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Comprehensive Analysis of Factors Influencing Quality Education in Community Schools. A Case Study of Sarlahi District, Nepal

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Abstract

This study examines the quality of education in government schools of Sarlahi District, Nepal, focusing on factors such as school infrastructure, teaching methodologies, parental involvement and inclusivity. The study adopts a quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design and analyze data collected from students across eight community secondary schools in various municipalities of Sarlahi District. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires to assess perceptions of educational quality, discrimination, gender equality and the availability of learning resources. The findings reveal significant gaps in teaching quality, infrastructure, and inclusivity, with notable inconsistencies in interactive and child-centered teaching methods. Inadequate science and ICT laboratories, coupled with insufficient skilled manpower, undermine the learning environment. The analysis also highlights limited parental involvement in academic support with economic pressures contributing to conflicting responsibilities of student between household chores and education. Overall, the study emphasizes the need to address these challenges by enhancing teacher training, investing in educational infrastructure and bridging the

gap between policy and practice to achieve inclusive, quality education in Sarlahi District.

Keywords: Quality Education, Lab and ICT, School Environment, Skilled Manpower, General Equality

Background of Study

Quality education is not merely defined for the purpose of assessment but it is conceptualized as a student-centered education that prepares individuals for life. Quality education demands attention to the social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive development of students, regardless of their gender, caste, ethnicity, socio-economic status or geographical location (Karatsiori, 2023). This implies that quality education encompasses not just the content of the curriculum but also the approach and objectives of teaching. In 2012, the United Nations first listed quality education as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Karatsiori, 2023). However, the concept of quality education is not a new one; educational institutions should prioritize the needs and development of students over their institutional profiles (Barrett, 2006). Unfortunately, quality education has often been relegated to a topic of debate rather than being implemented effectively.

Quality education has been defined and redefined over the years by various scholars, educators and organizations. It extends beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge; it is about fostering an environment that cultivates holistic development—social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive—among learners (Corbett & Guilherme, 2021). UNESCO (2005) identifies five key dimensions of quality education: learners, learning environments, content, processes and outcomes. This framework emphasizes that the quality of education should be judged not only by the academic success of students but also by how well it prepares them for their future roles in society (Zajda, 2021).

The idea of quality education necessitates an inclusive approach. It extends beyond classrooms and textbooks to include the complete ecosystem that contributes to student and learning growth (Patfield et al., 2022). Educators must move beyond traditional pedagogies and

adopt student-centered methods that emphasize critical thinking, problem solving, cooperation, and creativity (Patfield et al., 2022). The goal is to generate graduates who are both academically competent and socially responsible, capable of positively contributing to society.

In developing countries, economic factors pose a significant challenge to achieving quality education. Schools often lack basic infrastructure, qualified teachers and adequate learning materials. Conflict-affected regions' education systems are further pressured, resulting in disruptions in learning and long-term educational setbacks for children. For example, UNESCO (2019) reports that over 262 million children and youth globally are not in school due to a variety of factors such as poverty, conflict and gender inequality.

Language and cultural diversity can also impede access to high-quality education. In multilingual societies, the medium of instruction can either facilitate or hinder learning (Zickafoose et al., 2024). Instruction in a language other than the learner's mother tongue may reduce comprehension, engagement, and memory (Zickafoose et al., 2024). In today's world, technology is critical to improving educational quality. Digital technologies and resources have transformed the educational process, making it more accessible, interactive and personalized (Haleem et al., 2022). E-learning platforms, online courses, and digital libraries provide students from diverse backgrounds with unprecedented access to high-quality educational content (Singh et al., 2023). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, internet learning technologies allowed millions of students to continue their education even if schools were closed. However, the digital gap remains an issue. While technology has the potential to democratize access to education, it can also worsen existing disparities if not applied properly. Access to devices, adequate internet access, and digital literacy skills are required for implementing technology in school (Afzal et al., 2023). Many low-income and rural populations do not meet these requirements, limiting the potential benefits of digital education. To achieve truly inclusive quality education, it is critical to address the digital gap through investments in infrastructure and training.

Despite the global emphasis on quality education, there has been little focused research on the precise elements influencing educational quality. This study focused on the influence of information and communication technology (ICT), students' homework habits, assignment procedures, and discipline in molding educational outcomes in this environment. This gap emphasizes the importance of conducting a thorough analysis of these issues to better understand their impact on education quality in community schools. Addressing this gap can provide valuable insights into improving educational methods and policies customized to the specific needs of Harion Municipality in Sarlahi District, Nepal.

Research Method

This study adopted a quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design to evaluate the quality of education in community secondary schools across the Sarlahi District. The research focused specifically on assessing the factors influencing educational outcomes in secondary schools within different municipalities of the district.

The study has selected eight community schools with technical programs purposively situated across various municipalities in the district. These selected schools represent diverse socio-economic and geographical sectors, ensuring that the findings are generalizable across the Tarai region.

The study participants were students from classes 9 and 10 at the selected secondary schools. Participants were selected randomly. Self-administered structured questionnaires with reliability tests (the reliability values of the tools ranged from 0.81 to 0.84) were used to collect data from the sample respondents, allowing them to freely respond to the survey without any pressure. Permission to conduct the survey was obtained from the respective municipalities and schools, ensuring adherence to ethical standards and local regulations. The data collected was exclusively used for research purposes.

Data Collection and Presentation

The primary instrument for data collection was a self-administered questionnaire designed to capture relevant information about students' educational experiences, practices, and perceptions. The questionnaires were structured with clear, closed-ended questions to facilitate easy and unbiased responses. The questions were focused on assessing various aspects of quality education, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT), homework habits, assignment practices, discipline, and the overall school environment. The collected data were to be analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were used to summarize the data.

The data presentation and analysis reveal three core themes. They are Challenges and Opportunities in Promoting an Inclusive and Supportive Educational Environment, Evaluating Inclusivity, Teaching Practices and School Environment in Government Schools, and Challenges in Science and ICT Education Infrastructure and Resource Utilization. The first theme addresses the obstacles and potential strategies for fostering an inclusive and supportive educational atmosphere. The second theme focuses on assessing the effectiveness of inclusivity measures, teaching methodologies and overall school conditions. The third theme highlights significant deficiencies in science and ICT infrastructure and resource usage, underscoring the need for substantial improvements to enhance educational outcomes.

Ethical Considerations

The study maintains strict ethical standards, ensuring that the participation of students is entirely voluntary, and confidentiality is upheld. Data collection permissions were sought from the respective municipalities, and the information gathered is used solely for research purposes. The study's design adheres to ethical guidelines, protecting the rights and privacy of all participants.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data presentation and analysis reveal three core themes. They are Challenges and

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Challenges and Opportunities in Promoting an Inclusive and Supportive Educational Environment

This theme captures the key issues identified in the survey results that include discrimination, inclusivity, teaching quality and the overall child-friendly nature of the school environment. It reflects the dual nature of the findings: while there are positive aspects, such as the promotion of cultural diversity and good physical facilities, significant challenges remain in ensuring consistent equity, supportive learning conditions and inclusive teaching practices. The theme underscores the need for targeted improvements to create a more engaging, secure, and nurturing educational experience for all students.

Table: 1

Challenges and opportunities

Different types of discrimination in schools	low: 5.2	only few : 21.4	no: 57.5	
Child friendly environment in the school	Very good: 17.7	good: 38.4	neutral: 10.5	bad: 15.2
Our school environment	highly secure: 20.5	secure: 21.1	normal: 36.6	unsecure: 5.9
Sir/madams teach us lovingly	yes: 50.7	sometimes: 19.1	neutral: 6.6	no: 7.7
Interactive way teaching method	yes: 57.0	sometimes: 5.0	neutral: 12.0	no: 10.0
Students are valued/ recognized equally	yes: 69.1	neutral: 5.0	no: 10.0	

Teaching and learning activities are child-centered	yes: 45.5	neutral: 21.6	no: 17.0
Disable student are given priority in all aspects	yes: 37.0	neutral: 21.1	no: 25.5
Students maintained highly discipline environment	yes: 62.7	neutral: 5.5	no: 15.2
Academic environment are in school	yes: 59.8	sometimes: 9.3	no: 14.1
The school's physical facilities and facilities are child-friendly	yes: 70.7	no: 13.4	
The school promotes the preservation of all cultures	yes: 76.4	neutral: 3.9	no: 3.9

The survey results highlight critical insights into the educational environment and practices within the surveyed schools, focusing on issues such as discrimination, inclusivity and teaching methodologies. A significant concern is the prevalence of discrimination in schools, with 5.2% of respondents indicating it is low, 21.4% stating it occurs occasionally and 57.5% reporting no discrimination at all. Despite the majority perceiving an absence of discrimination, the notable percentage of students experiencing it suggests that discrimination remains a challenge in some contexts, potentially affecting the inclusivity of the school environment.

The survey also sheds light on the school's overall child-friendly environment. While 17.7% of students rate it as very good and 38.4% as good, 15.2% describe it as bad, indicating that not all students feel their learning environment is supportive or nurturing. Furthermore, perceptions of security vary, with 20.5% feeling highly secure and 21.1% feeling secure, while a concerning 5.9% find the environment unsecure. This insecurity may hinder students' ability to focus on learning.

Teaching quality has also received mixed ratings. Although the majority of kids (50.7%) believe that teachers connect with them in a loving manner, 7.7% disagree, and 19.1% say this happens only seldom. Furthermore, 57.0% of students report the interactive teaching approaches but 10.0% do not have this experience that underlining the need for more consistent application of

engaging teaching practices.

Equity in the classroom is also crucial that with 69.1% of students feeling equally appreciated and recognised. However, 10.0% do not share this experience which indicate the gaps in attaining a completely inclusive educational environment. 45.5% of students identify their teaching and learning activities as child-centered, yet 17.0% do not see this approach in practice which indicate a gap between educational theory and implementation. Similarly, support for impaired students remains inconsistent, with 37.0% reporting that priority is given and 25.5% disagreeing which indicate the need for more efforts towards inclusivity.

Although 15.2% of students disagree, suggesting that behavioural norms vary throughout schools, 62.7% of students describe a very disciplined atmosphere, suggesting that discipline is well-maintained. Although 59.8% of students accept the existence of the academic environment, 14.1% do not, indicating areas for improvement. Nevertheless, overall, the perception of the academic environment is good.

Physical facilities receive excellent evaluations from students, with 70.7% evaluating them as child-friendly, which is a crucial factor in creating a suitable learning environment. Finally, cultural diversity is strongly fostered, with 76.4% of students backing their school's efforts in this regard. However, 3.9% believe that cultural inclusiveness is lacking, highlighting the necessity for continuing reinforcement of these concepts. While the educational environment has some positive aspects, significant gaps highlight the need for a more inclusive, engaged, and supportive approach to promoting high-quality education for all children.

Evaluating Inclusivity, Teaching Practices, and School Environment in Government Schools

This theme encapsulates key insights into the educational environment, highlighting critical areas such as discrimination, inclusivity, child-centered learning, student security, teaching methodologies, discipline, and cultural diversity. The findings underscore the need to address disparities in inclusivity, enhance student engagement, and foster a supportive and secure school

environment to achieve a truly quality education for all students. The data reflects a mixed reality where positive elements coexist with significant challenges, calling for targeted improvements in teaching practices, inclusivity measures, and overall school culture.

Table 2

School environment in government school

Parents are happy when you are going to school	yes: 68.6	neutral: 4.8	no: 10.7
I feel very happy after going to school	yes: 70.5	a little bit 25.4	neutral: 4.1
Parents are happy when you do your homework	yes: 80.5	neutral: 15.4	no: 4.1
your parents order to do your work of house after come back from school	yes: 38.5	a little bit: 42	no:19.5
Equal priority in education for you and both your sister and brother	yes: 62.4	a little bit: 35.6	no:2.0
your parents assist for your homework	yes: 18.6	a little bit: 22.4	no: 59

The survey results provide significant information on students' perceptions and experiences with parental involvement and attitudes towards their education in the Sarlahi District. The vast majority of kids (68.6%) report that their parents are pleased when they attend school, indicating a good attitude towards education in the home. However, 10.7% of students believe that their parents are unimpressed when they go to school, implying that a small but significant minority of children may be experiencing a lack of encouragement at home.

Regarding students personal attitudes about attending school, 25.4% are only marginally content, whilst 70.5% are joyful. This diverse response may reflect differing levels of drive or satisfaction with the educational setting. It could have an impact on students' overall educational journey. It's interesting to note that most children (80.5%) say their parents are happy when they complete their homework. It support the idea that academic achievement and parental approval are closely related.

However, 15.4% of kids report that their parents had a neutral attitude to homework,

which could reflect a lack of engagement or concern about their academic achievement. The results also reveal that a significant percentage of students (38.5%) are routinely given household duties after school and 42% are occasionally given household duties. This could point to a conflict between domestic tasks and school obligations particularly in homes where kids are expected to help out around the house. Interestingly, 19.5% of students claim they are not required to do household duties, which could free up more time for them to concentrate on their academic work.

Regarding gender parity in school, 62.4% of students believe they receive equal priority in education as their siblings, while 35.6% believe that they receive slightly less importance. Only a small percentage (2%) say they do not receive equal importance. This implies that, while gender equality in education is widely acknowledged, there are still some disparities that may need to be addressed that notably in the distribution of educational opportunities among families.

Finally, the findings suggest that the majority of parents (59%) do not help their children with homework and just 18.6% actively participate in their children's academics aspects. This lack of support may impair academic achievement of adolescents, as parental participation is frequently a critical element in educational success. The comparatively low levels of support could be attributed to a variety of variables, including educational backgrounds of parents, time restrictions and a lack of knowledge of the curriculum.

To summarize, while the overall attitude towards education in the Sarlahi District is favorable, with many kids reporting satisfaction with both attending school and doing homework but there are some areas for worry. Increased parental involvement in students' academic work that improved family-school balance and continued attempts to attain gender equality in educational opportunities are all necessary. Children in this area may benefit from improved educational experiences and results if these issues are resolved.

Challenges in Science and ICT Education Infrastructure and Resource Utilization

The theme encompasses the important difficulties raised, including the poor state of science

labs, the insufficient use of ICT and science resources, the restricted integration of contemporary teaching technology, and the shortage of qualified staff. In order to improve the calibre and efficacy of science and ICT education in the area, the subject highlights the necessity of tackling these resource- and infrastructure-related issues.

Table 3

ICT education infrastructure

Condition of the Science Laboratory	best: 13.0	better: 11.8	good: 32.3	weak: 26.6
Use of the laboratory in science learning	best: 13.0	better: 11.8	good: 32.3	weak: 26.6
Use of projector, power point, smart board in class for teaching	best: 16.1	better: 8.2	good: 24.3	weak: 35.0
Availability of skilled manpower in ICT and Science lab	yes: 52.5		no: 16.1	
Condition of ICT and science Lab	best: 4.8	good: 16.4		weak: 28.2

The information reveals a number of significant issues with the resources and facilities available for science and ICT (information and communication technology) instruction in Sarlahi District community schools. Just 13.0% of students rated the scientific labs as the best and 11.8% as better which indicate that they are in less than ideal condition. A significant percentage of students (32.3%) believe that their labs are in barely good condition and 26.6% believe that they are in weak condition. This suggests that most scientific labs are in poor condition and do not have the tools and facilities needed to provide a productive learning environment. A key element of science education is practical learning which can be severely hampered by inadequate laboratory conditions.

The same trend can be seen in how laboratories are used in science classes: 13.0% of students think they are the best, 11.8% think they are better, 32.3% think they are good, and 26.6% think they are weak. This implies that even when scientific labs are accessible, they are not being used to their fullest capacity whether as a result of a lack of space, inadequate equipment or

improper supervision. The inadequate usage of labs indicates a lost chance for experiential learning, which is crucial for students to understand difficult scientific ideas.

The results are alarming when it comes to the usage of contemporary instructional tools like smart boards, PowerPoint and projectors. Just 16.1% of students say that using these technologies is the best, 8.2% say that it is better, and 24.3% say that it is good. There is a large gap in the use of technology in the classroom. It is evidenced by the noteworthy 35.0% rating it as weak. The less use of these digital technologies may be the result of inadequate training for educators and poor equipment availability or lack of maintenance. All of which ultimately hinder the improvement of dynamic and captivating learning environments.

There is also a mixed picture about the availability of skilled labor in science and ICT labs. Although 52.5% of students say that there is qualified staff, a significant 16.1% say that there isn't. The efficient use of ICT and science labs is hampered in many schools by a shortage of competent personnel, since knowledgeable teachers are necessary to operate sophisticated equipment which lead students through experiments and incorporate technology into the teaching and learning process.

The overall condition of ICT and science labs is generally poor, with only 4.8% of students rating them as best, 16.4% as good, and a notable 28.2% rating them as weak. These findings suggest that the facilities are largely inadequate, potentially due to outdated equipment, insufficient maintenance, or a lack of investment in upgrading the infrastructure. Poor lab conditions and insufficient access to quality ICT tools limit students' exposure to modern scientific and technological learning, crucial for developing skills that are increasingly important in today's world.

In conclusion, the data shows that community schools face major obstacles when it comes to the availability and utilization of scientific and ICT resources. The efficiency of science education is hampered by subpar laboratory conditions which is as a result of lack of qualified staff and a lack of use of technological teaching aids. By addressing these problems through staff training, lab renovations, and the integration of contemporary teaching tools, the learning environment can be

greatly improved, which will ultimately improve regional educational outcomes.

Discussion and Analysis

A number of factors including as school infrastructure, teaching strategies, parental involvement and the inclusiveness of the learning environment that affect the quality of education in government schools in Sarlahi District of Nepal. In order to critically examine these elements, this part synthesizes the study's findings that connects them to previously published works and makes inferences about the region's educational system.

According to the survey, opinions on discrimination in schools are divided; 26.6% of students admit that it occasionally occurs, while 57.5% of students say it never occurs. The existence of discriminatory behaviors continues to be a worry that impacts the general inclusivity of education, even though the majority report a discrimination-free environment (UNESCO, 2005). As seen by the sizeable percentage of students who believe that there are disparities in the education. The survey emphasizes that although inclusion is acknowledged as an objective, it has not yet been entirely achieved.

Furthermore, in line with global trends where males frequently have greater access to school than girls, gender equality is still a crucial issue (UNESCO, 2019). Even while the majority of students think that they have the same educational options as their siblings. Reports of unequal prioritizing persist particularly among female students. This conclusion reflects larger cultural standards in South Asia, where girls' educational opportunities continue to lag behind those of boys (UNESCO, 2019).

According to the data, there is variation in the quality of instruction; 57.0% of students acknowledge the use of interactive teaching methods whilst 10.0% do not. This discrepancy points to a lack of consistency in instructional strategies which may be caused by inadequate resources and training for teachers (UNESCO, 2005). Students' involvement and learning outcomes are impacted by the inconsistent application of UNESCO's emphasis on student-centered learning.

According to the survey, just 45.5% of students consider teaching and learning activities to be child-centered. This is consistent with Manuchehr's (2010) findings, which argue that academic institutions usually prioritize their reputation over the interests of their students. To deliver a high-quality education, schools must adopt inclusive and participative teaching practices that fulfill the needs of the variety of students.

One of the most pressing challenges mentioned is the state of scientific and ICT laboratories. According to the report, 35.0% of students say that the use of digital teaching aids is insufficient, while 26.6% believe that their science laboratories are inadequate. Access to technology and hands-on learning are critical components of modern education, therefore a lack of resources jeopardizes instruction quality (UNESCO, 2019). The poor infrastructure reflects bigger issues in developing countries, where a lack of funding and resources makes it impossible to provide high-quality education (UNESCO, 2019).

Another major concern is the availability of skilled workers in ICT and science labs, with only 52.5% of students recognizing the presence of trained individuals. This gap emphasizes the importance of investing in teacher training and professional development in order to improve educational quality. UNESCO (2005) emphasizes the need of skilled and motivated educators in creating an effective learning environment.

Parental participation has a key role in influencing students' educational experiences. The study discovered that while the majority of parents (80.5%) support their children's education, just 18.6% regularly assist with homework. The lack of direct involvement could be attributed to low educational background of parents or time restrictions. According to UNESCO (2019), parental participation is an important element in academic performance and improving this feature may lead to better educational outcomes.

Furthermore, the competing demands of domestic and academic commitments present extra problems for students. According to the study, 38.5% of students are expected to conduct

home activities after school, which can interfere with their study time and focus. This research highlights the need for increased family knowledge and support to prioritize education, particularly in rural areas where economic pressures frequently demand child labor.

According to the study results, 76.4% of students believe that their schools encourage cultural preservation which demonstrates an inclusive attitude that values multiple cultural identities. However, preserving this inclusivity necessitates ongoing efforts to eliminate subtle kinds of bias that may still present in the classroom setting (UNESCO, 2019). Creating a child-friendly and secure atmosphere is essential, as students' sense of safety and belonging significantly influences their academic performance and overall well-being.

While digital tools have the potential to transform education by increasing accessibility and personalization, the digital divide remains a significant barrier. Many low-income and rural students are unable to reap the benefits of technology due to a lack of access to devices, dependable internet, and digital literacy skills. To ensure that technological innovations contribute to inclusive quality education, efforts must be taken to close the gap through investments in digital infrastructure and training.

The study identifies six major areas that need to be addressed in order to improve educational quality in community schools of Sarlahi District. Addressing concerns of inclusivity, improving teaching approaches, upgrading infrastructure and boosting parental involvement are all critical elements towards achieving quality education. As the findings indicate that existing gaps between policy and practice must be closed to guarantee that educational environments are really helpful, inclusive and conducive for learning. schools of Sarlahi District can better prepare children for a rapidly changing world by aligning with global educational standards and prioritizing student-centered initiatives.

Conclusion

This study provides important insights into the challenges and opportunities for fostering

diversity, enhancing teaching techniques, and closing infrastructure gaps, notably in science and ICT education. While there are certain advantages, such as the promotion of cultural diversity and physical infrastructure, problems including prejudice, variable teaching quality, and inadequate science labs hinder educational advancement. Gender equality, while growing, still has gaps, with many female students obtaining unequal educational opportunities.

The lack of current teaching materials and trained personnel in ICT and science labs, combined with limited parental involvement in academic support, exacerbates these issues. Household duties frequently conflict with academic priorities by influencing educational emphasis of students. Additionally, discrepancies in the usage of interactive teaching methods and child-centered approaches highlight the importance of regular teacher training. To create inclusive and supportive educational environments, significant improvements in infrastructure, instructional approaches, and parental involvement are required. By resolving these concerns and conforming to global education standards, schools in Sarlahi District can provide a more equal and effective learning environment, better prepared children for future difficulties.

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Conflict of Interest

I declare that there are no competing interests.

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