

## **Assessing the School Management Decision Practices: Insights from the Policy Provisions**

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Received: December 11, 2023  
Copyright: Acharya (2024)

Revised & Accepted: February 11, 2024



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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the management decision-making practices of community school management in Nepal, focusing on the policy perspective. An analytical approach has been used to analyze the information. The authors conducted a comprehensive review of the school education policies that pertain to school management decision-making practices. The authors analyzed the policy requirements on community school management decisions and practices. According to the policy provisions, the school head teachers, school management committee (SMC) members, and teachers' representatives are actively engaged in management decision practices. This study reveals that the head teacher and school management committee hold the authority over important aspects of school management decision-making, such as teacher recruitment, school development planning, and teaching learning activities. The role of local government has crucial in the overall development of community schools in Nepal. Implementing effective school management practices can greatly enhance the development of the school and ensure the delivery of high-quality education. In this context, the authors emphasized the importance of harmonizing management practices to ensure effective decision-making and encourage active participation, ultimately leading to improved school administration.

**Keywords:** Community school, Education policies, Implementation, Management practices, Problems

## 1. Introduction

The school management decision practices involve selecting the most appropriate decisions that could enhance the performance. Management decisions may select the most suitable option from a range of choices. The prompt school management decisions made by a government that emphasized equality, harmony, hierarchy, and the legitimacy of state power. The Ministry of Education (MOE, 1971) established the authority of state governments, recognizing their role in making beneficial government decisions. The severe centralization of the National Education System Plan (NESP) had no impact on political or administrative decentralization. Due to the emphasis on control rather than public health, the approach and objectives were deemed rigorous (MOE, 1992). The rejection of NESP policies and the implementation of new educational administration management systems began in the 1980s (Bhatta, 2005).

Regarding management decision practices, the World Bank (2007) recommends community and parent engagement in school and local decision-making for sector plan performance. This enhanced school responsibility, a major issue when community schools were nationalized in 1971. New instructors boost parents' assembly-elected school management committee (SMC). The primary objective of this study is to investigate school management decision practices through the policy provisions in community schools of Nepal.

## 2. Literature Review

Regarding management decision practices, there are different opinions and research studies, so management decisions involve deciding between issue solutions. Duke et al. (1980) focused that chairman-led committees must weigh choices before reaching a decision. Before adding a contentious reading program to a high school's curriculum, officials must consider. Consider a curriculum for all district high schools that make these choices together. Paulsen and Betz (2004) remarked that not all committee decisions need unanimity. When to host the weekly staff meeting or what to serve teachers for dinner at open house needs little forethought.

There are mostly practices of school management decisions by head teachers alone. The management decisions sharply impact school planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, and controlling. School management conflict resolution involves strong decision-making that induces members to address disputes without harming education or student learning. Regarding this matter, Bell (2002) agreed that school principals are in a vital position toward strategic school planning.

There has been examining the school's surroundings and predicting problems. Regarding this process, principals and leaders are crucial who can make timely and appropriate decisions. These include little concerns like picking a homecoming dance motto to major ones like student assault or staff harassment (Bucher & Manning, 2003). Principals may employ several decision-making frameworks and include multiple stakeholders depending on organizational settings.

The school management decisions and practices have an impact on the school's environment, atmosphere, and values. The results affect students' environments educational experiences and management decision practices. Valero (2008) illustrated how management strategies impact

# **International Journal of Atharva (IJA)**

**Vol. 2, No. 1, February 2024      Pages: 11-18**

**ISSN: 3021-9205 (Print)      ISSN:3021-9299 (Online)**

**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/ija.v2i1.62820>**

power distribution and application. UNESCO (2005) highlighted that delegation offers others decision-making power when delegating to non-bureaucratic parties. While transferring, restructuring, and reassigning power to the local unit improves service delivery. Toward the power-sharing, federal decisions and administration have been delegated to local governments. Decentralization enhances local government accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency, and community decision-making skills. Including regions, social actors, and sectors, it encourages authority and function sharing across government levels and other entities, as per law and constitution. The central government in Nepal has promoted local agencies under decentralization to identify and prioritize local needs; organize, distribute, and provide resources; and provide better services to communities. As a result, communities with decentralized decision-making provisions have fostered indigenous skills and knowledge.

Nepal National Education Planning Commission has emphasized that the central government should lead, solve common needs, and supervise educational activities. In the meanwhile, districts and local communities have to manage their schools (Ministry of Education, 1956). Ministry of Education (1971) changed the country's education system. The strategy emphasizes management, administration, education, and text consistency.

The sixth plan (1980-1985) promotes public involvement above government education support. Seti Education for Rural Development and Primary Education Project began this decade. The program aims to improve basic education at a cheap cost. Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) was created, planned, and executed to improve access, fairness, quality, and primary education management efficiency. Priorities included classroom, resource center, teacher training, curriculum, and textbook development. Teachers indicated school hierarchy influences engagement. The teachers' responses suggest that school authorities relied on the deputy head, senior master, senior lady, and department heads for important decisions (NPC, 1980).

Educational stakeholders have been questioned by Assey and Malingumu (2023) on curriculum implementation in community-based secondary schools. The results supported the limited rationality model of decision-making, which holds that leaders who make decisions without problem identification, evaluation, and assessment fail to address organizational issues. The report concludes by advising Tanzanian local governments on community-based secondary schools. Educational leaders should get continuing pedagogical leadership training, review teaching and learning decisions, and engage in mentorship programs. Kimbrel (2019) analyzed urban, rural, and suburban US school employment. They examined how modifications affected teacher quality.

The religious foundation of inclusivity was studied by Zammit & Zammit (2023). Ten professional senior school leader qualitative interviews were done. Theme analysis shows inclusion begins with acceptance. Maltese schools struggle to integrate seriously disadvantaged children, especially autistic ones. Head teachers struggle to encourage inclusivity. Inclusion tactics include school community cooperation, student decision-making, equitable involvement in school activities.

Perro et al. (2020) evaluated school homework as formative assessment. Ten Grade 3-5

teachers from two schools were interviewed in person. Focus groups and 2-week language arts and math studies were also done. Formative assessment requires feedback, self-evaluation, and learning goals, which teachers failed to implement. Formative assessment may facilitate social change by building teacher self-confidence and collaboration via a development program and learning community. Principals' leadership and interventions in professional learning communities and the ethical challenges of developing a collective culture were studied (Ballantrud & Aas, 2022). The knowledge, diversity, collaborative teaching, and democratic leadership were valued in a learning community. Leadership ethics emphasize personal responsibility and civic moral education, which fosters self-awareness and community.

Kebede et al. (2020) studied school-based malaria social behavior change communication community message exposure, acceptance, knowledge, and behaviors. A pre-posttest study on community involvement was conducted in five Ethiopian Jimma Zone districts. Primary schoolers did small-group interactive peer education. After that, parents got malaria awareness and prevention information. Australian school career education and development ideas were outlined by Keele et al. (2020). The comprehensive approach comprised tailored assistance for the individual, school, community, and culture. They also valued personalized counseling from qualified professionals, hands-on learning, and exciting activities that foster foresight, introspection, flexibility, and decision-making. Recognizing excellent behavior helps improve and adapt to student requirements and situations, even when a perfect delivery model or theoretical framework is impossible.

This study has examined school management committee (SMC) decision-making practices. Nepal's approach to school management is unique since it considers numerous elements. The school administration committee controls all operations with this idea. The head teachers and teaching staff representatives serve as committee secretaries. A school management committee (SMC) is a legal entity controlled by teachers and principals.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study is based on a policy review of the school management decision practices in community schools. Thus the analytical qualitative research approach has been applied. The required information has been collected through the comprehensive review of policy documents concerning policy provisions as well as related research studies that were completed to identify policy and program provisions about the school management committee decision-making practices in community schools in Nepal.

### **4. Results and Discussions**

The information and facts have been evaluated and interpreted thematically using ideas and policies from the texts and then, conclusions were drawn. The policies have been formulated by governing bodies such as the Ministry of Education, Department of Education, Teacher Service Commission, and National Centre for Educational Development. Practices of these policies have made at the local level in schools and District Education Offices. The authors reviewed the existing policy provisions and practices made to implement these policies. Each school has a School Management Committee (SMC) to manage and lead the school. The

headteacher who is the member secretary of SMC is the leading person to rule and run the school.

**1. Teacher Service Committee:** The teacher service commission advertises in national periodicals and conducts written tests in emerging zones to employ permanent teachers. The teachers selected from the written examination will be interviewed and, the passed ones from the interview process and recommended for the appointment. All the teachers require a teaching license to apply for the posts in teacher service committee and even to apply for contract teachers. The basic level and secondary teachers take distinct tests. The schools are categorized schools as basic level schools (1-8 classes) and secondary level schools as per education act.

The policies and practices sometimes contradict when policy and situation do not match. Regarding this, the situation may not always favor quality education. School management committee must propose two permanent teachers from the same school under the head teacher appointment regulation. They reportedly altered marketing, examinations, results, and interviews. The new act prohibits the SMC and head teachers from employing unqualified teachers since they can only hire teacher service committee qualified individuals. Only candidates with personal and ideological ties mostly benefit from the merit list due to the local authority. Some schools hire temporary as well as contract instructors who are paid internally.

**2. School Management Committee:** Regarding the collaboration with SMC, teachers, the head teacher, Parents Teacher's Association (PTA), and others, every school prepares a School Improvement Plan (SIP) as a guideline to improve a school's academics and administration. School improvement plan (SIP) advocates school-community ties and participatory techniques to enable them, community engagement in decision-making, local solution planning, enhancing school teaching-learning circumstances, progressive authority devotion, and school and community resource control. Researchers found the Ministry of Education Act and practice discrepancies. Education legislation mandates SIP design, but the head teacher submits it to district education office for formality. SMC members must comprehend educational and regulatory duties. However, it seems that there is little community involvement in SIP preparation.

Teachers and head teachers completed the school improvement plan and studies show that SMC members are not completely participating in SIP preparation. The SMC assigns SIP preparation to the head teacher, who forms a committee. During SIP creation, instructors present it to SMC members, head teachers, resource people, and external and internal supervisors in separate sessions. The head teacher aids SIP preparation and contacts the SMC chairman. This method excludes teachers and SMC members. SMC members relied on the head teacher and did not execute the SIP for school development. The head teacher trusts SMC members to implement SIP to improve the school.

**3. Student Enrollment Activities:** Regarding the enrollment activities, every school presents new public school enrollment issues each year. When class enrollment exceeds expectations, the Management Committee may approve a second section. Management Committee and school may expand classrooms. Schools require guardians for initial entrance. When accepting pupils, the school will seek the guardian's name, address, description of the family's immovable property, and estimated income for free education. Students who fail the secondary test and enroll obtain their chosen class.

After the session starts, ministry of education (MOE) mandates schools to enroll students within a month. The school may enroll a student who passes the yearly exam a month late. According to the study, teachers and SMC members work hard to encourage local youngsters and parents. Similarly, to increase enrollment in the first month of class, the free and obligatory government education program has improved. The outcome emphasized decentralization over authority PTA, educators, SMC, and community members make decisions utilizing rules.

They engage in academic planning, resource center-level competitions, community service, and awareness campaigns, etc. Coordinating with other institutions promotes school development ideas and practices. The sharers hold seminars and workshops to enhance practice and policy. They engage in academic planning, resource center-level competitions, community service, awareness, etc. Teachers and students collaborate to promote brotherhood. The academic competition, social engagement, and connection-building are involved. Teachers desire to share ideas with other schools. SMC members help other schools maximize student potential. Exam and extracurricular administration may become easier and more competitive. A resource center and organizing school head teacher entail power theory where teacher control is used in decision-making theories.

**4. Extracurricular Activities:** Educational rules govern extracurricular and many school events are planned. Internal sports week tournaments are held annually for all students. After SMC and PTA meetings with teachers and staff, the head teacher nominates a special coordinator as well as in-charge. The local government organizes local-level sports tournaments like the Mayor Cup. The Headteachers think that every school requires specialized extra-curricular activities (ECA) educators to establish and implement plans and policies freely.

**5. Policy Practices in Management Decision Making:** The Nepal Teacher Service Commission (TSC) conducts district and regional written tests for permanent teachers. School management committees must address issues. Teacher training, temporary work, relocation, scholarships, social audits, school infrastructure, monitoring, and scheduling. SMC members in exam schools may unaware of the school's administrative authority. The head teacher of SMC oversees community school activities. Teachers, community members, and administrators expanded school curricula to meet their needs. Education legislation mandates SMC to create an annual work, academic, and school improvement plan. Teachers, head teachers, SMC, and PTA develop SIP which encourages school-community cooperation. Local solutions come from school and community planning. The SIP enhances school and community education and resource management.

The findings present that SMC members' inadequate school administration knowledge. The



minority members of SMC manage schools with political awareness, experience, and financial stability. This study suggests that educators may have unequal growth chances where limited teacher training, seminars, and other development activities. Politics and connections affected program acceptability and implementation. Nepal's enrollment in community schools reflects decentralization and models. These partnerships stopped teacher exchange, resource sharing, training, and materials manufacturing where resources and school officials observed this strategy's ineffectiveness. The head teacher chooses the special coordinator as well as in-charge after SMC, teaching staffs, and PTA committee approval as well the head teacher and SMC chairman influence decisions.

The government agencies delegate decision-making, management, and accountability. Cooperation with other institutions includes academic planning, resource center cooperation, community service, and awareness campaigns. SMC policy affects local calendars, classes, quality, and performance. The collaborative management decision-making includes teacher, head teacher, and community control. These techniques establish schools using government and local finances.

## Conclusions

This study aims to analysis the community school management decision practices from the policy provisions. As per this study, school management committee needs power distribution for contextual decision-making. The head teachers implement and decide policies regarding the teacher recruitment, infrastructure, delegation, and external development programs. Similarly, the head teachers, staff, community members, and parents teacher association members make budgetary choices. The school management decisions on physical expansion, teacher recruitment, professional development, and contact with other institutions include school management committee members.

This study looks clueless about their duties, leaving the chairman or head instructor to supervise. For community engagement, regarding school management committee seems to have departed from school sector reform plan and community-led school administration. These collaborative techniques incorporate head teachers, teachers, and community members in quality-improvement choices. All stakeholders have benefitted, establishing excellent school success partnerships.

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# International Journal of Atharva (IJA)

Vol. 2, No. 1, February 2024      Pages: 11-18

ISSN: 3021-9205 (Print)      ISSN:3021-9299 (Online)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/ija.v2i1.62820>

<https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230210440276>

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