

## Article on Impact of Good Governance on School Performance of Nepal

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### Abstract

*This article deals with the impact of good governance on school performance in Nepal. Good governance and its impacts on school performance is a burning as well as searching issue in the field of the educational sector of Nepal. The purpose is to explore and to discuss the findings of the impact of good governance on school performance through critical analysis of the literature review. This article is based entirely on the secondary sources. The finding of the study is that the good governance practices play the significant role in school performance in Nepal. Further, other major findings of this review include low school performance, less participation of stakeholders, lack of transparency and accountability, and corruption in the education sector. The reason for the low performance of schools in Nepal is the lack of good governance. If we adopt good governance practice in education, we can easily ensure/achieve a better school; better performance is the implications of this literature review.*

**Keywords:** good governance, participation, school, school performance

### Introduction

As good governance encompasses aspects such as transparency, accountability, participation and rule of law, its impact on the quality of education and school performance is self-evident. If we want to look at the social side of any country, we have to look at the educational side. If the basic dimensions of good governance are mobilized in an appropriate manner, the performance of the school will automatically become stronger. Lewis & Pettersson (2009) opine in the same line as, "good governance can serve as an entry point to raising institutional performance in the delivery of education services" (p.2). On the other hand, the effective performance of the school depends on proper and appropriate good governance. In the absence of good governance, the issues related to school performance such as student achievement, discipline, proper operation of budget, student passing status and performance cannot move forward.

The government of Nepal (GoN) has implemented the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP), School Sector Development Program (SSDP), and different plans, programs with

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the aims of meeting the goals of quality education for all and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The GoN also initiated educational reforms in terms of educational curriculum, policies, and strategies to provide basic and higher education with increasing local involvement in the management and maintain good governance in the schools.

Very few researches are found directly related to good governance on school performance in Nepal. However, the findings related to good governance, student achievement and school performance have been critically analyzed in the article.

The study conducted by Search for common ground (n.d) showed that, "out of four million school students, 44% are currently enrolled in private schools, as the quality of education and governance is considered substandard in public schools" (p.VII). Shah (2016 as cited inThyness, 2011) found that "there is lack of transparency, accountability and rampant corruption in education sector at school level in Nepal" (P.4). Further, he argued that Nepal is being faced the problems of school governance in education sector.

Moreover, survey research conducted by Parajuli et al., (2019) through Martin Chautari on community school operation in Nepal concludes that community school leadership is not inclusive and does not reflect the diversity of Nepali society. Similarly, the research has clarified the fact that about 20 percent of the schools do not have annual plan and budget and 8 percent do not have social audit. In addition, MOEST (2019) has found that the performance of more than two-thirds of Nepalese schools was found to be below the national average. In addition, Education Review Office (ERO, 2019, p.vi) has found that "more than 70% students have achieved only below 28% of the tested curriculum in Mathematics indicating a huge mass of students underperforming in this subject" (Kafle et al., 2019). Moreover, a recent study conducted by Chapagain (2020) has revealed that the performance of 66 percent of the community school students is under a satisfactory level than private and 85 percent of them are very poor in Mathematics subjects than others.

Based on the presented background on good governance and school performance in Nepal, there are very few researches focused on the impacts of good governance on school performance in Nepal. That's why, in this article, I am interested to explore the impact of good governance on school performance in Nepal. It begins with introduction followed by methods and materials, results and discussion on different themes in relation to literature review on the impact of good governance on school performance in Nepal and followed by conclusion.

## **Methods and materials**

This article is based entirely on the analysis of the previous literature review. This article has collected, grouped, compared, and analyzed information and data based on secondary sources. This article has been prepared using only sources available on the internet.

## **Results and Discussion**

Previous articles and reports are discussed in the section of results and discussion by mentioning on different themes and contents in terms of impact of good governance on schools' performance in Nepal.

### ***Views on Good Governance and School performance; Concept and Definition***

Good governance comprises of transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation, and consensus oriented, equitable and inclusive and responsive. In other words, it concerns with accountability, transparency, and the rule of law that contribute to the social and economic development (World Bank, 1994). Moreover, Sida (2002) also mention "good governance implies an efficient and predictable public sector incorporating participation and the rule of law, i.e., with the characteristics of democratic governance" (p.2). Carter and Man (2003) opine "[g]ood Governance means achieving desired results and achieving them in the right way, i.e. in ways that are consistent with the normative values of democracy and social justice" (p.1). In a Nutshell, good governance means provide the services; formulate and implement rules and regulations in accordance with law and act; transparency; accountability; participation, responsive and effectiveness in terms of school performance.

Similarly, school performance includes students' achievements, teachers' and students' school attendance, teacher performance evaluations, equitable participation, discipline and efficient use of resources. Moreover, various educational indicators are used to identify school performance. Good governance has a significant impact on such educational indicators. Therefore, in order for a school to perform well, the state of good governance must be strong.

### ***Review on Good Governance and Learning Achievement in terms of School performance***

There is a good relationship between good governance and students' learning achievement. National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA, 2020) was conducted by ERO in 2015 A.D., it found that only 50 percent students in Grades 3, 5, and 8 meet NASA criteria for Science, Math and English. A similar study conducted by Room to Read (2009) showed only 43 percent of Grade 2 students could read the entire letter correctly. Interestingly, EQUIP 2 (2010) also found that 36 percent of native Nepali speakers in Grade 3 could not read a single word of Nepali 'Grade 3 text'.

A similar study (NASA, 2019) argued that a huge mass of the students underperforming in the Mathematics, and Nepali at Grade 5. Surprisingly, only 28 percent of the students have adequate knowledge and skills in Mathematics curriculum and 55 percent of the students have not adequate knowledge and skills in Nepali curriculum (p.vii). It seems that the learning achievement of the students has been decreasing trend in Nepal. It is a serious issue and challenge for the policy makers, teachers and stakeholders as well. About the achievement and gap related results of NASA 2018 are quite similar to the results of NASA 2012 and 2015 (NASA, 2019, p.ix) claimed that "the consistent recurring results not only proves the reliability of the NASA study, but also indicates that interventions were not sufficient in improving the quality of learning in the school level".

### ***Review on Good Governance and Participation in relation to School Performance***

Another dimension of good governance is meaningful participation of stakeholders in the decision-making process of the school. Community participation in school governance improves the learning achievement. Shah (2016) argued that "participation of community people or local stakeholders in school governance and decision-making process on the democratic way can be helpful to produce expected achievement of the education" (p.5). He also found that the "community participation at Community Management Schools

(CMCs) in decision making process as well as emotional attachment among community, school, teachers, students were found higher in rural area than that of urban area" (p.100). Similarly, the performance audit report of the community secondary schools (ERO, 2019) has showed that the participation of the parents and community who attend at the time called by the school is weak. It is claimed that parent's involvement has a vital role in a decision-making process for overall school performance.

Equitable participation in the school is an important aspect of good governance. Many studies revealed that the equitable participation in the school is far from the motto of good governance. UNICEF (2015) has showed that there are more than 7,70,000 children are out of school between the age group 5-18. Additionally, NIRT & AIR (2017, as cited in Handicap International, 2015) found that there were 1,79,000 children with disabilities between ages 5-18 and more than 1,05,000 of these children are out of school. NIRT & AIR (2017) found that there are some of main lingering issues that demonstrate inequity in participation in Nepal's education system like: low retention rate of marginalized group; girls repletion rates are higher than boys; younger married children remain short time in the school and high prevalence of child marriage among Tarai ethnic groups (p.64). From this scenario, it is argued that girls with poor background, children with Madhesi, Muslim, Dalit and Marginalized communities are under-represented in basic and secondary education enrollment as well as lowest access to participating in the school's decision-making process in Nepal.

### ***Review on Transparency and Accountability in relation with School Performance***

Transparency and accountability are crucial aspect of good governance that determined the overall school performance not only quantitative aspect but also qualitative progress and uplift. To what extent are stakeholders informed about the decision-making process and other information? transparency answers that question. Similarly, accountability means that the general public takes responsibility for their own actions in relation to other people (PRAN, 2068 B.S.). Accountability includes an answerability and enforcement to maintain good governance and to adopt for the achieving goals in an effective and efficient manner. High accountability means not only making the people feel good governance but also taking moral responsibility for the services provided.

The strength of transparency and accountability is that it helps reduce corruption. There is also a lack of transparency and accountability in Nepal's school sector. This is further confirmed by the finding of Shah (2016, as cited in Thyness, 2011) that the education sector at school level in Nepal is suffered from the lack of transparency and accountability. Research conducted by Parajuli et. al., (2019) have highlighted the fact that at least 20 percent of schools do not have an annual budget every year. It has also revealed that about 8 percent of the schools do not have social audits. It has highlighted the lack of transparency and accountability in Nepal's schools.

### ***Review on Corruption in Education with School Performance***

Corruption cannot be discussed with only money but it is also linked with place, time, and policy which directly affects the performance of the school for improving the educational practice and quality. Shah (2016, as cited in Thyness, 2011) revealed the rampant corruption exist in schools' education in Nepal that are directly connected with the characteristics of good governance. It can be argued that the lack of transparency is the

cause of corruption. Based on the above findings, corruption directly affects school performance for improving the quality education.

### ***Review on the Linking of Good Governance with School Performance***

Several studies have been conducted in Nepal on students' achievements, performance and governance. However, very few of them are to be associated with good governance and performance of the school. In 2074/75 B.S. the Performance Audit report of Community Secondary Schools was made public by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) in Nepal. Looking at the overall performance level of 1967 community secondary schools in 24 districts, 17 (0.86%) were weak, 1644 (83.58%) were normal, 305 (15.51%) were medium and 1 (0.05%) were found to be at the best level. This means that more than two-thirds of schools have below-average performance levels in terms of investment, process and achievement (MOEST, 2019). In this respect, it can be argued that the performance of Nepalese school is far from satisfactory due to the poor governance practice.

A research survey conducted by Parajuli et. al (2019) on the operation process of community schools in Nepal has found that even though most of the schools in Nepal make annual budget and plans, at least, 20 percent of the schools do not have annual plans and budgets every year. Even the accountant does not always participate in the process. About 90 percent of Nepal's community schools are audited annually. However, only about half of the schools are audited by the auditor in the school and rest of the schools are audited by taking the account of the school in the place specified by the auditor. Many schools conduct social audit and report is presented at a parent meeting. However, about 8 percent of schools do not have such a social audit. Overall, 40 percent of schools do not know about the social guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Education, and even if they do, they do not. In addition, Shah (2016) has conducted research on decentralization in relation to good governance in education. He found that "[t]he findings of the study imply that there should not be contradiction about the nature of decentralized education at policy level and its implementation level" (p.101).

These all data and information related to good governance clearly show its relation to the aspects of school performance and school achievements and claim that there is weaker governance practice on school performance of Nepal.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, good governance is the heart of government which is the process of formulating and implementing the plan, procedure, action and entities in terms of school governance. Moreover, good governance comprises the different crucial components, viz, transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation, and consensus oriented, equitable and inclusive and responsive. Similarly, students' achievements, teachers' and students' school attendance, teacher performance evaluations, equitable participation, discipline and efficient use of resources are falls under school performance.

This article has explored and discussed the components of good governance in relation to the performance of the school in Nepal with critical literature review and content analysis. It is found that there are very few researches that directly related to good governance on school performance in Nepal. However, the findings related to good

governance, student achievement and school performance have been critically analyzed in the study.

Low school performance, less participation of stakeholders, lack of transparency and accountability, and corruption in the school education sector are the main findings of the study. These findings also support the views of Shah (2016), Parajuli et. al (2019), and Kafle et al., (2019). Parajuli et al., (2019) also claimed that there are at least 20 percent of schools do not have an annual budget every year and about 8 percent of the schools do not have social audits. The reason for the low performance of schools in Nepal is the lack of good governance which is in line with the findings. Similarly, Kafle et al., (2019) also support the findings of the study is that there are "more than 70% students have achieved only below 28% of the tested curriculum in Mathematics indicating a huge mass of students underperforming in this subject" (p.vi).

In a nutshell, the conclusion of the study is that good governance practices play a significant role in school performance in Nepal. Furthermore, better school performance; or achievement depends upon the practices of good governance. If there will be a favorable context in good governance the outcomes/outputs of school performance can be achieved at a higher rate. Otherwise, it will be lower. The implication of the study is if we adopt good governance practice in education, we can easily ensure/achieve a better school; better performance in Nepal.

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