



Head Teachers' Leadership on SIP Preparation: A Study of Community Schools in Kirtipur Municipality, Kathmandu

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Abstract

This research examines the school improvement planning practices of school head teachers to address general issues in their regular school leadership processes. It examines the plans schools develop to conduct their daily activities and the procedures they adopt to address them. As qualitative research, it is based on the existing experiences of head teachers. The purposively selected three head teachers were interviewed in a semi-structured approach, and their responses were recorded, and a transcription was done to build common themes. The common themes were elaborated with appropriate verbatim to refer to further evidence. From the experiences of head teachers, the findings analyzed include the following: schools perceive SIP as the sole document for school development; however, it has dominantly restricted head teachers from going beyond. Head teachers don't initiate the preparation of other broad proposals or concept notes for exploring external funds to enlarge school capacity. But for short-term purposes, the school prepares a few periodical plans, including an annual academic calendar. Head teachers encourage collaborative work of team members in formulating such short-term plans; they also use their intuitive wisdom to address the issues approached in the general school administration process.

Introduction

In the evolving landscape of educational reform, the role of head teachers has emerged as a cornerstone in shaping the trajectory of school development. Particularly in community schools, where resources are limited and stakeholder engagement is crucial, the School Improvement Plan (SIP) serves as a strategic blueprint for enhancing educational quality and institutional effectiveness. This study explores the leadership role of head teachers in the preparation and implementation of SIP, focusing on how their vision, initiative, and collaboration with stakeholders influence the success of these plans. This introductory part included the background of the study, statements of the problems, research objectives, and research questions to address the role of head teachers in the community school improvement plans preparation for providing effective leadership in the school.

Context and Background

Leadership is a common word that simply refers to the ways to guide others. According to Sharma and Jain (2013) “leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish objectives and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent”. Similar to this definition, Northouse (2007) writes, “leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”. It is the human factor that binds a group together and motivates it towards goals (Keith & Davis, NA). From these definitions, it can be inferred that leadership is a process of guiding others to achieve goals set. It is a way of managing things, guiding behaviors, and ordering rules in the institutions that exist in a specific context.

School leadership is an important variable that can make all the difference in a school. However, leadership is referred either a person or a group of persons to direct the school. As the person, school leadership is often termed synonymously as either principal, headmaster, or head teacher. Leadership can significantly impact the quality of the school and learning outcomes of students (Miller, 2013). No school can successfully achieve its best in the absence of talented leadership (ibid). Leadership serves as the catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that exist within the school. The concerns of school leadership impact the overall environment of the school, which includes management of physical facilities, system development, and learning progress of students (Pina, Cabral & Alves, 2015). The set of actions that school principals bring into action has positive support to improve school and classroom conditions, and that influence teachers’ work, which in turn influences students’ outcomes. Good school leadership creates a pleasing environment in the school, where the principal tries to promote an atmosphere of trust among the staff and respect for students and staff (ibid). Supporting this concern, Robinson (2007) believes that there is general jurisdiction that politicians, policy makers, and the public at large are convinced that the quality of school leaders and of principals in particular, makes substantial differences to the progress students make at school. His belief reflects that the role of good leadership takes dysfunctional schools and transforms them into schools that attract both students and staff, where there is love of learning and school achievement meets relevant benchmarks (ibid).

Effective School Leadership and Planning

Community schools (government-aided public schools) are the backbone of Nepal’s schooling system and are governed largely

through School Management Committees (SMCs) and devolved local structures. National sector documents stress school improvement, but implementation is constrained by capacity, teacher-management tensions from decentralization, and resource gaps, making strong school leadership and realistic planning essential (CER, 2022).

Terminological understanding, school leadership is both leadership and management, where leadership is mostly related to the improvement of academic performance of schools with soft skills development, while management is arranging the overall school environment. So, the core values of school leadership are to meet the criteria set for educational improvement of schools. Successful school leaders develop a vision for their schools based on their personal and professional values. They articulate this vision at every opportunity and influence their staff and other stakeholders to share the vision. The philosophy, structures, and activities of the school are geared towards the achievement of this shared vision (NCSL, 2003).

Planning is like an instrument of quality assurance to aid the sustainable development of schools to adapt to changes in policies and market forces, which Ramlal & Jones (2020) call strategic planning. Strategic planning is a model that allows the leadership of schools to document a strategic picture of the school in the present time, identify the direction it needs to go, and outline its strategic direction for the future (Davies & Ellison, 1998). The process of strategic planning is built on three foundational stages that include strategic analysis that seeks to document factors that will influence the school in the present and in the future, strategic choice that allows stakeholders to identify options, evaluation of the options, and selection of

the most appropriate strategy for suitability, acceptability, and feasibility, and strategic implementation to bring the vision into a reality (Johnson & Scholes, 1997).

School leadership has wide-ranging practices in terms of responsibilities, systems, and practices across countries. Successful school leadership is also the achievement of the leader's capacities. Arguing this, Pont (2014) writes, "Professionalizing school leadership can be partly attained by developing and strengthening leadership skills related to improving school outcomes through initial and continuing training and mentoring". Thus, from this view, it can be mentioned that policies and practices of countries receive significant meaning in bringing school leaders to success. Countries have a variety of practices of recruiting school headship based on policies, priorities, and practices of their own. It is also different on the ground of developed and developing countries.

Planning is an essential management function in all schools, regardless of their geographic location or grade level served. Although principals may no longer be prepared with knowledge of planning models and practices, they utilize a variety of such models intuitively with a varying degree of success (Beach & Lindhl, 2007). But many schools don't show their interest in successful planning because of its additional requirement of time and effort (ibid). So, planning in school is tailored practice to the specific circumstances of each school and must be properly integrated with other managerial functions. In organizational process, there is a complex, highly interwoven set of processes, but developing a wonderful plan is one thing; implementing that plan and creating change and seeing that change is institutionalized and stable across the organization and through time.

Principles of Effective School Leadership

School leaders are central to school improvement in order to promote student learning and to improve the quality of education, and they are widely recognized as the key change agents at all levels in a school system (Fullan, 2006). School leaders exert their influence directly and indirectly on several factors throughout the school and its community in pursuit of improved student learning. Most importantly, school leaders' roles directly affect teacher capacity, motivation, commitment, and working conditions, all of which impact teaching practices linked to student learning and achievement (as cited in Shing & Allision, 2016). Many studies claim that successful schools have been established with the principal's efforts on school operations with clear vision goals, high performance expectations, motivating and supporting teachers and students, and mobilizing proper resources. They also modify organizational structure, pedagogical approaches, and ensure a pleasing learning environment at school. However, there are certain areas to take into consideration for the effective operation of schools, which simply, we call components of school leadership. In support of this, Leithwood (2012) specifies that the most important areas on which school principals can focus are: setting direction by developing a consensus around vision, goals, and direction; helping individual teachers through support, modelling and supervision, redesigning the organization to foster collaboration and engage families and community, and managing the organization by strategically allocating resources and support. Thus, from these remarks, we can state that successful schools are established from the planning level that follows towards mobilizing resources and assessing achievements till the end.

The Ontario Leadership Framework (as cited in Shing & Allision, 2016) outlines five practices for effective school leadership, viz, setting directions, building relationships and developing people, developing the organization to support desired practices, improving the instructional program, and securing accountability. By setting directions, it is the way of providing a clear sense of purpose through creating a shared vision focused on academic excellence, involving organizational values. It is the state of desired affairs that induces commitment among those working in the organization (Sergiovanni, 2007, 10). The successful school leaders set high expectations, communicate their vision and goals to stakeholders, and assess the progress frequently.

Likewise, building relations means establishing collegial relationships with stakeholders based on care, respect, and trust to develop a strong learning community (Leithwood, 2012). It is also important to show friendly treatment to team members to encourage to serve better so that they can jointly achieve the goals they have to achieve. It is also establishing a culture that serves as a compass setting to steer people in a common direction; provides a set of norms that defines what people should accomplish and how; and provides a source of meaning and significance for teachers, students, administrators, and others as they work (Sergiovanni, 2007). So, successful school leaders promote collaboration among members of the school community, motivate and inspire teachers and students, demonstrate strong ethical behavior, maintain transparency and appreciation for others, and remain highly visible and easily accessible (Leithwood, 2012).

Another dimension of the framework is developing organization and supporting

desired practices. The general activities to perform under this dimension include: building a collaborative culture and distributing leadership, structuring the organization to facilitate collaboration, building productive relationships with family and community, connecting the school with the wider environment, maintaining a safe and healthy environment, and allocating budget to achieve the school's vision and goals (Ontario Leadership Framework, 2013). This dimension stresses the collaborative work among the team members in the school in order to achieve the desired aims for school development, either educational achievement or promoting physical facilities in the school. Improving instructional programs is another dimension in this framework, which aims to create an effective learning environment at school, either by providing instructional support to teachers, or emphasizing teachers who have either skills or an interest in teaching. It also prioritizes monitoring progress in students' learning, through which the instructional skill of teachers is also judged in terms of its effectiveness. So, improving teachers' performance skills through building their capacities, improving working conditions, and offering motivation to excel, etc., is the core priority of this dimension. It ensures teachers' expertise in instructional skills. Another dimension, securing accountability, is about building staff members' sense of internal accountability and meeting their demands for external accountability. For this, this dimension emphasizes teachers' engagement in regular progress assessment of students' achievement, promotes collective responsibility among teachers for students' achievement, and school development. It also keeps the teacher alert by participating in their performance appraisal and adjusting expectations and goals. But before that, every teacher shall be defined clearly for

individual accountability for setting goals for their target. This dimension aims to create an organizational structure that reflects values (Ontario Leadership Framework, 2013).

Provision of School Planning Systems in Nepal

Though the school-level education comes under the right of local government (Nepal Law Commission, 2015), it is centrally distributed in Nepal. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) is the core planning body of education in Nepal, while there are some implementing agencies, like the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD), Education Review Office (ERO), Curriculum Development Center (CDC), etc., that mobilize other resources at the province, district, and community level. The ministry has endorsed the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP 2016/17 -2022/23) as a strategic planning document for school education. It consists of five major dimensions, viz, equity, quality, efficiency, resilience, and governance and management (SSDP, 2016). The last dimension, 'governance and management', talks about the effective systematic management at school that includes good planning, building coordination with the community and stakeholders, and effective resource mobilization.

School Improvement Plan (SIP) is the institutional planning document of community schools in Nepal, in which schools set their goals for academic achievement and physical development. It was introduced under BPEP II for promoting a decentralized reform process in schools, which aimed to enhance the effectiveness of the school system (TU, 2003). It is a multi-year plan (five years) that incorporates strategies of schools to achieve the goals, along with the work to perform, agencies to coordinate, and resources to mobilize. So, it is considered the major

instrument for school programs, resource management, and educational outcomes (ibid), which aims for the transformation of schools through the involvement of stakeholders. Though SIP is a five-year document of the school, it needs to update various indicators in every year to assess their progress as targeted. However, there is a rumor that the majority of the schools prepare their SIP only as the mandatory document of the government rather school's transformative purpose.

According to the provision of the Government of Nepal, community school prepare their individual SIP as per the format developed by the Department of Education, Government of Nepal. The major components to incorporate in SIP preparation include: school introduction, need identification of the school, plan formation, goal setting, resource management, year-wise update of the school's internal efficiencies, etc. After the update of such information, SMC of the concerned school approves it by the mid of June in every year. After the approval, the school mandatorily submits its copy to the respective VDC. / Municipalities, resource center, and district office for the information (DoE, 2017). School receives a grant from the government according to the progress achieved by the schools.

Besides this, community schools prepare various short-term plans for the period of a month, quarter, half-year, and a year. The annual academic calendar incorporates the entire plan of a school in a year that includes the enrollment process to result dissemination. It also talks about the general works and special functions of schools, like parents-day celebration, sports week, all examination schedules, etc.

Statement of the Problem

While school improvement planning is mandated in most education systems, there is limited research focusing on the leadership role of head teachers in the SIP preparation process. Some schools struggle to create actionable, data-driven plans that address pressing academic and organizational challenges. This gap raises concerns about whether head teachers possess the necessary leadership competencies, collaborative approaches, and strategic planning skills to lead this process effectively. Without effective leadership, SIP preparation risks becoming a formality rather than a transformative tool for educational development. Similarly, School Improvement Plans (SIPs) in Nepalese community schools are locally owned tools of decentralization: school-level planning instruments that, when genuinely prepared and implemented with active stakeholder participation (especially teachers and headteachers), create ownership, mobilize local resources, and thereby help improve teaching and student learning outcomes (Budhathoki, 2023).

Since the government of Nepal has a mandatory provision that community schools shall prepare a School Improvement Plan (SIP) as the local plan of the school (TU, 2003), the school has a copy abiding by the order of the government. They also submit the document to the respective government agencies, currently at the rural municipality level. But during my observation in many districts, schools prepare SIP only for the sake of the name. Schools, from their side, don't initiate any work to implement the purpose and are not serious about improving educational quality, infrastructure development, and system strengthening. Similarly, there are several issues that arise at any time, which are either not required to be incorporated in SIP or not possible to address. Likewise, many

schools are running without a basic number of human resources, basic infrastructure management at school, and with a crisis of funds. In such a situation, this research has tried to identify the practices school leadership uses to address such situations. So, this study was aimed at exploring head teachers' practices on handling such issues with plans or intuitive ideas. That issue could have been on daily timetable management, resource allocation, resource mobilization, or external management of the school.

Research Objectives

The study aims to:

1. Examine the leadership roles and practices of head teachers in the preparation of School Improvement Plans.
2. Identify challenges faced by head teachers during the SIP preparation process.

Research Questions

So, this research had explored the answers to the following questions;

1. What leadership roles and practices do head teachers demonstrate in SIP preparation?
2. What challenges do head teachers encounter during the preparation of SIPs?
3. How do head teachers engage teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in the SIP preparation process?
4. Which strategies can be proposed to strengthen head teachers' leadership in SIP preparation?

Research Design and Method

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study as it aimed to understand participants' experiences and the meanings attached to their experiences in a given cultural

context (Merriam 2009). In-depth interviews were employed to gather data by exploring participants' experiences, attitudes, and beliefs (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2011). This qualitative study is based on the lived experiences of three school head teachers in community schools in Kirtipur Municipality in Kathmandu. Head teachers were asked about what preparations they generally had to address the issues that would come up in some immediate contexts. They were also asked what planning documents they already had that were related to the planning at schools. Head teachers were interviewed virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown announcement by the government of Nepal. I recorded their interview with their prior permission. In order to code and transcribe the data, create codes, and find relevant verbatim extracts, I have been recording participant interviews since this study. I created common global themes after gathering the topics and used suitable terms to describe them.

Previously, the interview was conducted virtually with purposively selected research participants. For that, I had a coordination meeting with the education section in Kirtipur Municipality, and in consensus with them and as per the requirements of my study, participants were selected. One of the core requirements for participant selection was that he/she shall be a full head teacher with at least five years of work experience in school leadership. The medium of language in the interview was Nepali for all three participants. Meanwhile, I also had a consultation of adequate resources written on school plan practices at both the national and international levels.

Findings and Discussions

The common findings from the research with appropriate themes and verbatim for further evidence have been described as;

HT Visioning and Goal setting in SIP preparation

Vision is the ‘capacity to create and communicate a view of a desired state of affairs that induces commitment among those working in the organization’ (Sergiovanni, 2007, p. 10). Highly effective school leaders inspire others by providing a clear sense of purpose and direction through creating a shared vision focused on academic excellence, involving organizational values (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Besides setting high expectations for students and teachers, successful school leaders collaborate with stakeholders in identifying and setting goals aligned with their vision of academic excellence, communicate their vision and goals frequently to stakeholders, and regularly monitor and assess the progress made (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

A **School Improvement Plan (SIP)** is a strategic plan designed to improve the quality of teaching, learning, infrastructure, and overall school management. It’s typically developed **collaboratively** by the school leadership, teachers, school management committees (SMCs), parents, and local education authorities (Singh and Allison, 2016).

The Government of Nepal has been practicing SIP as the decentralized reform initiative in community schools for the last two decades (TU, 2003). The core points in SIP include school programs, resources, and outcomes that the schools should consider. So, SIP is regarded as a tool for the transformation of schools through the involvement of

stakeholders. The Government of Nepal has taken SIP as the mandatory document for every school (DoE, 2017). So, every community school has prepared it.

Since SIP is a yearly planning document, it has limited school head teachers’ creativity on limited pages. They think it is the overall vision of the school to achieve, gradually, head teachers don’t go beyond it to explore additional sources for school development. They do not prepare any other long-term visionary plans, concept notes, or proposals for schools to achieve further betterment. However, for the purpose of the short term, they have been practicing various short-term plans. In support of this idea, one respondent in my research (participant-2) shared, “for the ease of operating regular works in school, our school has developed a couple of separate planning documents (. . .), many of them are for one academic year, however, they all support the achievement of the target set in SIP”. Making specific to the document types, he further categorized,

Annual Calendar, Daily Routine, Monthly, Quarterly, and Half-Yearly Plans are some systematic documents, but along with them, we make meeting minutes among SMC/ PTA members and internal meetings with staff. Teachers’ role assignment is also done, like ECA in charge, cultural performance, sports, and sanitation, subject heads, and so on, in staff meetings.and these decisions are normally for one year.

From the study, I came to know that schools have practices to prepare /implement documents solely according to the mandatory provisions of policies. They are not found preparing/adopting any other documents like financial resource collection from external doors, promoting collaboration with external

stakeholders in their own. Which is because, as Singh & Allison (2015) justify, “the official duties do not highlight the role of the headmaster in creating a vision, building community relations, mobilizing resources, team building, promoting collaboration, instructional planning and supervision, physical development, or setting standards”.

Resource Mobilization and Arrangement

Community schools lack many resources in Nepal. Promoting physical learning facilities and unequal distributions of teachers for grade/subject-specific purposes are the most influential problems being faced at community schools. The Government of Nepal has proposed 149 indicators for child-friendly schools (DoE, 2010). And out of the total indicators, 25 are proposed as minimum standards, and out of these 25 indicators, 5 are again prioritized indicators that a school must focus on managing. The prioritized five indicators are Adequate Classrooms, Teachers, Separate Toilets for Girls and Boys, Text Books, and Book Corners (DoE, 2012). But, only 4% of schools have met all five prioritized enabling conditions (DoE, 2014). So, from here, it can be traced that community schools are facing problems in teacher management.

From this study, I also found that head teachers have problems in managing limited resources at school. They don't have specific alternative plans to fill the gap approached due to a lack of human resources. Many schools lack an adequate no. of teachers, and they have to adjust with the existing teachers. They don't have any norms or criteria to assign the additional roles; rather, head teachers use their wisdom in some cases. In support to this case, respondent-1 in this research shared his practices as;

Well, we had limited teachers in the school, and myself is the only teacher for science in the school to the secondary level. Since I am taking responsibility for administration, I can't take more classes, but taking science in grades 8 -10 with two sections in grades 9 and 10. Then there was no teacher to teach science in lower grades, especially in grades 6 and 7. After that, I assigned this subject to a female staff thinking that her husband was a science teacher in another school, and she would receive support from her husband at home. But she was the teacher for social studies; however, she has been teaching science well, till now.

From the experience of the head teachers, they don't have any special plan to assign the roles to teachers as per the needs of the school. Rather, head teachers evaluate the general skills, interests, and external environment of teachers before assigning the additional roles. The remarks of participant-3 are justified as follows;

I generally, let the staff choose/assign their roles themselves, however, I also facilitate to assign such roles just evaluating their skills and interest (. . .). There is no guideline to top up the person for a specific purpose.

Similarly, community schools under the general stream are regularly government-funded educational institutions where government agencies provide financial support to schools according to norms (Nepal Law Commission, 2002). Teacher salary, various scholarship schemes, fund for physical facilities strengthening, textbook management, day meal support, teaching learning materials management, examination, etc., are some of the supports that the schools receive from the government (CEHRD, 2020). However, the needs of schools are

not fulfilled by the norms of specific support. But, schools in *Kirtipur* area don't have any initiatives for the additional fund management at the school. They are solely dependent on the support from the government. Why is this so? In response to the question, one respondent (participant 3) claims that "schools are treated with biases politically from local government, some schools don't get additional support despite frequent requests. Since this is Kathmandu, the capital city of the nation, no non-governmental organizations and other charity organizations contribute here". Because of this situation, head teachers have not attempted to submit any proposal for external funding collection to external agencies. However, the funds collected from students' fees, and money collected from voluntary donations, etc., are a few sources for fund management beyond the government's support. Schools use such funds for the security personnel's benefit, general maintenance purposes, and teachers recruited from local resources (participant 1). So, because of this understanding/practices, community schools in *Kirtipur* area do not have practices for responding to the call to any charity organizations.

Despite having limited government support and having to work within tight constraints on resources, many of the participants from higher-performing schools were found to have been proactive in coming up with ways to motivate their teachers and students. Besides successfully providing the resources and conditions needed for effective teaching and learning, they frequently emphasized how they sought to provide encouragement and motivation to their teachers.

Collaborative Leadership practices on SIP

In Nepal, SIP is a key planning tool under the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) that schools use to set goals for quality

education, access, and equity, often with local government and community involvement. Participatory leadership style where decision-making is collective, voices of teachers, parents, students, and community members are valued, and leaders facilitate rather than dictate. The appointment head teacher is done once in five years, and it can be extended at the recommendation of the School Management Committee (Education for Rules, 2002). The head teacher has been assigned thirty-one roles (Rule No. 94), and with many significant others, some of them include goal setting through preparation of the school's multi-year plan, like SIP, and yearly, half-yearly, and monthly plans for the academic and physical achievement of the school. Head teachers are mostly responsible for preparing and facilitating the implementation of such plans in schools.

Head teachers in this study adopt a collaborative process in the process of developing a planning document. Generally, they held the meeting among staff before preparing the school's annual academic calendar, periodical plans in school, special role assignments to teachers, etc. After strengthening the service of local government, currently, schools adopt the general plans of the concerned local government so that schools can make their plans in accordance with their local *Palika*. Adding to their statement, one teacher (participant -3) expressed his practices:

We have a periodical schedule of staff meetings on the last Friday of every month, in which we make several decisions (...). Mainly from the first meeting in an academic year, we form different teams for yearly purposes. (. . .) For preparing the annual calendar, I also facilitate forming a staff team. They also chose team members among them; however, my suggestion on teachers' activeness, who

have performed additional roles in previous years and who are sound at strategic ideas, also facilitates the staff to finalize the team members.

From this practice of one participant, I can understand that head teachers entertain collaborative leadership practices at school while assigning tasks to their team members at school. Collaborative leadership is creating an environment where collaborative leadership can thrive, beginning with a shared vision and the belief that the gifts and resources needed to accomplish that vision are found in the collective members of a group rather than a single leader (as cited in Collinson, 2007). In support of the nature of collaborative leadership, another head teacher (participant 2) shared his practices on the school's daily routine preparation as,

I told to assistant head teacher to collaborate with all teachers to prepare the school's daily teaching routine through their group discussion. They prepare a draft, and after discussion on the draft, finally, the routine is finally finalized. (. . .) The routine is prepared at the first of each new session for the entire year”.

However, schools have practices that they don't change their routine periodically; rather, the routine prepared once is for an entire academic year.

Monitoring and Assessment

Head Teacher monitoring and reviewing progress in community schools during School Improvement Plan (SIP) preparation is about making the SIP a living, participatory process rather than just a document. Teacher monitoring and assessment is one of the crucial aspects for the school head teacher, which includes assigning appropriate roles to

every teacher, assessing their entire progress, and the roles they performed. Head teachers have to assess their individual teachers' performance in every academic year, and they have to submit the teacher appraisal records to the concerned level (Nepal Law Commission, 2000). It is only the formal assessment of teachers according to the already set indicators. However, during such a long time in a year, many practical issues of teachers shall be addressed for the better mobilization of the team. Though they come under informal practices, head teachers have different strategies to evaluate their co-team members. One head teacher (respondent 1) shared his experience as “I have my diary records of every day in the office. I maintain records of everything in the office, class, and in meetings. I note down every complaint of students, parents, and immature works of teachers”. About the contents that are included in dairy, he further elaborated,

Strengths, weaknesses, best performances, leaves, extra works, things to improve, complaints from parents or students to teachers, and model works he/she performed are noted down in my diary. I don't respond to them immediately, but in the staff meeting, I share them with every teacher. And also, as per their responses, I evaluate them in an annual appraisal for official purposes. Most importantly, for the best performing teacher as per my diary records, I also recommend to SMC for the necessary reward and treatment.

This is one of the reliable techniques to assess their teachers. It gives immediate feedback to teachers if they are shared in staff meetings, which supports others not to making similar types of mistakes. It will also facilitate the development of positive competition among teachers and ultimately support the academic betterment of institutions. The findings

highlight that head teachers play a central but unevenly effective role in SIP preparation in community schools. While most head teachers formally lead the process, their leadership style is often administrative rather than participatory, with limited teacher and community involvement. This aligns with prior studies emphasizing that leadership in school planning in low-resource settings is frequently compliance-driven rather than transformational.

However, there are signs of positive impact: schools with engaged leadership and well-prepared SIPs demonstrated better allocation of resources and improved school functioning. This suggests that strengthening leadership capacity through targeted training, mentorship, and participatory planning models could significantly enhance school improvement outcomes.

Conclusion

This study explored the leadership practices of head teachers in relation to plan preparation in community schools within Kirtipur Municipality, Kathmandu. The findings reveal that while head teachers demonstrate a basic understanding of planning processes, significant gaps remain in strategic thinking, participatory approaches, and implementation monitoring. Most head teachers were found to rely on routine or externally mandated planning formats, with limited innovation or contextual adaptation. Although some schools engaged stakeholders such as teachers, School Management Committees (SMCs), and parents, this participation was often nominal rather than meaningful. Leadership was largely administrative rather than visionary, with an emphasis on compliance rather than proactive goal-setting or long-term educational improvement.

Headteacher leadership practices substantially affect SIP quality and the likelihood of implementation. Inclusive planning, evidence use, capacity building, and budget alignment are particularly important. However, leadership is necessary but not sufficient; district support and community resources are also required to transform plans into sustained school improvement.

In conclusion, leadership practices around plan preparation in community schools of Kirtipur are in a developmental stage, requiring strengthened capacity, policy support, and a cultural shift toward more participatory and strategic planning. Professional development programs, peer-learning platforms, and decentralized decision-making can empower head teachers to become more effective instructional leaders and planners.

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