

Decision Making Practices in Integrated Public School of Nepal

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Introduction of the study

Decision making process is the process of choosing the best solution among available alternatives and includes the steps such as identifying problem, selecting an alternative, and evaluating the decision's effectiveness. In National Education System Plan (NESP) 1971 the government used to bear only partial responsibility in decision making practices. The decade of the 1980 was evaluated as very essential period for the development of new management systems in educational administration and the gradual reversal of NESP policies and programs (Bhatta, 2005). School Management Committee is the legal body formally constituted to manage and operate the school with the decision of the community. Teacher's professional organizations have been raising several questions related to SMC decision making process, they blame that SMC members can be influenced by the political institutions in making decisions because of having less knowledge on educational aspects. This study aims are looking into decision making practices in integrated public schools in terms of SMC.

Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study was to explore decision making practices in integrated public schools of Nepal. More specifically the purpose research has carried the following objectives:

1. To explore and analyze the decision making policies and practices in integrated public schools of Nepal.
2. To come up with plausible decision making process for integrated public schools of Nepal.

Methodology of the study

This research is based on the premises of qualitative research design under interpretive research paradigm. This study followed critical interpretive design to analyze and interpret the field data. The population of the study includes the members of the selected 5 schools (three urban and two remote) from Kathmandu and Lalitpur district. HT=5, SMC Chairman=5, School Supervisor=1+1=2, RP= 2+2=4, and Teacher Representative= 2+2=4. For data collection the researcher took help of the head teachers of the selected schools, and reached to the members of the school management committees. The researcher conducted group discussion using focus group discussion guidelines with the SMC members and resource person. Teachers and school supervisors were asked questions to explore their opinion towards decision making policies and practices. The data were analyzed thematically and interpreted linking them with the theories and the established policies as prescribed in the documents. The researcher has also used conceptual framework as a point of reference for his data analysis. In doing so, the researcher interpreted obtained the data using the theories such as power theory and decentralization theory. The results were achieved directly from the analysis of the raw data, not from a priori models. The primary mode of analysis is the development of categories or themes from the raw data. The general thematic categories were deduced from the research objectives. The specific thematic categories were derived from multiple readings of the raw data.

Results of the study

Power theory and head teacher control model of decision making was found in teacher recruitment practice. (2) Preparation of SIP was found to have been more participatory than other areas in terms of decision making

process. (3) It is found that power theory intervene the decision making system of school. (4) Teacher control model is implied (a) if they are in favor of SMC, head teacher control model is implied (b) if they are in favor of head teacher and community control model is implied (c) if SMC is guided by specific political ideologies. (5) It was found that decentralization theory is practiced and mixed model is followed in relation to the student enrollment in public schools of Nepal. (6) It was also found that decentralization theory is implied and mixed model is found to be in practice on the basis of head teacher control for institutional linkage of schools. (7) Special coordinator/incharge is nominated by head teacher with the decision of SMC and the recommendation of teacher staffs and PTA committee. At this point the researcher found that decentralization theory has been practiced to conduct the whole activities of schools. (8) It is found that the public judgment is based on the successful decision making and implementation of the infrastructure development plan. The development of infrastructure in schools was found to have been deeply influenced by the activeness and coordination of head teachers and chair person.

Discussion of the study

A research conducted by CERID (2008) support that the head teacher is in power and decision making process in school is influenced by the head teacher control model. National Council for Economic Research (2008) supports SMCs focused on improvement of physical condition as compare to student's achievement. CERID (2003) study also supports that the participation of community people in the preparation of SIP was minimal. CERID (2008) study reveals that functions and powers given to SMC and actual practice indicate that SMC could not influence significantly the school decisions. Extracurricular activities of school are free from community and head teachers' influence. Dynamic SMC and head teacher collect many more fund and support from different NGOs and INGOs for infrastructure development of the school. Decentralization cum power theory is the plausible theory in decision making practices in schools.

Conclusion

Considering the theory of decision making practices in integrated public schools of Nepal, it can be concluded that power-cum-decentralization seems to be more practical way to run the integrated schools. This can be considered as mixed-model which is blending of head teacher, teacher and community control model for the collaboration of major stake holders to take appropriate decision for better quality. This had helped all the stakeholders to have a sense of belongingness towards the school thus contributing in overall development of school in a more participatory manner.

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