

# **Detailed Study on Head Teacher Efficacy and School Improvement**

**Consultant: Hope Nepal**  
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## **Study Team**

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## **Summary and Conclusion**

### **Summary of the Results**

The Education Act (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> amendment) and subsequent regulation (Education Regulation, 2059) has defined 31 different functions, duties, powers for school Head-teacher. However, many other obligations that are sent in the form of orders and circulars often consume more time than those that are specified. Moreover, some of the functions, duties, powers require a host other activities and preparations. For example SIP is quite laborious and time consuming and require specific skills which often conflict with Head-teacher's other obligations. Performing these duties and functions diligently and achieving desired goals is possible only when the Head-teacher is spared, at least some, from taking the full load of class work.

The intent, as reflected on education act and its regulations, with regard to the head-teacher is more upon administrative and managerial roles than teaching classrooms. The focus group discussion and actual practices of the head-teacher's traced for three consecutive days also revealed corresponding results that advocate head-teacher more as an administrator than a teacher. Their expectation from head-teacher is more of an administrative, management, and supervisory roles.

Government has recently introduced legislation and incentive schemes that encourage school community to join hands with the government to run the schools on their own. The intent of this policy is to empower local community through increased participation in school management.

Studies have also suggest schools with good understanding and cooperation between the head-teacher and SMC has managed the school remarkably well (CERID, 2002, 2003). This implies that the head-teacher must possess some leadership skills such as vision, commitment, and the ability to mobilize local resources.

Resource crunch in schools has been universal issue in almost all community schools in Nepal. Some of the best practices with regard to resource mobilization is that schools have established working relationship with numerous local organizations such as, local clubs, DDC, Municipality, and VDC; and local stakeholders such as, schoolteachers, parents, and individual.

Some of the best practices noticed with regard to access to education among sampled schools include adopting strategies that are self-initiated by the school to maintain enrolment in their school. Some of the strategies include visiting families, conducting ECD centers to bring junior students and some schools have even managed to provide pencils and notebooks from their own resources.

Similarly, in some schools, the head-teacher has, in consultation with the SMC, taken initiatives on income generating activities by renting out school property such as, the school building to run higher grades; land for social and religious function; and pond for fish farming.

Some of the best practices with regard to school management have shown head-teacher's determination and the very characteristics of taking self-initiatives to implement innovative programs and activity. Most importantly, the head-teachers have been found to have paid particular attention in maintaining harmony and cooperation among school teachers, with the SMC members, with the DEO staff, and the RPs. School management among sampled schools has been found to have actively engaged in various self-initiated activities without much regard to the government support. Thus, it appears that the determination and taking self-initiatives is fundamental to maintain school enrollments, education quality and mobilizing resources for school improvement.

Congenial atmosphere in school and among the schoolteachers is vital to promote coordination and team work in the school. Head-teacher's personality and self discipline, creativity, and impartiality are some of the characteristics observed as helpful to boost faith and respect.

In some schools, head-teacher and teachers have developed a commonly acceptable code of conduct which everyone is strictly observing. In some schools the head-teachers have taken self-initiatives to coordinate with local agencies and have secured additional resources for the

school. These resources mostly include support school building, furniture, and some scholarships for poor and deserving students.

Level of confidence among head-teachers measured on 15 competencies showed almost uniform level of confidence across primary and secondary head-teachers. Though the analysis of competency level is only preliminary, the result indicates only basic level of competency among most of the head-teachers. It appears that some follow-up and refreshers on competency based training program would improve the level of confidence among head-teachers.

Efficacy level among head-teachers measured on Albert Bandura's 9 point efficacy scale revealed low self-efficacy among sampled community schools whereas in sampled institutional schools most head-teachers are found to have higher self-efficacy level. Existing discrepancy in education quality between community and institutional schools thus appears to be associated with the level of self-efficacy also.

Analysis of self-efficacy level among head-teachers in management transfer schools has shown some promising results. Head-teachers in these schools are more consistent and higher with regard to their self-efficacy level compared to the community schools. The main strength of head-teachers in management transfer schools is found on enlisting parental and community involvement in school development.

## **Conclusion**

The intent inherent in education act and regulations, the informally held expectations of the stakeholders, and the actual practices by the head-teacher all correspond to see the head-teachers performing more like an administrator, manager and supervisor of school related activities. The difficulty in taking these roles efficiently require two considerations: 1) that the head-teacher should be considered as administrative staff and should not be counted as teaching staff while assessing teacher student ratio, and 2) for proper planning, budgeting, record keeping and reporting, additional support staff should be made available in each school. These propositions does incur additional costs to the government, however, the amount that each year is wasted and sometimes misused, knowingly or unknowingly, due to improper record keeping would come to be far more greater that the costs for additional staff. Additional support to the head-teacher would increase head-teacher's level of confidence and performance level considerably high.

Head-teacher's competency level measured on 131 indicators showed an average level of competency. The training provided to them appeared to be helpful as most have at least the basic level of competency and some have even acquired higher level of competency. It is likely that some refresher training on the same would boost their level of competency.

Self-efficacy on the other hand is generally low among community school head-teachers. Low self-efficacy also means low self-esteem that implicates head-teachers efficiency and effectiveness on the performance of their duties, functions and powers. It is sometimes observed that a qualified and experienced teacher have performed miserably. On the other hand, some inexperienced and even less qualified teachers have performed quite well. This situation is explained by their level of self-efficacy. Teachers with low-self efficacy perform miserably despite their education and experience. There are several ways that could be adopted to boost head-teacher's level self-efficacy.

However, the sample taken for this study is too small to conclude on the level of self-efficacy and to propose measures to boost their level of self-efficacy. It is therefore strongly recommended to conduct a large-scale study on the self-efficacy.

## Recommendation

Recommendations are made based on research findings and feedback received from the study committee, DOE staff and experts. Since the study has also developed a comprehensive case study of 12 sampled schools some recommendations are school specific.

### ***Recommendation with Action Steps***

The results of current study suggest most head teachers have not been able to perform their defined role due to various constraints. The actual role has been demonstrated in some schools as compulsion and in others as rituals. It is compulsion because the head teacher is supposed to act as an administrator willingly or unwillingly against co teachers. Moreover, the task has not been done perfectly due to various constraints, such as social relations, political intervention and occasional pressure from the district education office.

The defined roles had been a ritual because the head teacher has to perform teaching roles like other teachers and ad-hoc activities such as meeting with parents and other visitors, visiting DOE and RC dominate head-teacher's daily activity. Some of the practical policy measures are recommended hereunder:

1. The total workload of the Head-teacher should be specified to not over 12 periods per week. This should be clearly specified in the education regulation.

The Overall National Education Committee (ONEC, 2018) had specified 15-20 periods per week for head-teacher. However, the context has changed that require head-teacher's proactive roles in school management, SIP preparation, community mobilization and in maintaining harmony in school, among many other roles. The head-teacher thus won't be able to afford more than 2 periods per day.

2. Regarding resource mobilization many of the schools have been found to have been using their internal resources in order to pay for the extra teacher hired by the schools. In order to avoid this situation the ministry should manage the

required number of teachers so that such resources can be mobilized for the overall development of the schools.

3. Head-teacher should also teach as a substitute when class teacher is absent. Teaching class is necessary to be in close contact with the students and to learn their specific needs. This must be reflected in education regulation.
4. Head-teacher should be protected and encouraged taking legitimate action against school-teacher's misconduct. Head-teacher must be provided immunity from external influence by reflecting specific power in the act.
5. Head-teacher should be given full authority over hiring and firing of school-teachers, and class-teacher's evaluation. A high-level committee should be formed to review all research works conducted on head-teacher and SMC's roles and function and to propose appropriate roles for both in the light of emerging challenges and strategies being taken.
6. Head-teacher should have a helping hand to perform all duties, roles, and functions diligently. An administrative staff is mostly desirable in schools to support the head-teacher. Alternatively, one of the teachers could be appointed as deputy head-teacher to support some of his/her time in collaboration with the head-teacher. However, the class-load of the deputy must not exceed 20 periods per week.
7. Head-teachers, in the sampled schools, are mostly found selected by the SMC and sometimes proposed by the then out-going head-teacher. The focus group recommended selecting mature and experienced teacher for the position. However, it is the study team's recommendation that the teacher must go through a qualifying process in order to be considered as potential candidate for head-teacher position.

Much of today's education planning, budgeting, implementation and delivery of educational inputs depends solely on school management. There can't be second opinion that head-teacher is the leader and manager of all school activities. Various program approaches currently in the offing such as, the EFA, SIP, block-grant,

management transfer are all seeking visionary, qualified, competent, and determined leader as the head-teacher in schools.

Low level of self-efficacy and low competency among school head-teachers is considered impediments to government initiatives that are currently being introduced. Only the experienced, qualified, and competent teacher can take the new challenges as anticipated in the program documents. Success of all these initiatives depends largely upon the selection and deployment of most competent teachers in the position of head-teacher.

The following is recommended as a criteria and procedure for head-teacher selection:

- a. Be a school teacher and minimum of 5 year's teaching experience in appropriate level.
- b. Must have IA, BA, and MA for primary, lower-secondary and secondary level respectively.
- c. Should have taken, with passing grades, at least one semester's course on headship (school management, administration, and supervision).
  - i. The DOE, in collaboration with Faculty of Education at universities should introduce one semester credit course on head-ship.
  - ii. The credit courses should meet level specific education objectives and required level of competency.
  - iii. Teachers should be encouraged to take the course by awarding stipends or subsidies from the government.
  - iv. The course can be conducted on a distance-learning modality to minimize costs and time of the teacher.
- d. Teacher must have a qualifying certificate.
  - i. The teacher service commission (TSC) should take such examination at regional or sub regional level on regular basis.
  - ii. Must pass competency based written examination on school management, administration, and supervision.
  - iii. The TSC should award qualifying certificates to each passing teachers.



- e. The SMC must recommend to the DEO from among teachers who meet all the above criteria and have the qualifying certificates for head-teacher.
  - f. The DEO should appoint one of the recommended teachers as head-teacher.
8. Competency based management training appeared to have some improvement on the level of competency among head-teachers. It is recommended to provide refresher training on the same for head-teachers.
9. Level of self-efficacy among head-teachers is both variable from one teacher to other and is low. Low and variable self-efficacy among head-teachers also seems to explain variation in education quality from one school to another. It is hence quite important to conduct the following to boost self-efficacy:
- g. Develop training package on self-efficacy
  - h. Provide training to some head-teacher to pilot
  - i. Include efficacy based training component in the head-teacher training packages.
10. Conduct self-efficacy study on a large sample.

### ***School Specific Recommendations***

There are more or less similar type of problems among the community schools, the main concerns is resource constraint because they depend on government grants. The institutional schools, on the other hand do not have such constraints because they are independent schools, they themselves are responsible to generate their resources on their own.

Individual assessment of school cases didn't yield specific policy strategy recommendation worth mentioning. The observed cases are annexed in the report.