and plan considering the needs and expectation of communities. The school has good collaboration with other government agencies at local level to get their support. Now, the results and performance of the school has been improved significantly.

The school conducts social audit, annual financial audit, parent counseling and visiting marginalized groups to promote good governance and accountability. These events are organized with complete participation of communities, SMC and PTA members, students, teachers, and education officials from the district. A representative from local government reported that the school has transparent process to appoint teachers and other staff. Teachers of the school are found satisfied by the governing systems. The school has also developed participatory School Improvement Plan (SIP) including inclusive and equitable education agenda in the plan. The local government official reported that the SIP development and implementation processes have been seriously collaborative and participatory.

The leadership of head teacher, SMC and PTA was found more efficient as both the mechanisms were found more active to consult with the community people who have diverse needs, expectations, thoughts, and aspirations. Similarly, the teachers were found taking leadership in teaching and responding the needs of diverse learners.

## **C. Continuation of Learning in Difficult Circumstances**

The school has seriously considered to continue education during COVID-19 pandemic. Two major strategies of alternative learning were used to support the learners. First, the schools organized online classes for the learners who have access to ICT. Second, for the learners who do have access to ICT, home visits were organized by teachers to support them. The head teacher of the school says:

*“The teachers are self-motivated to visit the children and their parents periodically to support them for their learning. For example, most of our teachers were busy in facilitating learning in different communities during the lockdown in the district.”*

Specifically, the students from the marginalized group were given priority while visiting home by teachers with proper social distance. According to the student of class 7 from the *Madhesi* community, all the subject teachers taught them in the public building near their community with social distance and minimizing health risks.

#### **D. Inclusion and Equity**

Most of the stakeholders of the school responded that they are engaging in activities of the school including parents and students from the marginalized communities and groups. One of the parents from the *Musahar* community expressed that, due to the responsible services from the school, he has become more responsible to his children's learning and has been visiting the school regularly to know the performance of his children and to get ideas on how he could support at home. Similarly, teachers are found teaching with a more positive attitude. Teachers are found further responsible for the school's vision of inclusive and accessible education as per the local Education Act, and children's social, physical, mental, and economic well-being.

Students were also found active in their learning and collaborating with their colleagues. As reported by a student, all her friends collaborate each other and they never discriminate based on caste. Some community members were found supportive to the marginalized children by providing stationery and clothes on the occasion of different ceremonies like birthday and marriage anniversary.

The local government is found equally responsible for public education, particularly to provide equal access to quality education. According to the Education Officer and representative of local government, they are very serious to the education access of marginalized children and have prioritized this agenda in the policy development and implementation processes. Furthermore, the local education act has ensured the provisions of up to 50% participation of parents from the communities in school level activities. SMC and PTA are leading the activities like community interaction and awareness so that they get sufficient support from the parents and communities.

#### **E. School Financing**

The school has enrolled children from diverse backgrounds which ensured inclusion. According to the HT, more than 100 students come from the marginalized groups like *Madheshi*, *Janajati*, *Mushahar*, *Rishidewa*, and *Muslim* who need to travel 10 kilometer every day to come to school. School provides additional support for them to come to school from the fund created by community. Kabita Parajuli (Pseudonym), a secondary level teacher shares:

*“We had distributed cycles to more than 35 students who were economically poor and used to come to school on foot from quite far distance. Realizing the needs of children from marginalized groups, the school has also arranged bus services.”*

The school has given due importance to the students, who are excluded economically, socially, and geographically from the internal source of school. There are also priority seats for children with disability and girls in the buses. The school has strategy and allocated fund for supporting and bringing children from marginalized communities in the school. The HT expresses:

*"To support the students from marginalized groups, we have created scholarship fund of 1.5 million (Nepalese rupees). We provide necessary support like stationery, school dress, sanitary pads, mid-day meal, and so on to the needy students from this fund. Furthermore, we request some community people to support needy learners and we found positive response from communities who are financially in a good position to support. The support includes buying stationery items, school dress, food, and so on."*

The community members are active in this school to raise fund and support to promote quality and inclusive education. SMC members claimed that it would be impossible to enroll 2200 students in a public school, if the school lacks good leadership and financing. The competition is very high as the public schools need to compete with private schools. Parents in the discussion highlighted that the resource given by the government was not sufficient, so they work in a team to raise fund and support the school.

### **4.3 A Case of Kamana Secondary School**

Kamana (pseudonym) Secondary School is the model school located in the semi-urban area of Bagmati province in Nepal. It has 40 teachers (22 male and 18 female); among them, nine teachers are paid by the internal sources of the school. There were altogether 675 students (352 girls and 323 boys) in 2019. Among the 175 newly admitted students, 62 were transferred from the private school. It has practiced both general and technical streams (Computer engineering at secondary level) with sufficient facilities like ICT tools, hostel, libraries, book corners, laboratories, sufficient transportation services.

#### **A. Learning Achievements**

Kamana Secondary School has achieved a greater success on learning outcomes. The current dropout rate of the school is zero and it has successfully attracted students from well-known private schools. In the discussions with teachers and parents, they highlighted that, along with learner-centered teaching, the school has been organizing curricular and extracurricular activities, support classes for the needy learners, no physical punishment, and so on. To show the performance of learning achievement as an example, the results of last two academic years for the basic and SEE levels have been presented below in the table.

**Table 2: Results of the Kamana Secondary School**

Grades	SEE		Basic Level	
	% of students attaining grades in 2017/18.	% of students attaining grades in 2018/19.	% of students attaining grades in 2017/18.	% of students attaining grades in 2018/19.
A+	7	8	12	10
A	10	12	10	16
B+	43	36	53	63
B	25	40	20	6
C+	8	4	5	5
C	6			
D+	2			

(Source: School Record 2020)

## **A. Governance and Accountability**

The school governing system is very smooth as it is run as per the rules and regulations which have been developed with the participation and contribution of parents and communities. According to Bishan Panta (pseudonym), the head teacher of the school:

*"I have followed all the norms and procedures of the Public Procurement Act honestly. I have been interacting and collaborating with all the stakeholders like SMC, PTA, and Ward committee to make decisions."*

As per the HT, the school has followed most of the norms and procedures of accounting. During the observation of a few reports and meeting minutes of the school, it was found that there was a practice of following clear procedures even in small matters. For example, they have been forming different committees like procurement, monitoring, construction, and so on with clear Terms of Reference (ToR). All the committees ensure the representation of teachers, parents, students, and other relevant stakeholders in their composition.

Teachers and students were accountable to perform their responsibilities. As reported by the SMC members, most of the teachers performed their assigned responsibilities such as exam preparation and management, extracurricular activities, additional classes, etc. very sincerely. Parents were found satisfied with the decisions made by SMC and PTA. Particularly, the system of publishing reports after the completion of any task by the respective committee was found very effective to maintain a transparent school governing system in the school.

The leadership of school has received positive response and trust from parents and students. One of the students in the discussion shares:

*"Our head teacher is quite friendly with us. He visits us regularly to listens our views and he allows us to express our opinions. His response to our issue is very satisfactory."*



The school has coordinated leadership practice as teachers leading teaching and curricular activities, students leading extracurricular, SMC and PTA leading parents' engagement and head teacher leading for the overall direction and vision. The evidences for this approach were seen through the minutes of school and different committees formed in the school.

### **B. Continuation of Learning in Difficult Circumstances**

Although most of the public and private neighboring schools were closed due to COVID-19, this school was found supporting its students in their learning. As experienced by one parent, the school supported his children by providing worksheets with creative tasks and providing needy feedback. Classes were found divided into groups to contact their subject teachers in a different schedule. One of the students shared that they were supported by the teachers seriously and inspiring them to engage in learning activities. Besides, the teachers received 15 days' ICT training organized by the school. One of the teachers expressed his satisfaction with the training which enhances his professional skills to use ICT during COVID-19.

### **C. Inclusion and Equity**

The school has sufficient infrastructures and facilities like classrooms, toilets, staff rooms, playgrounds, libraries, etc. which were found inclusive. The early grades classrooms have teaching-learning materials and blackboards were placed in such a way, so that, small children could easily write on them. The school has been providing additional support to the needy students such as free hostel facility, free day snack, school uniform, stationeries, and so on to maintain equity-based practices.

To address the problem of girls and female teachers in the school, a Gender Complain Addressing Committee consisting of 5 members, has been formed, which has been actively working in close collaboration with SMC female member. The school also explored options for providing food for needy children and parents during lockdown. There was a good practice of forming different committees like construction, child club, literature, sports, etc. which were found inclusive in terms of gender and other groups. In the discussion, learners reported that they had not felt any discrimination based on caste, gender, physical abilities, and social status in the school.

### **D. School Financing**

The collaborative practices were found in the schools as the teachers, students, parents, SMC, and PTA in the discussion shared that they have been involved for raising resources for the school. The evidences of effective participation to raise resources and manage the financing were further validated by the meeting minutes which show the issues they discussed on raising fund and the committee they formed to manage it well. The community members were found positive to contribute money to the school due to the devotion shown by school to quality education. As recorded in the school, more than dozens of the community people have contributed to scholarship funds, particularly to support poor and marginalized children. The parents were found actively involved in the awareness campaign organized by the school during COVID-19. In the conversation with students, they responded that they were happy to be involved in different activities conducted by the school and generate resources to manage

these activities. As said by a local government representative, the school also coordinates with the local government as and when needed. The school also has been receiving funds from the government as per the norms of model school.

#### 4.4 A Case of Janahit Secondary School

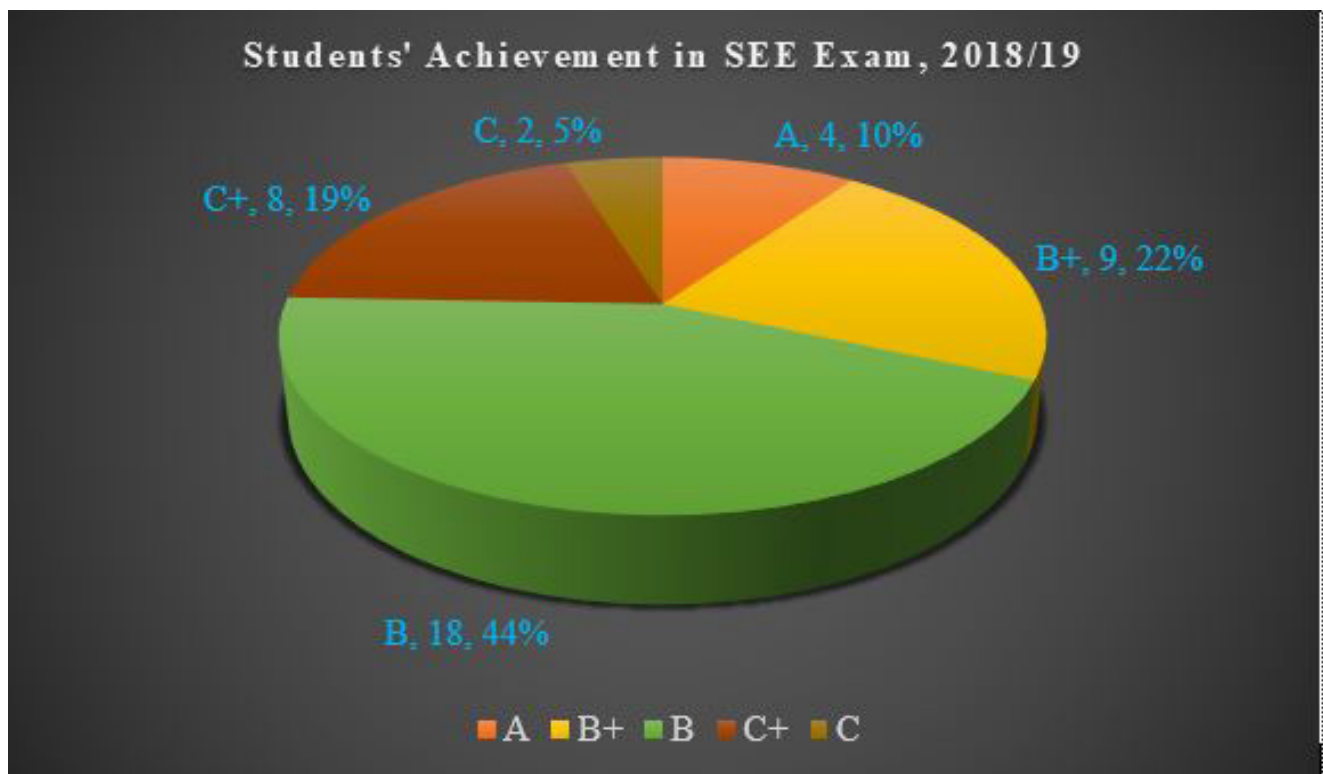
Janahit (pseudonym) Secondary School is located in the village area of Terai region, Province Two. There are 1054 students (502 girls and 552 boys) in 2019 and most of the students were from the mixed community. Among them 300 newly admitted students, 250 were from popular private schools. There are 54 staff (30 males and 24 females), and among them, 30 teachers/staff are paid by their internal source.

##### A. Learning Achievements

The school has run general and technical streams. The school has excellent learning achievement records. Due to such achievement, the students from the private school were found enrolling in this school. As reported by a participant in the discussion, more than 78 percent of the students secured above C (grade) in the SEE exam of 2018/19, whereas the result in 2017/18 was 63 percent. At the basic level, 83% of the learners secured B+ in 2018/19. Besides, the school promotes practical skills like rice plantation and fish farming. The practical skills also include promoting innovation like producing sanitizer and soap.

As an example, the Result of technical stream of SEE in 2018/19 is presented in the figure below:

Figure 2: Learning Achievement of Technical Stream in 2018/19



(Source: Telephone Survey, 2020)

Based on the Figure 2, the educational achievement in the technical stream looks satisfactory as no children secured the lower grades. The satisfaction of students was also high, one of the students from the technical stream who was waiting for SEE result says:

*"I am not worried of SEE result; more importantly, I have learned many practical skills such as how to feed fishes, how to identify their physical problems, and how to save them from outer hazards, etc."*

The evidences show that the school and children are more focused on learning rather than exam's score, which is a good sign of quality education as they are learning centric.

## **B. Governance and Accountability**

The school is found running its programs as per the needs and demands of the community and it has established system of interacting with the stakeholders. The practical program of animal science has been initiated in as per the demand of the community. The teachers are responsible to deliver the lessons as per the needs and interests of children. A resource person shared that the teachers develop teaching plans, teaching materials, and include practical exercise as part of their delivery. Every day, they reflect how the day went and plan for the next day. The head teacher has taken leadership to engage teachers and students forming different committees like Art and literature, Environment Club, Agricultural committee, Animal Farm Committee which promote their creativity. SMC, PTA, and parents are actively involved to promote good governance and accountability that ensure child rights to quality and inclusive education.

The head teacher, SMC and PTA are working closely to ensure institutional accountability. They are mobilizing the community to gain community support and ownership. The school leadership is well received by parents and community and they fully support the leadership. Despite several initiatives taken by school, they are well coordinated and managed within the overall quality education framework.

## **C. Continuation of Learning in Difficult Circumstances**

During lockdown due to COVID-19, the school used different alternative learning solutions based on their access to students. The school produced TV/radio programs to deliver lessons and broadcasted them through local radio and television channels to support the learning of children. The school also focused on promoting creative and innovative learning activities such as drawing, storytelling, singing, and producing soap and sanitizers. The students produced sanitizer and soaps during the pandemic and distributed it to the community for free of cost during COVID-19. This focus has not only supported to continue learning, but also reduced the tension of teachers, students and parents which is a great initiative to address their psychosocial wellbeing

## **D. Inclusion and Equity**

The school has strategy to promote inclusion and equity. It has allocated quota system to enroll students with disability and students from poor and marginalized communities to ensure their access. These students do not necessarily appear in the entrance exam which is compulsory for other students to

get enrolled. A teacher reported that during the practical activities in the farms and field, students are seriously assigned the activities as per their skills and interests. The school has provisions of mid-day meal and scholarship which are great support for the marginalized children and reduce dropout rates. There are also practices of ensuring inclusion in the committees formed by schools which encourage everyone to work in a team.

## **E. School Financing**

Parents and communities have active engagement for supporting the practical lessons and activities organized by schools through raising resources. A resource person says:

*“The whole community in the leadership of Raju (pseudonym) contributed to build necessary infrastructures for fish farming, plantation of rice and vegetables and other practical lessons.”*

Similarly, Gokarna Chaudhary (pseudonym), a teacher expresses:

*“We have a piece of land (17,500 square feet) for our lab for rice plantation and fish farming where our students learn practically which has been possible through the contribution of parents and communities.”*

The school earn money by selling fishes and vegetables which has been used to support children from marginalized communities. Additionally, parents and communities have been involved in the meetings and actively contributing to develop strategy and plans to raise and manage resources to support quality education at schools and home. Similarly, the local government, PTA, SMC, and education officials have been actively engaged to support teachers and head teacher to raise fund for the better-quality education.

### **3.5 A Case of Sandesh Secondary School**

Sandesh (pseudonym) Secondary School is a model public school since 2016/17 and located in the semi-urban area of Province Five. According to the record of 2019/20, there were 3500 students (1797 girls and 1703 boys) up to class 12. Among them 650 newly admitted students which includes 526 students from popular private schools. At present, there are 122 teachers/staff (68 females and 54 males), among them, 92 teachers/staff are paid from the internal source of the school.

#### **A. Learning Achievements**

The learning achievement of the school is found far better than national average and other public schools in Nepal. According to the school record, in the SEE examination of 2018/19, four percent of students secured A+, 10 percent secured A, 43 percent secured B+, 25 percent secured B, 10 percent secured C+ and five percent secured C. The school has made gradual progress on its learning achievement as the result of 2018/19 was better than previous year. Additionally, the school has sufficient infrastructures and facilities such as ICT Lab, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Social and Mathematics lab, pure drinking water, sufficient playground, well-managed canteen, a hostel for visually impaired learners, smartboard and ICT for teaching-learning, library & e-library, transportation facility, alternate energy, and so on. The teachers and students are capable enough using those facilities which have played crucial role to improve quality education.

## B. Governance and Accountability

Despite big number of students and teachers, the school has participatory management systems to ensure transparency. The head teacher says:

*"We have shared the different responsibilities like the level in-charge, subject committee, extra-curricular committee, academic in-charge, teacher coordinator, community relations officer, administration coordinator, and three vice-principals. These committees work in close coordination among themselves and with head teacher, SMC and PTA members."*

As explained by the principal, the teachers were accountable to fulfill their responsibilities. The different committees, head teacher, SMC, PTA members are accountable to their roles and responsibilities. Similarly, the school was found applying collaborative strategies to manage special education in the school. Likewise, social auditing system is found effectively implemented and a report was found on the school's website and the Facebook page for transparency and accountability.

SMC's leadership role to support HT and teachers has been very effective to improve quality education and to establish special education for CwD. As stated by the teachers, the leader of the school like SMC chair and head teacher are very positive to share leadership role forming different mechanisms where teachers and students and encouraged to lead different activities.

## C. Continuation of Learning in Difficult Circumstances

The school has taken some initiations to support children during COVID-19 pandemic. According to teachers, class 10 students were supported by the online using different tools like Google Meet and Zoom, and other students were supported through home visits and radio programs developed by the school. Junior children were provided a few projects as per their levels. For the visually impaired children who stay at the school hostel have been visited by teachers to support on their learning. Additionally, the school has strategy to promote alternative solutions during difficult time.

## D. Inclusion and Equity

There are 30 visually impaired students in the school. The school has provided free hostel facility for these children. 50 students from other marginalized groups have been getting scholarship that supports to continue their education. The school has also been providing additional support classes to the needy children and promoted flexible systems for the disabled learners like providing additional time in the examination, frequent parents' meetings, teachers' special attention to these children, disable friendly computer lab, and so on. As shared by a visually impaired student, other students are friendly and supportive in their difficulties. Kamal Lama (pseudonym), the principal explains:

*"Our teachers support CwD in learning as well as assessment procedures seriously. For example, they never use the sentences like, look at the book, look at the picture, what do you see in the picture, etc. in the classroom teaching. But they inspire other students to explain the picture who are near CwD. Teachers themselves pay special attention to those students. We have been practicing a separate examination hall with flexible procedures with supportive measures for these children."*

The CwD in the schools are encouraged and supported by teachers and other students. Naresh Chaudhary, (pseudonym), a visually impaired student of class 10 accepts:

"In every activity, I have been getting support from my teachers and friends. They manage separate exam hall and extra time understanding our disabilities. I am waiting for the SEE result to join in class 11 at the same school as the teachers and whole school understand our issues and support us."

## E. School Financing

SMC and PTA were found actively participating in the planning, monitoring, and policy making processes of the school so that they have better financing in the school. As replied by the parents, school invites them to discuss on important agendas including improving quality education and addressing the needs of marginalized children through additional resources. SMC has taken initiative to generate funds to support for the promotion of inclusive education. Parents, SMC and PTA, the local government and CSOs have been supporting schools to train teachers on quality and inclusive education and to promote extracurricular activities to improve quality education. The school has been taking initiatives for road maintenance, blood donation programs, sanitation campaign, etc., which are important part of quality education.

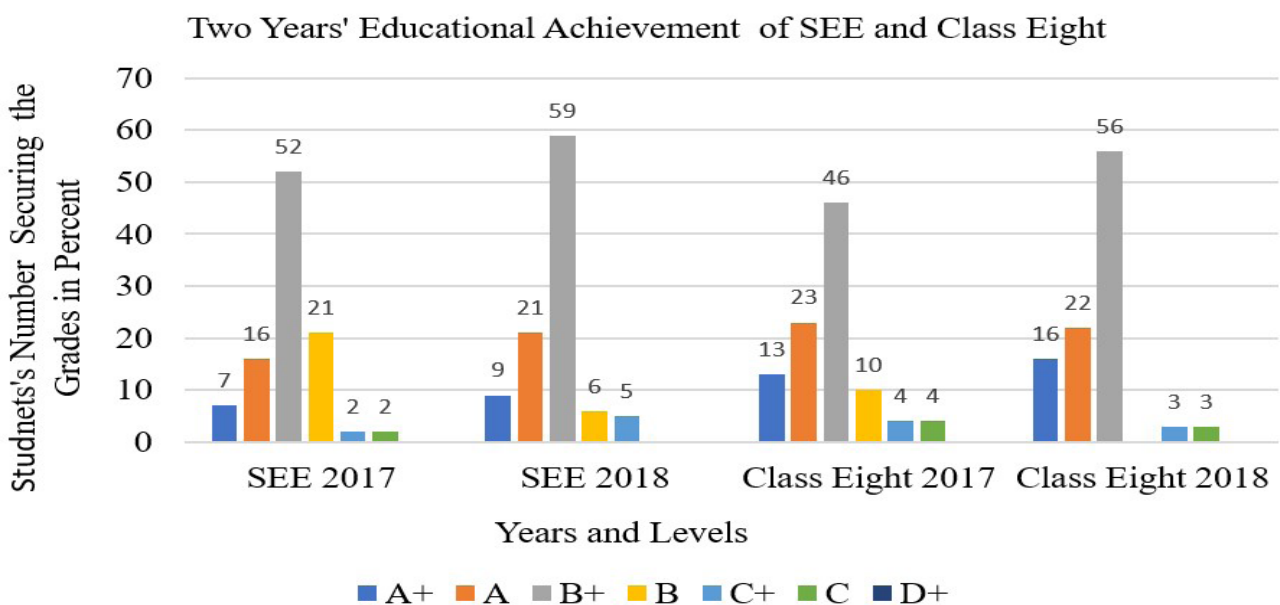
### 4.6 A Case of Janakalyan Secondary School

Janakalyan (pseudonym) Secondary School is located in the hilly district in Karnali Province. It was declared as a model public school in 2017/18. In total, there are 127 teachers/staff (71 female and 56 male), among them, 100 are paid by the internal resources. There were 2365 students (1168 boys and 1197 girls) in 2019, among them 710 (30%) were from private schools.

#### A. Learning Achievements

According to the information provided by the school administration, educational achievement of the school is found satisfactory. The last two years result in SEE and basic level exam is presented in the figure below:

Figure 3: Results of SEE and basic level for the last two years



(Source: School's Record)

As presented in the above figure, the learning achievement at both levels is high. Most of the students have secured B+ and B grades which are regarded as good grades. Few percentages of the students have secured C and D+ grades on both levels. The results show gradual progress of the schools as the result of 2018/19 is better than 2017/18. Additionally, the overall learning achievement of the school is 74 percent which is far better than national average.

The school inspired children to promote self-regulated learning and leadership skills. The school has formed different committees like Publication Unit, Eco-club, Youth Circles, Class Monitor, Vice Monitor, Moral Clubs, Child Clubs, etc. In the students' experiences, such activities have prompted their innovation and leadership skills. As reported by the teachers, frequent practice of students' assessment, proper support from the parents, community, SMC and PTA, additional classes for the needy students, regularity of students, learners' deep devotion to learning and so on are the reasons behind the successful learning achievement.

## **B. Governance and Accountability**

The teachers, SMC and PTA members, and head teacher have enrolled their children in this school which is very rare in other public schools in Nepal. When the leaders enroll their children in the school, they are more committed to improve the quality of school. The promotion of such system has inspired parents to enroll their children in this school. The school has followed local Acts and laws thoroughly. The formation of SMC and PTA from the parents of children studying in the school is a good practice, and this makes SMC and PTA responsible and accountable to improve quality learning of the school. The school has started conducting periodic review meetings of the stakeholders, monthly meeting of the PTA and SMC, regular audit of financial activities, academic audits, provision of annual best teacher awards, etc. promote good governance and accountability system in the school.

Similarly, the school has developed a system of assessing the performances of different committees every year by the evaluation team including students' representative in the team. This system makes everyone responsible and accountable to each other. The teachers felt, this is manageable along with their main role to teach in the classrooms as this promotes leadership skills and collaborative culture in the school.

The school has promoted shared leadership as teachers are empowered to take lead on academic activities and students to extracurricular activities and SMC and PTA to aware communities and parents, and head teacher for overall leadership and they coordinate each other while conducting these activities.

## **C. Continuation of Learning in Difficult Circumstances**

Although the school did not face any disastrous situation in the past, it has been supporting students during the COVID-19 pandemic quite well. They develop clear strategy to continue learning through virtual classes and regular phone call with the students. According to the head teacher, most of the parents were supported to engage their children in learning activities. The follow up calls by teachers helped get clarity on how the students were making progress. However, the head teacher accepted that they were unable to include all the children because of a lack of access to ICT devices and internet facility. Despite difficult circumstances, the alternative practices initiated by school were found satisfactory.

## **D. Inclusion and Equity**

The school includes representatives of different groups including girls and CwD in the committees formed by the school, this shows the example of how equity and inclusion can be promoted in schools. There is a scholarship provision for girls, CwD and the children from marginalized communities. To support the learning of needy children, teachers also provide additional classes. As shared by teachers, the classrooms are arranged to meet the needs of different learners and a disability is given high priority. A committee of the students has been formed to maintain inclusive activities in the school. Infrastructures like toilets are disabled friendly but the school building is in the construction phase. As said by a girl of class nine, sanitary pad is freely available for them in the schools. Other mechanisms like PTA and SMC are also found inclusive and as per the Education Acts.

## **E. School Financing**

The school is taking leadership to involve communities and parents to generate resources and managing them properly. The parents, SMC and PTA contribute small fund to promote curricular and extracurricular activities. They have taken roles to aware communities on quality education, sanitation, and parents' roles to support their children. They participate in the regular meetings organized by schools and provide constructive feedback for raising fund and take roles to complete activities assigned to them. The education officer from the district and representatives from the local government office visit the school and provide necessary suggestions and financial support.

### **4.7 A Case of Mamata Secondary School**

Mamata (pseudonym) Secondary School is located in a remote geographical area of Far Western Province of Nepal. According to the academic record of 2018/19, there were 793 students (431 girls and 362 boys). Although the school is in the remote location, 10 students were transferred from the private schools of the town. Among the 25 teachers (14 females and 11 males), three are paid by the internal sources of the school.

#### **A. Learning Achievements**

In both, SEE and basic level examination, the school is found to achieve satisfactory learning achievement. According to the data (result of 2018/19) provided by the school, the grades secured by the students ranges from A+ to D+. However, majority of students obtained C+ and few were found achieving D+. Similarly, among the 62 students at basic level, two secured A+, five secured A, 34 secured B+, seven secured B, five secured C+, five secured C, and four secured D+. The school is making gradual progress on their learning achievement every year. The overall achievement of basic level was 57 percent in 2018/19 where it was 54 percent in the 2017/18. As shared by a teacher, they have been conducting support classes to the needy children, weekly and monthly test, practice of daily lesson plans, monthly review of the educational status of the school, scholarship and stationery support for the economically poor children, and so on which are the determining factors to increase learning achievement.



## **B. Governance and Accountability**

As reported by the district education officer, this school is truly implementing the concept of free and compulsory education and has been inspiring other public schools to promote quality education. In collaboration with the local government, the school has been taking leadership to implement the concept of free and compulsory education. Teachers were invited to share learning and train the teachers of other public schools in the municipality. As shared by parents, the school taking leadership particularly on awareness programs against all kinds of discriminations based on caste, gender, economy, religion, etc. is praiseworthy. Teachers are found more accountable to provide free support classes to the needy learners. SMC, PTA, parents, and teachers developed plans jointly. The development and implementation of SIP involve teachers, students, SMC, PTA, parents, and representatives of the I/NGOs. The school has been using SIP as a governing plan to promote good governance and accountability. As shared by SMC members, as an example, they have been practicing transparent system for the recruitment and appointment of teachers and staff as per the needs of school.

## **C. Continuation of Learning in Difficult Circumstances**

Due to geographical location, the school has been facing many natural disasters like landslides, floods, heavy rain, heavy snow falling, etc. The school has included such subject matters in the local curriculum and have taught focusing on the prevention from the disasters. The school have also identified safe space where all the teachers and students stay together during sudden disasters. As reported by the principal, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they practiced community education model where teachers get support from community members. The school also developed radio programs to support children as an alternative means to continue learning. However, it was difficult to ensure that every learner is engaged in learning due to strict lockdown, but the initiation of school was praiseworthy.

## **D. Inclusion and Equity**

The school has separate toilets for girls which are gender friendly. Teachers were found supportive to the disable and economically poor children by providing additional support classes. The marginalized students have been provided free bags, stationers, additional scholarships in collaboration with different NGOs. The local government has been making financial support to improve quality education. The committees have been formed following the principles of inclusion. As shared by parents, school is promoting free and accessible education and there are no discriminatory practices in the school.

## **E. School Financing**

Teachers, parents, students, SMC, PTA, and the head teacher work closely to generate resources and improve performance of the school. The support of NGOs and the active involvement of local government contributed to improve quality education of the school. The school family highlighted that without the financial contribution of rural municipality, they wouldn't have achieved the success that they have attained currently. The municipality has taken its responsibilities and has provided resources to successful schools to promote public education seriously formulating and practicing Education

Act along with other supplementary guidelines such as scholarship procedures, temporary contract procedures for teachers and head teachers, guidelines to develop public schools as the best educational destination, and so on. These initiatives of the municipality were good guidance for the school. The parents support school to plant grass in the public land collaborating with other stakeholders. The school earns money by selling grass which has been used to support quality education. Besides, the school has worked with NGOs to get support for training teachers, campaigning against child marriage and additional support like uniforms, stationery, school bags, etc.

## Chapter 5: The Narrative of Public Schools

The narrative of public schools is built on from the grounded evidences from the seven successful public schools in Nepal which is further validated by the empirical research findings of this research. The average people hear only the scandalous stories (Draewall, 2016) and news to establish their concepts on the performances of schools. This narrative provided evidences to those audiences and other stakeholders to address the gaps seen on their perception of public-school education. The key perception gaps are: “public education are broken, and they need to be fixed” (Smith, 2019); teachers in public schools are not trustworthy (Munnik & Smith, 2019); and public schools do not necessary deliver lessons in English as a medium of instruction, hence have poor quality education (Gyawali and Khadka, 2016). However, the seven public schools in Nepal which are located in the rural, urban and semi-urban locations of the country have been performing high against the successful quality school indicators.

The case study public schools are far more above the national benchmark on learning achievements and have been practicing learner-centered pedagogy with innovative, creative, and self-motivated learning. The schools have promoted inclusion and equity, good governance, and accountability to meet the diverse needs and expectations of children and parents. The schools have good practices on how they involve parents, communities, students, and other stakeholders for the overall development of schools. Despite the difficult circumstances like COVID-19, the schools have been using alternative options to continue children's learning. The school leadership is responsible for promoting collective leadership to address the issues of ethnic groups, gender, disabilities, and the excluded communities including Dalits. The collaborative culture has been established in those schools among the stakeholders to develop their feeling of ownership and ensure their contribution for the promotion of quality education in the schools.

The case study public schools have been successful to attract the students from renowned private schools from the same locations. The table shows students from private schools enrolling in the public schools in the academic year 2019.

**Table 3: number of students enrolling in the case study schools from private schools in 2019**

Schools	Total new students enrolled	Total from private schools
Gyan Secondary School	40	40
Panchakanya Secondary School	400	350
Kamana Secondary School	175	62
Janahit Secondary School	300	250
Sandesh Secondary School	650	526
Janakalyan Secondary School	710	710
Mamata Secondary School	10	10

As shared by parents in all the focus group discussions, the case study schools were more responsive and child friendly to the needs of students and expectations of parents, than the private schools. The public schools have been practicing regular interactions with parents and teachers conduct regular home visit. The learning achievements shown by case study schools have been very impressive as their results

are better than private schools. Additional supports like free transportation services, free stationery, scholarships for girls, Dalits and poor children and bicycle for the needy students are provided. However, as shared by the same parents, private schools charge high fees, expensive textbook and exercise book, and lack of additional supports like scholarships are the pushing factors. The private schools have not promoted child friendly environments as they only focused on preparing for the exams with limited extracurricular activities.

In the current system, Nepal has three tiers of government systems: federal, provincial, and local. The local government institutions have become the leading stakeholders in transforming and creating the possibility of rapid positive change in education (Neupane, 2019). For better educational performance, public school teachers have started using leadership and collaborative activities (Acharya et al., 2020) and focus on practice based teaching-learning (Koirala, 2019) which has supported improving the learning achievement.

Besides success stories of the public schools, there are few barriers and gaps which has hindered to promote quality school education in Nepal. As a multicultural nation, there are a lot of local feelings, cultures, value, strengths, and aspirations of the citizens. However, there are a few initiatives and poor system of collecting evidences from public schools which need real promotion. Wagle et al. (2019) found that the policy provisions of local curriculum and the use of locally available resources for teaching and learning have continuously lost its position in the educational circle due to lack of monitoring and supervision. To inspire such locally engaged public school, Neupane, (2017) caste, and ethnic group in rural Nepal. Using the primary data from a questionnaire survey, a series of interviews, and school observations, this study found that girls' school attainment is significantly lower than that of boys'. Similarly, Dalit (the lowest caste recommends forming policy for inclusive education based on the local socio-cultural environment, especially concerning the caste/ethnic composition of the local community with proper monitoring strategies (p. 68).

## **A. Narratives on Learning Achievements**

Khanal et al. (2019) found high levels of interest, collaboration, prohibition of political activities inside the school, approachability of parents, and transparent recruitment and mobilization of high-quality teachers in successful public schools are good indicators of quality education. According to the performances of seven case study schools of Nepal, it shows that public schools can attract parents and children who are studying in private schools by improving their teaching-learning and learning achievements, for example, 710 students, 526 students, 350 students and 250 students from the renowned private schools have been transferred to Janakalyan Secondary School, Sandesh Secondary Schools, Panchakanya Secondary School, and Janahit Secondary School respectively. For the quality enhancement, HTs and teachers have been developing collaborative culture not only among themselves, but also with parents and community. The teachers in those schools are equally capable promoting child friendly and child-centered teaching in the schools. The teachers are professionally accountable, provide additional classes for the needy children, promote creativity and innovation, and use self-regulated techniques to inspire children and parents in the schools for the better performance of children. For examples, Gyan Secondary School has been promoting curricular and extracurricular activities like quiz, storytelling, speech competition, and son on to promote the creativity of children which contribute

to the better learning of children; and due to the achievement made on learning, Sandesh Secondary School gained the trust of parents which created demands of enrolling children even more than of its capacity.

## **B. Narratives on Governance and Accountability**

The effects of commitments and development of major policy instruments by the government, improvements have been seen in the public-school education system of Nepal gradually. Public schools have started implementing the concept of good leadership. HTs from higher-performing public schools discussed the importance of strong teamwork and collaboration among their teachers and identified ways in which they shared and distributed leadership among their teachers and staff to manage their schools (Singh, 2017). The case study schools have implemented different strategies to promote good governance and accountability in the schools. They have systems of transparent and collaborative decision-making processes which ensure the involvement of stakeholders. They also conduct periodic social audit with the participation of parents and community members. The schools are accountable to create demands and provide enabling environments for learning and ensuring the rights of children.

The schools have also established good relationship and partnership with the communities, for example, Janakalyan Secondary School has promoted local culture, ethical and moral value-based education as per the feelings, and aspiration of the communities. This initiative has a huge value to gain trust of parents and community which has longer term impact on quality education. The schools are practicing effective institutional leadership through collectively deciding the priority of the schools and working in a team. Besides the academic activities, the schools with support from communities have maintained the condition of roads to schools, organize sanitation campaign, organize social awareness on discrimination issues, blood donation program, and so on as practiced in Mamata Secondary Schools, Janakalyan Secondary School, Gyan Secondary School, and Kamana Secondary School. The head teachers in the schools play the role of facilitators which promote everyone's ownership in the activities of the schools. The schools have promoted readership skills and creativity of children through publication of wall magazines, Eco-clubs, child clubs, school captains, literature clubs, moral education clubs, and so on through effective participation of students and community support. These activities developed mutual trust among students, parents, communities, and schools, which ultimately contribute to quality education of the schools.

## **C. Narratives on Continuation of Learning in Difficult Circumstances**

All the schools are aware of value of continuing learning of children during any disasters or pandemic. They also have clear ideas and plans on how they can use alternative options to promote learning during difficult circumstances. During COVID-19 pandemic, the research team found that the schools promoted learning centers in the community by considering physical distance and health risks, project work were given to children to enhance their learning, virtual learning classes have been organized for those who have access to internet and for other home visits by teachers have been organized, and radio programs are developed for other learners. Through the support and guidance of teachers during COVID-19, Gyan Secondary School, for example, has been promoting creative activities on how children can be engaged on the project activities at home to improve their learning.

## **D. Narratives on Inclusion and Equity**

Classroom facilitation processes have been inclusive with the proper respect and care of the students' diversities. There are more than four hundred resource classes for CwD in public schools (Regmi, 2017) which are practicing disable-friendly policies and internal systems to promote equitable education. This shows in practice, the case study public schools have been supporting for the rights of children to education. However, the issues of children with disabilities (CwD) have not been fully addressed by the mainstream education. The schools are clear on child rights to education and have been using this in practice. They have support plans for the children coming from marginalized sections of the society. They have created disable friendly environments in the schools for the CwD. They have hygiene kits, separate toilets, and bicycle (in Terai districts) for girls. Teachers are trained on inclusive teaching pedagogy and they provide need-based support to children. There are scholarship provisions for girls, Dalit, CwD and other needy children. With the support from SMCs and PTAs, Panchakanya Secondary, Mamata Secondary and Sandesh Secondary School promoted partnership with community and NGOs to provide additional support to the children from marginalized communities and groups which increases their access to inclusive and quality education.

## **E. School Financing**

Parents and communities are joining hands to support teachers and schools and generate fund to support schools. As a result, the school has an overwhelming interest of students to enroll and the schools have to screen the enrolment through an entrance test (Khatry, 2020). These efforts of public schools need to be recognized and promoted without further ado. In the case study schools, the participation and contribution of parents, communities, SMCs, PTAs and local government in the school's activities and their collaboration with teachers and head teachers to generate resources played crucial role to achieve success of the schools. This engagement promoted mutual accountability and transparency leading to high learning achievement, for example, Kamana Secondary School attained excellent achievements. Voluntary contribution of community experts and government representatives to facilitate sessions on lifelong learning skills and animal science education at Gyan Secondary School, Mamata Secondary School and Janahit Secondary school is an exemplary work.

Besides, NGOs' participation and contribution developing strategies and plans, training teachers and additional support like stationery, uniforms, hygiene kits, and so on to needy children remain vital to enhance quality education in the schools. Being open and transparent Janahit Secondary School and Mamata Secondary School have inspired parents and communities for fish farming and grass plantation in the public land and the returns of these initiatives have been used to support needy children. The GoN has not allocated 20 percent of its annual budget for the education sector despite its commitments in different global forums. Ghimire (2019) highlights that the government needs to allocate one-fifth of its national budget to the education sector to ensure quality education. NECN (2018) highlights:

*“The Gap at present school finance system is found very huge so more than twice the current education budget (10%) is required to maintain free and quality education in terms of financial obligations, and it is urgent that the federal, Provincial and Local governments increase their investments in education by means of education tax and other internal sources. For this to happen, the various levels of government should be better off paying special attention to the mobilization of internal as well as external resources” (p. 23).*

Despite the above issues and limitation, the case study public schools are managing their financing quite well including financing for teachers’ salary through their own resources to achieve quality education goal. These evidences and initiations need to be acknowledged and the GoN should harness the power of successful public schools to improve quality education in public schools.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusion

This research has concluded defining indicators for ‘successful quality school’ as a broad concept covers different dimensions besides the best score attained in the exam results. It enhances creativity, leadership skills and life skills of learners. They learn to respect and live with moral values, ethics, identity, and acceptable behaviors as per their need, interest, ability, and socio-economic background. The quality of teachers and teaching have greater role to ensure quality learning. Transparent, collaborative, and systematic governing systems, institutional leadership and accountable stakeholders are responsible making successful quality schools where education is delivered in a safe environment. Along with the internal systems and practices, it has become compulsory to address the needs, feelings, aspirations, and cultural values of community to achieve quality education goals. Similarly, continuation of learning of children with contextually appropriate solutions in any circumstances has a lot of value to support children, not only for learning but also for their psycho-social wellbeing.

The research has established clear narrative for public school which is grounded on the evidences from the case study schools in Nepal. The narrative can be concluded as: public schools have been providing quality education; they are not broken and someone is not needed to fix them rather they are performing excellent with their own initiatives; teachers, school management and leadership are very serious to improve quality education and they can do it by themselves with the support from parents and community; language is just the means of instruction and quality lies on what child learns especially about knowledge and skills that they gain which are meaningful to them and the society they live in; the schools are successful enough to change the perception of parents and have attracted parents and students which resulted in enrolling the significant number of students from renowned private schools; they are continuing education using alternate solutions to meet the needs of various learners even during COVID-19 pandemic; and finally the learning outcomes of the public schools are outstanding and far higher than national average.

### 6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the recommendations are made on two areas – policy and implementation. The recommendations are as follows:

#### A. Policy Related

- i. The government should make clear indicators of measuring the quality or successful schools in the context of Nepal. Based on the indicators, schools should be monitored regularly.
- ii. The government must promote a positive narrative of public education with clear guidelines. This research will be a tool for the government to promote public education.



- iii. The government should develop guidelines on how successful schools can be supported so that the best performing public schools can serve as model schools for the surrounding schools.
- iv. The government should make proper policies and guidelines at all levels to monitor and evaluate the performance of public education and should provide necessary support based on the findings of monitoring and evaluation.
- v. The provincial and local education Acts and policies should be clear on the promotion of public education that ensures the child's rights to education as per the global and constitutional commitments.
- vi. The government policies should be clear on the roles of stakeholders including CSOs to promote quality public education and positive narrative of public schools.
- vii. There should be coherent link among local, provincial and federal policies to promote quality public education addressing the issues related to teachers, alternative learning solutions during disasters and pandemic, inclusive education workforce, infrastructures, and so on.
- viii. The policy development and implementation processes should be inclusive, participatory, transparent and accountable so that marginalized communities and CSOs have voice and agenda in the policies.

## **B. Implementation Related**

- i. The government should share the learning and narrative of successful schools in other public schools, which inspire and motivate public schools to perform better.
- ii. The government at all levels should developed implementation plans and allocate at least 20% budget to promote quality school education which includes teacher development, leadership and management skills in schools, teaching-learning resources, parents and community engagement, plans to continue education in difficult circumstances, so on.
- iii. All the public schools in Nepal can learn from this research and should develop clear plan for the overall development of schools with ultimate goal of improving quality and learning outcomes.
- iv. The development, implementation and monitoring of plans should be done in close coordination and participation of parents, communities and CSO to ensure ownership and support.
- v. The local capacity should be developed for the implementation of quality public education agenda.
- vi. Parents, community, and local actors should be made aware on 'public schools are successful and performing excellent'. The narrative developed in this research will be a great to tool to promote.

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## National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE- Nepal)

National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE- Nepal) in UN ECOSOC special consultative status is a civil society movement with mandates to lobby and advocacy for ensuring quality education for all. The history of NCE-Nepal traced back in April 2003, after obtaining membership from the international network, Global Campaign for Education (GCE). As GCE Nepal network decided to broaden its spectrum on advocacy, all coalition members felt a need of it legal identity. As a result, NCE-Nepal was formally established on 2010 as civil society movement to ensure the right to equitable, inclusive quality education for all.

NCE-Nepal is a campaign for undertaking collective efforts and coordinating among individuals/ organizations engaged in promoting the human rights to quality education in Nepal. It works as a watchdog to ensure everyone's rights to education and advocates for the same. It focuses on strategic interventions related to policy advocacy, networking, lobbying and campaigning at the district, regional, national and international levels. Currently, it has 409 member organizations including 48 General members and 361 affiliated members ranging from international and national non-government organizations, federation, education media organizations and teachers' community to grassroots institutions working in the field of education and child rights. Besides, it has district coalition in 30 districts covering 7 provinces of Nepal. NCE-Nepal is also a member of Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) and Global Campaign for Education (GCE). In addition to this it has recently registered as a member of Inter Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). Being a member of GCE and ASPBAE, NCE-Nepal has access to engage to debates on education issues at local, regional and international forums. It is one of the recognized CSO network to contribute in the national policy making process for education in Nepal as acknowledged by the Government.

### Vision

Equitable inclusive quality public education for all in Nepal.

### Mission

Lead the creative campaigning to hold the government accountable and to ensure right to quality public education in Nepal with civil society organizations, social justice movements progressive academia and marginalized communities.

### Goal

To ensure equitable, inclusive, free, compulsory and quality education for children, youth and adult as their fundamental right to education in Nepal.

For More Details:



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