



AMC Journal (Pp. 34-52)
(A Peer-Reviewed, Open Access Journal, Indexed in NepJOL)

Research Management Cell

Adarsha Multiple Campus, Gajuri, Dhading

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/amcj.v5i1.75960>

ISSN: 2717-4808 (Print) 2738-9987 (Online)

Governance Models in Education: Insights for Nepal's Federal Education System

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Abstract

This article explores educational governance by reviewing relevant literature, policies, and reports from different contexts and countries. Employing a desk review method, it investigates various governance frameworks, including centralized, decentralized, and hybrid models, to evaluate their impacts on education systems. The results indicate that decentralized governance generally enhances school autonomy and accountability, fostering innovation and local responsiveness. In contrast, centralized systems tend to be more effective in upholding uniform standards and consistent service provision. Hybrid models present a balanced solution by blending the benefits of both governance approaches. Drawing lessons from global experiences, the article delivers insights for developing an effective governance framework for Nepal's evolving federal education system. It emphasizes the importance of a governance model that promotes equitable access to quality education while allocating the responsibilities among the three tiers of government.

Keywords: Decentralization, Education, Governance, Government

Introduction

The ongoing debate and uncertainty surrounding education governance in Nepal has led to a focus on carrying out thorough research to establish an efficient school governance model in federal Nepal. The article prioritizes analyzing power dynamics and sharing of responsibilities among different levels of government.

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The concept of governance relates to how decisions are made and authority is exercised within organizations, communities, or societies. It also includes the approaches used for decision-making within governance systems (Fukuyama, 2013). Likewise, Kjaer (2023) defines governance as encompassing the culture and institutional framework through which citizens and stakeholders interact and participate in public affairs. Additionally, governance is also defined as the systems and procedures created to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, adherence to the rule of law, stability, equity, and inclusivity, empowerment, and broad participation (Sari, 2023). Hence, the governance is conceptualized as an entire decision making, exercise of authority and sharing of power among different government and stakeholders. The roles, duties, authority, hierarchies, and processes of various institutions involved in the education delivery system, including classroom teaching and learning activities, are encapsulated within the concept of education governance (Robertson & Dale, 2013). The involvement of different entities and parties within the education sector is also addressed by education governance. According to Menashy (2017), governments, private sectors, civil societies, parents, and development partners are the primary stakeholders in education governance. Among these stakeholders, government holds authority established by different laws that enables to assign roles and responsibilities to other stakeholders (Robertson & Dale 2013).

Implementation of governance can occur at various levels, including local, national, and international. Entities such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the World Bank (WB), and the OECD, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) define governance as the exertion of authority or power to supervise a country's economic, political, and administrative affairs (Abdellatif, 2003). Governance is seen as power dynamics, encompassing formal and informal processes for policymaking and resource allocation, decision-making procedures, and mechanisms for government accountability (Cleaver & Whaley, 2018). In this context, governance is centered on power dynamics among stakeholders for the allocation and delegation of authority and resources.

The guidance and management of schools involve the structures and processes that lead them, which encompasses decision-making at various levels, including national, regional, and local authorities, as well as school-level administration (Du Plessis, 2019). Effective governance plays a crucial role in ensuring high-quality education, equity, and accountability. A comprehensive understanding of governance in school education is essential for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders seeking to enhance educational results (Cerna, 2013). Governance influences the allocation of resources, policy implementation, and overall school performance.

The practice of governance varies across the world, but it generally refers to the power dynamics among stakeholders and how power is distributed among them. Different nations have different governance systems, such as centralized, decentralized, or a mixed model, depending on their ruling system. Therefore, governance is implemented in diverse ways based on the country's governing structure. Nepal has traditionally followed a centralized governance system, but now transitioning to a new federal system following the enactment of a new constitution in 2015.

The implementation of federalism in Nepal has brought significant changes in the governance landscape, particularly in sectors like education (Khanal, 2018). Federal governance is a relatively new concept and system in Nepal, and there is an ongoing effort to align the entire state apparatus with the principles of federal governance. However, centralized practices continue to heavily influence policies, plans, structures, and programs, posing significant challenges for the country to adapt in the new system. The core objective of federalism is to distribute resources and authority among all levels of government through decentralization (Weingast, 2014). Nevertheless, there is currently no established system to fully embody the constitutional spirit of federalism, which would facilitate harmonious coexistence, coordination, and cooperation among all levels of government to uphold the fundamental rights of citizens. Thus, the primary focus at this time is on exploring and identifying suitable systems or strategies. Despite the lack of existing literature on this specific topic, it is evident that delving into this area and addressing these issues through research is crucial. The findings of such research would be beneficial to policymakers, practitioners, researchers, students, and anyone with an interest in this field.

Objectives

This article aims to comprehensively explore the governance of education by reviewing current literature and looking at educational governance frameworks across various international contexts. It intends to analyze how different governance models – centralized, decentralized, and hybrid – affect school autonomy, accountability, and overall educational results. The study investigates the benefits and limitations of these governance systems to identify effective practices that can be useful in educational reforms in Nepal.

Methods

The findings of the article were acquired through the use of the desk review method, which entails collecting and examining current information from a variety of

sources such as reports, studies, articles, and other relevant literature. Desk review is commonly used to obtain foundational information, identify areas of deficiency, and understand trends or patterns without directly conducting primary research. It involves systematically gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing existing information from secondary sources to inform decision-making, project planning, or research efforts (Bolderston, 2008). Similarly, Snyder (2019) states that researchers also observed that desk reviews are conducted as part of a literature review to pinpoint gaps in existing research and establish a theoretical framework for studies.

The essential basis for discussion, analysis, interpretation, and finding results in any research is the crucial part known as data sources. Data for this article has been gathered from sources such as academic journals, government reports, policy documents, and publications from international organizations like UNESCO, OECD, and others. Following the data collection, the thematic method was utilized to analyze the data. The themes were explored by grouping and categorizing information and analyzing different theories and practices with relevant examples in both the global and domestic contexts.

Result and Discussion

This section presents the results and discussion of this study. The main themes for the discussion are governance structures, policy implementation, resource allocation, educational outcomes, stakeholders' perspectives, opportunities and challenges in the context of federalism. These themes are discussed with theories and some available examples as follows:

Governance Structures

The term "governance structures" pertains to the systems by which political authority is wielded, decision-making procedures are arranged, and public answerability is upheld (Pope, 2005). These structures differ significantly among various political setups, impacting the distribution of power and the interactions among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. According to Mettenheim (1997), there are five main governance structures that are observed in practice throughout the world: presidential, parliamentary, federal, unitary, and mixed systems. Despite their unique characteristics, all these structures share some similarities in fundamental traits while the power balance among institutions differs. The scrutiny of these governance structures illustrates how education is administered within each type. To delve into this analysis, case studies of the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, and South Africa have been presented to reveal how these systems operate and collaborate to enhance governance in achieving educational objectives more effectively. Education governance structures are influenced

by the broader political system of a country, the examination with case studies of the five governance structures proceeds as follows:

Presidential Governance Structure: The United States of America (USA)

In system of presidential governance, the executive power is held by a single president who is elected by the population and operates independently from the legislature. This system is distinguished by the clear division of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches (Ackerman, 2017). Giving view, Pickerill (2004) examines that the United States is a prime example of this model, as the president serves as both the head of state and head of government. Legislative powers are vested in the U.S. Congress, while the judiciary, under the leadership of the Supreme Court, has the authority of judicial review

The education system in the U.S. is decentralized, with significant roles played by the federal government, state governments, and local school districts. At the federal level, the Department of Education establishes broad policies, provides funding, and enforces federal laws related to education (Feinberg, 2023). The primary responsibility for education lies with state governments, each of which has a Department of Education setting curriculum standards, teacher certification requirements, and other policies. States also determine funding allocations to districts. Locally elected school boards at the local level manage individual schools, making decisions on hiring teachers, implementing state guidelines, and managing budgets (Farrie & Kim, 2023). In federal governance system, the local and sub- national level governments are made more responsible for delivering the educational service to the people, where the central government plays only the catalytic role.

Parliamentary Governance Structure: The United Kingdom (UK)

In parliamentary governance system, the executive is strained from and accountable to the legislature. The prime minister, as the head of government, is typically the leader of the majority party in the legislature, and there is often a ceremonial head of state (Dowding, 2013). The United Kingdom provides a classic example of parliamentary governance system. The prime minister, elected by the majority in Parliament, oversees the executive branch, while the monarch holds a symbolic role. Parliamentary systems are known for the fusion of powers between the executive and legislature (Malik, 2023). The judiciary, however, remains independent, as demonstrated in the Brexit legal cases of 2019, where the UK Supreme Court intervened to limit executive actions regarding the suspension of Parliament (Bogdanor, 2010).

Education governance in the UK is mostly centralized, with the Department for Education (DFE) overseeing policies in England (Bush, 2016). The DFE is led by the Secretary of State for Education, who is a Member of Parliament and is responsible for establishing national education policies, such as the National Curriculum and Standards for state-funded schools. The legal framework is established by Parliament through laws, and key education issues are often debated by committees before the major reforms are passed through legislation. Local authorities play a crucial role in managing schools, enforcing regulations, and allocating resources. The delivery of education in this governance system is outlined by laws created by parliament and implemented primarily at the local and school levels for efficient functioning.

Federal Governance Structure: Germany

Power is divided between central and regional governments in federal governance systems, allowing regional entities to have substantial autonomy. This system involves the sharing of governance, with certain issues being resolved at the national level and others at the regional level (Jordan & Schout, 2006). The federal parliamentary system in Germany demonstrates this type of governance, in which the states have legislative authority separate from the federal government. This allocation is guaranteed by the Basic Law, and the Federal Constitutional Court upholds constitutional integrity by examining laws and ensuring adherence to democratic principles (Conradt, 2015). Germany's federal structure balances the powers of the national government with those of the states, allowing for regional autonomy while maintaining overall national coherence.

The federal education system in Germany is characterized by high decentralization, with each of the 16 federal states holding primary responsibility for managing its own school policies, curricula, and teacher training (Gördel, & Huber, 2023). The federal government's role is limited, primarily focusing on vocational training, research funding, and quality assurance. Coordination between states is facilitated through entities like the Standing Conference of Education Ministers (KMK), which ensures standards are upheld across different regions. Although the federal government and states collaborate in certain areas such as digitalization and research, education policies vary significantly from one state to another (Altrichter, Heinrich, & Soukup-Altrichter, 2014). The management of educational services is mainly delegated to lower level governments in the federal governance system, while the central government primarily acts as a facilitator to improve the delivery system.

Unitary Governance Structure: France

In unitary system of governance, the central government holds concentrated power, and there is limited autonomy given to regional authorities. Decisions regarding

governance are made at the national level, with direct supervision and authority over all lower-level entities (Piattoni, 2009). France utilizes a semi-presidential system within a unitary governance framework. The president wields significant executive authority, including the power to dissolve the National Assembly, while the prime minister is accountable for day-to-day administration (Harvey, 2009). The Constitutional Council assesses laws to ensure their compliance with constitutional principles, upholding judicial supervision in a system where the majority of political power is centralized (Metzger, 2014). The unitary framework streamlines governance by consolidating authority, although it may sometimes restrict regional representation and independence.

In France, the education system is governed through a unitary structure where the central government is primarily responsible for education policy, curriculum, and standards (Cummings, 2003). The Ministry of National Education is in charge of overseeing the entire national education system. While the central government handles content and administration, local authorities are responsible for managing school infrastructure, logistics, and certain financial aspects (Feiger, 2024). In this governance system, central government holds almost power and responsibility, while local levels are given limited roles of education management.

Mixed Governance Structure: South Africa

Mixed governance systems combine elements of presidential and parliamentary systems, creating a hybrid structure that seeks to balance executive independence with legislative accountability (Cheibub, Elkins, & Ginsburg, 2014). South Africa's governance structure blends presidential and parliamentary elements. The president holds executive authority, while the legislative branch provides oversight. South Africa's Constitutional Court plays a crucial role in upholding governance principles, ensuring that executive and legislative actions comply with constitutional mandates (Roux, 2009). This hybrid system allows South Africa to balance strong executive leadership with robust legislative and judicial oversight.

The education governance system in South Africa is a combination of presidential and parliamentary oversight (Janse van Rensburg, 2019). National policies are established by the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training, and these policies are then implemented with regional adaptations by Provincial Departments of Education (Lawrence, 2022). Public schools are managed by School Governing Bodies (SGBs), which are comprised of parents and community members. Legislative oversight is provided by parliamentary committees, and education standards are maintained by quality assurance bodies (Shaw, 1998). This

governance system exercises the mix model balancing the strong executive power with robust legislature and judicial system to oversight for efficient education delivery system.

Governance structures, whether presidential, parliamentary, federal, unitary, or mixed shape the distribution of political power, the interaction between governing bodies, and the methods of delivery of services. Through the comparative analysis of governance systems in the U.S.A., UK, Germany, France, and South Africa, this article highlights the diversity that how political authority is structured and exercised. Understanding these governance frameworks provides insights that how governments distribute power and authority among institutions.

Policy Implementation

The execution of government decisions and policies, known as policy implementation, is crucial in turning them into real results for education governance (Howlett, 2019). Successful implementation is essential for policies to achieve their intended goals, but it is often complicated involving different stakeholders, institutional frameworks, and external influences (Cerna, 2013). The implementation of policies is a critical phase in the policy process, as it determines whether government actions will achieve their intended goals that affects to the entire governance system.

Policy implementation in education governance involves translating policies into actionable strategies to achieve set goals. The process includes multiple stakeholders such as government bodies, educational institutions, teachers, and local communities that is often influenced by political, social, and economic contexts, making the policy implementation complex and multifaceted. Policy implementation in education governance is a dynamic process shaped by various theoretical perspectives such as; top-down approach, bottom- up approach, institutional theory and critical theory (Burch, 2007). These theories are applied varyingly according to the governance system and structures of the country. Balancing top down mandates with bottom up participation and ensuring that policies are equitable and adaptable to local contexts is crucial for successful outcomes. Theoretical models like top-down, bottom-up, and hybrid approaches offer insights into effective policy execution. However, various challenges such as limited resources, coordination issues, and political influences can hinder success (Pülzl & Treib, 2017).

The capacity differences among local governments have posed challenges to the implementation of policies (Honadle, 2001). For example, Bagmati Province has successfully introduced new curricula and teacher training programs, other provinces are

struggling due to limited resources and a lack of expertise. The discrepancy in policy implementation is reflected in the varying student-teacher ratios, with some provinces meeting the national standard of 1:30, while others surpass 1:50 (Dhungel, 2020). These examples show that capacity of local government plays the pertinent roles in policy implementation in federal governance system so that capacity development should be admired promptly.

Resource Allocation

The distribution of available resources, including financial, human, and physical assets, across different sectors, projects, and policy initiatives by governments, organizations, and institutions is known as resource allocation (Ostrom & Ostrom, 2019). It is crucial for achieving policy objectives, ensuring efficiency, equity, and sustainability. Allocating resources is a critical factor that decides how limited resources are distributed among different sectors. Theoretical approaches like equity versus efficiency and cost-benefit analysis offer a structure for comprehending resource allocation. Nevertheless, real-world obstacles such as political influence, corruption, and inequality make the process more complex (Florio, 2014).

Distributing and supervising financial, human, and material resources in educational governance is crucial for the effective functioning of educational institutions and has a significant impact on the fairness, quality, and accessibility of education (Atmaja et al., 2022). Various theories and models are employed to explain the processes of resource allocation in education, and practical instances from different countries demonstrate the real-world implementation of these theories.

The allocation of resources in education governance is influenced by a complex interaction of economic, political, and social elements. Theories such as human capital theory, equity versus equality, and public choice theory provide frameworks for comprehending the distribution and management of resources (Asaduzzaman & Virtanen, 2023). Successful approaches, such as Finland's emphasis on equity, provide valuable insights into how effective resource allocation can result in more equitable and high-quality education outcomes (Sahlberg, 2011). However, instances like those in the U.S. and Nepal underscore the ongoing difficulties in achieving fairness and efficiency in resource distribution.

The U.S. education system utilizes a highly decentralized method for allocating resources, with local, state, and federal governments sharing the responsibility for funding. Discrepancies in resources between wealthy and low-income school districts

have emerged because of the dependence on local property taxes for school funding (Baker & Corcoran, 2012) whereas Nepal has many chaos regarding resource allocation in education among three tiers of governments although all three governments have the responsibility for resource allocation and management as per constitution (Thapa, 2013).

The distribution of resources continues to be a pressing concern, as there are differences in financial and human resources across provinces. Analysis of financial information reveals that Lumbini province receives more funding per student than Karnali, which has an impact on the standard of education (National Planning Commission, 2020). These discrepancies have substantial effects on the fairness and standard of education, shaping student achievement and availability of educational resources.

Educational Outcomes

The results of education, known as educational outcomes, include student performance, graduation rates, skills development, and other measures of academic achievement. These outcomes are impacted by different elements (Glewwe & Muralidharan, 2016). The outcomes of education are the concrete results of the educational process, including cognitive (knowledge, skills) and non-cognitive (attitudes, behaviors) dimensions, as well as the economic, social, and personal advantages gained from education (OECD, 2019).

The achievement of educational results is influenced by a variety of factors, such as socioeconomic status, the quality of teachers, infrastructure, and policy structures. Obstacles like educational inequity, differences in funding, and conflicts make it even more difficult to enhance outcomes (Gorski, 2017). Examples from Finland and Sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate the significant differences in global outcomes, providing valuable insights into successful tactics and areas needing enhancement. Attaining strong educational results necessitates comprehensive governance approach that tackles both systemic and local challenges.

The achievement of students in education is impacted by various elements, such as the way institutions are governed, how resources are distributed, the caliber of teaching, and the socio-economic environment (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). Theories like Human Capital Theory, Social Reproduction Theory, and System Theory offer models for comprehending the intricate link between governance and results (Walby, 2007). Even though proficient governance can improve the quality and fairness of education, inadequate educational outcomes can also push for necessary changes in governance structures, ultimately leading to better systems in the long run.

After Germany's disappointing performance in the 2000 PISA assessment, the country implemented changes in its education governance, including the introduction of uniform standards and a stronger focus on teacher quality, which resulted in improved outcomes over time (OECD, 2012). In Chile, the voucher system generated varied outcomes and worsened inequalities, leading to governance adjustments that aimed to decrease competition in the education market and boost public investment (Carnoy & McEwan, 2003).

Preliminary information suggests that there are different results in Nepal, some provinces are seeing improvements in educational performance while others are lagging behind. Provinces with strong governance systems and efficient allocation of resources, such as Koshi Province has been observed an increase in literacy rates and better academic performance in national examinations (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021). On the other hand, Madhesh Province is facing challenges with lower literacy rates and higher dropout rates, highlighting the impact of governance and resource disparities (Acharya et al., 2024). Educational outcomes are a pertinent factor that the country's proper governance system yields. Educational outcomes provide the basis for governance reform and an efficient governance system produces good outcomes.

Stakeholder Perspectives

In the governance of education, stakeholders consist of governments, school administrators, teachers, parents, students, local communities, and non-governmental organizations. These are people or organizations with a vested interest or responsibility in the process of education. Education governance encompasses the various institutions, laws, policies, and procedures that contribute to the structuring and functioning of the education system (Fergie, Musselin, & Andresani, 2008). Individuals involved in this system have the ability to impact or are impacted by decisions concerning education policies, curriculum, and results.

The goals and preferences for educational outcomes of different stakeholders vary. For instance, national performance is a priority for governments, while parents are focused on meeting the specific needs of their children (Sliwka & Istance, 2006). Some stakeholders, such as governments and school administrators, have more decision-making power compared to others like teachers or students. Collaboration among all stakeholders is crucial for effective education governance and educational outcomes. No single group can operate effectively on its own. Each stakeholder should be accountable for their respective responsibilities (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

The involvement of stakeholders is crucial in shaping and impacting policies, initiatives, and choices in education governance. It is important to comprehend the viewpoints of stakeholders in order to develop policies that are comprehensive and effective in meeting the varied needs of people and communities (Roseland, 2000).

It is crucial to understand and take into account the viewpoints of stakeholders when making policies and decisions. Stakeholder theory emphasizes the importance of considering the concerns of all the groups impacted by a decision, and frameworks like power, legitimacy, and urgency can assist in classifying and prioritizing stakeholders (Fontaine, Haarman, & Schmid, 2006). Involving stakeholders and embracing collaborative approaches can help to balance conflicting interests and develop more comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

The governance of education involves various stakeholders, such as governments, teachers, parents, students, and private entities, all of them have significant impacts on educational results. Agency Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and Institutional Theory offer valuable perspectives on how these distinct viewpoints affect the management of education system (Manning, 2017). Successful governance necessitates the careful consideration of the varied interests of stakeholders, while also upholding accountability, fairness, and adaptability to local requirements.

Some stakeholders are hopeful about the opportunity for making decisions at a local level, while others are worried about the lack of coordination and inconsistencies. For instance, officials in Gandaki Province value the freedom to create education programs tailored to their locality, whereas educators in Madhesh Province face difficulties because of inadequate training and support (Gurung, 2018). Hence, stakeholders are the main stakes in the federal governance system and their interest, perspectives and feedback play a vital role in educational service delivery.

Challenges and Opportunities

An education governance system with federal characteristics distributes power between central (federal) and regional (state/provincial) governments. This decentralized approach permits adaptability and variety in policy formulation, yet it also brings intricacies in terms of synchronization and fairness (Ghosh et al., 2024). The advantages and obstacles brought by a federal system in the field of education, using instances from federal countries such as the United States, Germany, and Australia.

Many education governance systems struggle to provide equal access to quality education. Students' access to quality education is still affected by socioeconomic

disparities, geographic inequalities, and gender biases (Nwokike & Nwadike, 2023). Although there is increased access to education, improving its quality remains a significant challenge in many developing countries. Educational outcomes are negatively impacted by poor teaching practices, outdated curricula, and lack of instructional resources. Resource allocation often does not align with educational needs in many governance systems, leading to fewer resources for rural or marginalized communities and exacerbating inequality. Corruption and mismanagement of resources can weaken education governance systems, resulting in inefficient use of funds and poor educational outcomes (Duncan & Murnane, 2014).

Inadequate teacher training and low motivation are common contributors to poor governance outcomes. Teachers play a crucial role in implementing educational policies but may face challenges such as low salaries, limited professional development opportunities, and restricted autonomy in many countries (Gaynor, 1998). Political interference in education governance can also undermine the system's effectiveness by influencing curriculum decisions, resource allocation, and appointments, often leading to inefficiencies.

Decentralized system of governance offers local authorities to customize educational policies to meet the specific needs of their communities, promoting innovation and adaptability to local difficulties (Bjork, 2003). Partnerships between the public sector and private organizations can enhance the allocation of resources, the development of infrastructure, and the overall standard of education. These collaborations utilize private funding to bridge gaps in public education (Robertson, Mundy, & Verger, 2012). The incorporation of technology into educational governance presents opportunities to enhance accessibility, the quality of teaching, and the management of resources. Technology can improve the collection of data, the tracking of students, and the implementation of policies (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012).

Reinforcing accountability through the establishment of clear performance goals, monitoring, and transparency can lead to a substantial enhancement in educational governance. This helps to create an environment where educators, administrators, and governments are accountable for delivering high-quality education. International and regional collaboration creates avenues for the sharing of knowledge, capacity building, and funding to address common challenges in educational governance, particularly in developing nations (Khalid et al., 2019).

The presence of a federal education system offers various advantages and disadvantages. The attractiveness of federalism lies in its adaptability and ability to cater

local needs, as well as its potential for fostering innovation (Janson, 2011). However, it is crucial to tackle issues such as inequality, fragmented policies, and bureaucratic intricacies in order to ensure fair and efficient educational outcomes. Examples from the United States, Germany, and Australia serve to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses of federal education systems, offering valuable insights for policymakers.

The federal system brings about both difficulties and advantages for education governance. Challenges involve the need to establish consistent standards, tackle disparities in resources, and improve local capabilities (Adhikari, Poudyal, & Pasa, 2023). On the other hand, there are opportunities to create customized policies that cater to local requirements and situations, promote innovation, and encourage community involvement in the education field (Lamichhane, 2019). Education governance faces significant challenges related to equity, quality, resource allocation, and political interference. However, there are also numerous opportunities, such as decentralization, public-private partnership, and the use of technology to improve governance outcomes. By addressing these challenges and leveraging opportunities, education system can become more equitable, efficient, and responsive to the needs of all stakeholders.

Conclusion

The review revealed that decentralized governance often empowers schools with increased autonomy and accountability, leading to context-specific educational improvements. Conversely, centralized systems are better suited for maintaining consistent national standards. Hybrid governance models offer a balanced approach, leveraging the benefits of both systems while mitigating their respective limitations. For Nepal's newly established federal education system, adopting a governance model tailored to the diverse needs of provinces and local governments is crucial. Policymakers should prioritize frameworks that foster collaboration among the three tiers of government, ensure equitable resource distribution, and uphold accountability mechanisms. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impacts of decentralized education governance on educational outcomes and to identify contextually appropriate solutions that enhance equity and quality across all regions.

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