

Understanding the Nepalese Education System Today

Looking for Sustainable Opportunities for Development
of Kankali Secondary School in Kathmandu Valley

Final Report - Integrated Desk Research V2
(with findings from on-site visit in March 2014)

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Background...



Background

- **Many donations are made to Schools in Nepal from Overseas. These include Governments, Companies, NGOs and individuals. The particular case here is focused on Kankali Secondary School, a Community Government School in Kathmandu Valley.**
- Kankali Secondary School was established on 8th April 1982 (2039 Baisakh 25) and was soon after under the headmastership of Mr. Bishnu Paneru who remains the headmaster until today.
- Over the last 30 years the school has grown into the successful school with 28 class rooms that can be seen today.
- Over the years Kankali Secondary School has received support through NGOs, the Luxembourg Government, Luxembourg City's Secondary School Lycée Technique du Centre (LTC), and from private donations.
- Mme. Claudine Hengesch, a teacher at LTC and Project Coordinator for Kankali Secondary School, was personally active on the Kankali school premises, figuring prominently as a "prime mover" for Luxembourg support.
- In 1992-1995, support by Mr. André Linden, began after having been introduced to the project by Mrs. Claudine Hengesch, who has continued, until today, to give Mr. Linden advice and guidance on the project:
 - Donation for ongoing building activity for Kankali Secondary School (classrooms and compound wall),
 - Financial support for a first student at Kankali Secondary School,
 - Personal meeting in Luxembourg with Headmaster Mr. Bishnu Paneru
 - Extension of financial support for 3 more students at Kankali Secondary School,
 - Donation in support of temporary housing facility for a Family, on the recommendation by Mr. Paneru, with the gracious help of the Village Development Committee.

In addition, Mr. Linden's support continued as follows:

- 2001 saw the beginning of financial support for one more student at Kankali Secondary School.
- The first students meanwhile achieved SLC, after completing studies in Kankali Secondary School (one with First Division, and one with Distinction).
- 2006 Donation of Special Award for excellent Kankali student, indicated by Headmaster Mr. Paneru,
- 2007 Donation of Computer Lab for Kankali Secondary School

- March-April 2013 on the occasion of a visit to Kankali Secondary School, together with his cousin, Mr. Linden received a letter of request for *"uplifting/improvement of Kankali School"*, struggling against increasing competition from Private Schools.

- The letter explained the need for financial support, and delivered a wish list of specific items: *"For the completion of under Construction Toilet and building; 120 benches and other furniture; Denting and painting for buildings; For internet Connection; To have a garden; For Science Lab; Music lab and instruments as well; Drain and gravelling for 1.5 km road; Audio Visual equipment; Purifying the drinking water; Electrification in all rooms; For Library; Solar Energy to run Computers"*.

- Mr. Linden agreed to give immediate financial support for construction works regarding school buildings and road; as well as for the solar energy plant for the computers. The corresponding letter of engagement from Kankali Secondary School, with a proposal and a schedule for timely execution, is signed among others by: the Head Teacher; the President of the School Management Committee (S.M.C); the President of the Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A); the President of the Village Development Committee (V.D.C); the President of the Ex-Student Association; the President of the Child Club; and the Representative of the Women's Group.

- In order to guarantee optimal support for this important engagement of the Stakeholders of Kankali Secondary School in Kathmandu Valley, Mr. Linden commissioned Mr. Simon Patterson of QRi Consulting for Research on **"Understanding the Nepalese Education System Today – Looking for Sustainable Opportunities for Kankali Secondary School"** with the ultimate aim to elaborate a common vision, to help to contribute to establish Kankali Secondary School as an example of best practice for a Community based Public Secondary School in Nepal.

Objectives...



Objectives

- The objective of this research is:
 - **To obtain an understanding of the concept of “Unhealthy/Unnatural Competition” which appears to exist between Private Secondary Schools and Public Secondary Schools, in looking for sustainable opportunities for development of Kankali Secondary School in Kathmandu Valley.**
- In addition:
 - To provide an overview of the structure and how Secondary Education works in Nepal, in terms of Private vs Public Schools: Funding, Management, Entry System, Advertising, etc
 - To identify the Strengths/Weaknesses, Opportunities/Threats of Public Schools vs Private Schools in Nepal, and how Quality is Measured – Rationally and Emotionally.
 - To identify the meaning and definition of “Quality” within the context of Secondary Education in Nepal, especially Katmandu Valley.
 - Ultimately to help define ‘Best Practice’ for Public Schools in general, and for Kankali Secondary School in particular.
- The results will aid the generation of a hypothesis for primary field research with users of Private and Public Schools in general, and with users of Kankali Secondary School in particular; and/or for further more specific desk research.

Methodology...



Methodology

- This study consists of the analysis of published data and material.
- In addition an on-site field visit by Mr Linden and Mr Patterson took place in March 2014, some of the findings of which have been incorporated here in Version 2.
- The original desk research for this Report took place during June/July 2013 and was conducted by Jessica Neild, in conjunction with Debbie Whittick.
- The Study was managed and supervised by Simon Patterson, CEO of QRI Consulting.

Findings...



1. Background on Secondary Education in Nepal

1.1 A Brief Contextual Background on Nepal

- Nepal has a population of approximately 30 million. Despite the low per capita income, approximately US\$750, poverty has actually been reduced by half in the past seven years. ^[1]
- Never-the-less, Nepal is still ranked as one of the poorest countries in the world, 157th out of 187 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index 2012. ^[2]
- World Bank health indicators show child nutrition to be a concern with 47% of children under 5 years old having stunted growth. Malnutrition, parasites, and dysentery are a major concern.
- Nepal currently has the highest infant mortality rate in Asia and the highest maternal mortality rate in the world. The remote, mountainous harsh environment leave many struggling for survival in a cut off world, isolated from healthcare, education and energy supply.

- After a prolonged period of political instability Nepal has reached a degree of stability due to;
 - a peace agreement that was made with Maoist rebels in 2006 and who are now part of the legitimate political system.
 - the Nepalese people voting to abolish the monarchy in 2008 to form the creation of a Federal Democratic Republic.
- The years of autocratic rule followed by a series of fragile democratic governments and internal conflict have left scars and raised issues about economic, social, cultural and ethnic inequalities. In-fighting, corruption and lack of structure or direction typify the region.

1.2 A Brief Contextual Background on Schooling in Nepal

- Universal access to education began in 1951. Prior to this education tended to be the reserve of high caste and ruling family elites who were either taught in English or under more traditional and religious disciplines of the Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim faiths.
- Mass education required the building of an infrastructure and the training of a force of teachers. It was the job of the Nepal National Education Planning Commission with the help of the United States Overseas Mission to develop an education plan. It was decided that universal education at primary level, to be taught in Nepali, was the best course of action and to this day education in Nepal follows a US based model.
- The first schools were generally Community Schools, opened and owned by the Community, whilst being financially supported by the Government.

- Back in these early days education was selective and often excluded; girls, Dalits (untouchable caste), marginalised ethnic groups, other poor people and those in remote areas. ^[3]
- Between 1971 and 2001, education began to expand under the National Education Sector Plan of 1971. The model for expansion relied on Central Government Administration, rather than the Community. However, due to weak government, political instability and the remote and rural nature of Nepal, the system was a failure. Funding did not arrive and teachers abandoned class rooms due to lack of pay. In addition, the system did not represent the needs of local Communities and in particular the needs of the girls and other disadvantaged groups, who often remained marginalised.
- In 2001, parliament passed new laws to transfer schools back to Community Management. With backing from the World Bank they aimed to achieve 100% Community Management of all Public Schools by 2015. ^[4]

The New School Structure

Age	Grade	Old Versus New School Structure	
		Old System	New System
16	12	Higher Secondary Education (Grades 11-12)	Secondary Education (Grades 9-12)
15	11		
14	10	Secondary Education (Grades 9-10)	
13	9		
12	8	Lower Secondary Education (Grades 6-8)	Basic Education (Grades 1-8)
11	7		
10	6		
9	5	Primary Education (Grades 1-5)	
8	4		
7	3		
6	2		
5	1		
4	Pre-Primary Education/Early Childhood Development		

Table 1 – Nick Clark, ‘Academic Mobility and the Education System of Nepal’, 2013, World Education News Review

- Whilst Primary School level education has achieved over 95% enrolment, many children do not complete primary education or receive such a poor quality education that they are barely literate despite attending. Indeed, approximately half of all children leave education altogether after Primary School.
- Fall out at Secondary level is also high with half the student population leaving after Lower Secondary level (years 6-8). Only 24% of all children go on to Higher Secondary school (years 9-12).
- Basic literacy rates amongst 15 to 24 year olds currently stand at 73%. [5]

1.3 Poor Results at Secondary Level

- A new structure of Lower Secondary (years 6-8) is being incorporated into Primary schooling in an attempt to boost school retention rates, this is resulting in increasing Lower Secondary enrolment. (see Table 1)
- However, the number of children gaining **School Leaving Certificate (SLC)** has declined steadily over the past few years from 65% to 56% to 47% to 41% in 2013. [6]
- Results from Secondary Public Schools are pitifully low compared to the Private School sector. **In 2012, 36.5% of Public School students passed their SLC, while the figure for Private Schools was over 85%.** [7]
- The overall result is that, despite improvements in education in Nepal over the past decade, more and more children are being sent to Private Schools, particularly at Secondary level, due to reputation of Public Education failure.

2. The Meaning of Quality in the context of Secondary Education in Nepal, especially in the Kathmandu Valley

2.1 The Current Situation in Secondary Schools in Nepal

- In order to define 'quality' in the context of secondary education in Nepal it is helpful to have a brief overview of the shortcomings of the Secondary School system today.
- As noted earlier, Public Education suffered under the Centralised Administration system which depended upon a one size fits all model. It is now being phased out due to its failure to accommodate the disparate needs of local Communities.
- The new system of Community Schools, in which decision making is done by local stakeholders, is considered to be an improvement as Communities are felt to best understand their own educational needs.

- Despite this, Public Secondary Education is continuing to struggle with budgets; poor facilities, finding quality teachers within their budget, school closures due to Private competition, lost teaching days, etc... and as noted earlier, in recent years Public School SLC results have been falling year on year.
- Private Secondary Schools*, on the other hand, have been growing in popularity due to achieving high SLC pass results. Even poorer families are opting for Private Education as the Public School SLC pass rates are now so low. ** The term 'Private Secondary School' is to be taken here in its most general definition, without taking into account possible differences between schools with an almost purely commercial orientation vs schools with a broader educational mission.*
- However, there is also increasing criticism of Private Secondary Schools. Their teaching methods tend to focus strongly on results in a highly competitive inter-school environment. They often resort to teaching by rote and coaching children to pass exams, rather than expanding children's minds and creating independent learners and creative thinkers who are ready to face the modern, global challenges of a developing nation.

2.2 The Current Models of Education in Nepal

- On the following slides are models which illustrate Public and Private Schools' reliance on 'traditional' teaching methods, although for rather different reasons:
 - Private Schools want to get 'results' in SLCs and so use rote learning and coaching students on how to pass exams. Teachers risk losing their jobs if they 'fail'. Schools risk losing popularity, and lower achievement ultimately means lower fees.
 - Public Schools can suffer from having less opportunities for training, mentoring and updating skills of Teachers; lack of funding, less time on task of teaching, lack of equipment and teaching aids; overall the potential for struggling and despondent teachers and students.

Private Secondary School Model

Teacher

Respected, reliable, coaching children, putting on pressure, demanding, exam result focused. Performance driven, need to keep their job!

Students

Passive, receptive. under pressure to perform/compete. learning by rote, silent classroom, learning only 'conventional wisdom', exhausted, uninspired, but achieving.

School

Highly competitive environment, results focussed, impress parents/potential parents, pressurising teachers and students to get results.

Public Secondary School Model

Teacher

Authoritarian, static class, lecturing children. Stuck in a outdated modes of rote teaching. Sometimes using corporal punishment. Secure job, often employed on tenure.

Student

Learning by rote, silent classroom, suppressed student, passive, submissive children, feeling mentally confined; inertia, bored or frightened.

Government/Community

Traditionally centralised decision making and funding , Nepali language for all, one size fits all model, no flexibility in teaching materials.

But now changing to Community run schools with local stakeholders; increased local decision making in the running of these new Community Schools.

2.3 A Culture of Rote Learning

- Rote learning tends to be the norm in developing countries and this is particularly true in Asia where ‘passive learning’ is a cultural norm. The teacher is an authority and the students the recipients of a lecture to be learned ‘by heart’ and the information later regurgitated in tests. This method is evident in both the Private and Public Sectors in Nepal.
- A few of the better Private Schools in Nepal, particularly in the more cosmopolitan Kathmandu area, are trying to break away from the rote learning model. However for the majority it remains, as schools and teachers are culturally stuck in an Asian tradition of collectivism which depends upon; conformity, discipline, caution, indirectness and obedience, with an aim to pleasing the parents, teacher and the group.
- It is widely recognised that learning by rote can only produce limited results and ultimately it will limit the extent to which Nepal’s national development can take place.

“The educational methods commonly used in developing countries, particularly rote learning by students expected to be the passive recipients of knowledge, are mostly ineffective at training professionals to think critically and creatively about the development needs of their nations. Whether mathematical formulae or facts are memorised, parrot-learned material lacks practical applications without an ability to place it in the context of local environments, where social and economical systems and priorities, finance and managerial and political practices may be anything other than that outlined in the textbook.

In order to move their countries forward, development professionals require the critical thinking skills to enable them to identify and question planning and operating assumptions, which act as constraints, rather than blindly adopting inappropriate measures which may become institutionalised. They also need the creativity to design responses to local problems or the use of approaches that vary from the Western ones taught in textbooks.” [8]

Jonathan E.D. Richmond, ‘Bringing Critical Thinking to the Education of Developing Country Professionals’,
International Educational Journal, 2007.

“Far from being safe, wholesome and joyful centres of learning, many schools in Nepal today are places where children fear to go. Teachers are often untrained, uncaring and quick to give corporal punishment. Schools are dirty and lack minimum sanitary facilities, especially for girls. There are no sports activities or recreational facilities. The method of instruction involves rote learning rather than encouraging children to explore, analyse and understand what they are learning” [9]

Kul Chandra Gautam’s Keynote address at Rato Bangala Conference on School Education,
‘Enhancing Quality Education for All in Nepal’, Kathmandu, 6th April 2013

- Overall, when considering quality, the challenges for effective teaching in Secondary Education in Nepal are many, but certainly include overcoming certain traditional cultural ideologies that promote hierarchies and an unhealthy lack of challenge to outdated ideas.
- Where teachers are unchallenged authorities, employed on the basis of tenure, whose jobs are secure no matter how badly they perform, and funds for additional training are non existent, there is little hope for improvement (this important issue is looked into further in the next section of this report).

2.4 Basic Educational Needs

- Taking Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and adapting it to Education (see over), we can identify the basic needs of students in terms of; Physical needs, need for Safety and Security, Social needs, the need for Self Esteem, and ultimately the need for Self Actualisation.
- If we compare this to the models of education currently used in both Public and Private Schools in Nepal, it becomes apparent that the top of the pyramids, in particular, are weak.
- Our Maslow inspired model is very much based upon the culture of Individualism, therefore the emphasis on the importance of the need for 'Self Actualisation' rather than the Collective needs of Community, may be overstated here. However if education in Nepal is to be more effective, **the components of 'Self Actualisation'** appear crucial, particularly if they are extended to include the school, the class or project work in sub groups.

Hierarchy of Educational Needs in Nepal

Self Actualisation

Challenging projects,
Independent learning,
opportunities for critical
thinking & creativity

Self Esteem

Important projects, reward,
praise, recognition of strengths
& intelligence, prestige

Social needs

Acceptance, community/school/class
membership, association with a successful team,
inclusive for all, appreciation of all,

Safety & Security

Secure environment, physical safety, freedom from threat,
peace and comfort.

Physical Needs

Shelter, sanitation, clean water, food, warmth, health, exercise.

2.5 Quality in Education

In order to define what Quality Education means within the context of Secondary Education in Nepal, it is also useful to look at a more general definition of quality education defined by UNICEF and adapt this to be locally relevant to Nepal and the Kathmandu Valley where necessary.

• **UNICEF** defines Quality in education using five key factors:

- i. **Learners** who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;*
- ii. **Environments** that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;*
- iii. **Content** that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the area of literary, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and peace;*
- iv. **Processes** through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;*
- v. **Outcomes** that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. ^[10]*

i) Learners

Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities. UNICEF

- ‘Healthy Learners’ includes more than just being in good health, being well nourished and fed before going to school. Indeed, nutrition in the period of brain development in infancy is crucial to learning outcomes, as is early childhood mental stimulation.
- Family and Community belief in the importance and benefits of education impacts positively on learning outcomes. Educated parents are more able to be supportive of children’s learning. Schools can play a vital role through the involvement of parents and positive encouragement of parents in supporting their children to learn. Ideally schools can also provide education to parents, particularly mothers as the linchpins of the family.
- In turn, the school needs to support their teachers to create a positive learning environment.

ii) Environment

Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities. UNICEF

- The physical environment of a school impacts upon learning outcomes; lavatories on site and clean water effect health and can result in days lost due to illness, as well as time lost out of class if students have to go off premises for either.
- Parents may be reluctant to send children, especially girls, to a school without basic facilities.
- An additional factor in girls being educated is distance or transport to school. Girls in particular may be vulnerable if travelling alone and this can result in parents not enrolling them.

ii) Environment

- Other facilities on the school premises, such as a stocked library (or even eReaders), educational materials, and Science and computer labs are vital modern teaching aids and have been shown to help raise test scores.
- Conversely, when the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) program was trialled in Nepal and Primary school students were given their own laptop to take home as a learning aid, it was found that scores in English and Maths actually decreased.

“The results suggest that the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) model is not the best approach to improve primary education in Public Schools in Nepal. However, if policymakers in Nepal and elsewhere are convinced that digital devices are the future for improving educational outcomes, then other alternatives such as computer labs and eReaders should also be explored. One concern with the OLPC program is that students may be spending large amounts of time on video games and other educationally unproductive activities.” [11]

Uttam Sharma, ‘Essay on the Economics of Education in Developing Countries’, January 2012

ii) Environment

- Environment also includes psycho-social factors such as:
 - An effective discipline policy that promotes an environment of learning; low noise levels, clear rules on anti-bullying and harassment, anti-discrimination, and anything else that may affect the schools' smooth running – this includes avoiding political agendas from either teachers or students.
 - An inclusive environment where girls, lower socio-economic groups or castes and disabled children are all included and catered for without prejudice.
- Also if possible, the provision of health services for conditions that effect students and interfere with learning. This depends on local health concerns and needs and whether the school can provide these, but they may include treatment for; worms, parasites and stomach complaints.

iii) Content

Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the area of literary, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and peace. UNICEF

- Secondary School curriculum content should reflect national goals, i.e. SLC results. Higher Secondary Education Board Certificate studies (equivalent to A Levels in the UK system) may not apply as many Community Schools do not currently provide higher education beyond SLC.
- The introduction of Technical Education and Vocational Training (TEVT) for years 9 to 12 may also be a possibility in the future. The development of TEVT was a recommendation of the School Sector Reform Program in 2009 and this is currently being trialled in some 100 schools. This development could, in turn, potentially make education more relevant to local employment needs.
- Learning should be student-centred with the teacher as the facilitator; focussing on students needs, abilities, interests and learning styles. This should include; critical thinking and problem solving that develop skills as well as knowledge acquisition. Coverage should include authentic and contextualised problems to solve.

iii) Content

- Traditional and local interests should be covered to diversify the curriculum. Subjects such as music or dance that can give students' pride in their own culture, especially as the education system in Nepal is roughly based upon a US model and could potentially feel a little forced without local adaptation.
- Overall, the lessons should endeavour to bring subject to life and be made exciting and involving where possible. Where subjects cross over there is an opportunity to do this as House and Coxford point out:

“Because mastery of many curricular areas requires numeracy – from geography and social studies to science and vocational training – many mathematics educators advocate teaching numeracy skill in an integrated way rather than as an isolated subject in a mathematics course.” [12]

Paper presented by UNICEF at the meeting of The International Working Group on Education Florence, Italy, June 2000.

iii) Content

- Additional content may also be beneficial depending on the local situation and Community need. This may include:
 - Health and hygiene.
 - Etiquette and interpersonal skills.
 - Vocational skills.
 - Life skills – assertion and refusal, goal setting, decision making and coping skills.

iv) Processes

Processes though which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities. UNICEF

- Teaching quality depends upon the teacher's mastery of their own subject and their ability to pass on that information in an engaging manner. In Nepal today as a whole most teachers have had some form of teacher training, but may lack continued mentoring or updating of skills.
- Time on teaching task is crucial to learning. A study of Public Schools in Nepal found that only 45% of available school days are used for instruction. ^[13] Many teachers face problems of housing, transport, holding second jobs due to low salaries or being paid late, political action, all of which detract from time spent on the task of teaching.
- Loss of teaching hours due to teacher absenteeism and poor time management is probably the single largest cause of low success in SLC results in Public Schools. Periodic and continual teacher assessment along with generous performance related financial incentives could help to address this problem.

iv) Processes

- Continuous professional development to keep abreast of current thinking and best practice on child-centred teaching and active learning are crucial to avoid slipping back into rote learning. Indeed, good teaching requires a good understanding of how students learn as well as the subject being taught. Teachers can look on the Private and Boarding Schools Organisation Nepal (PABSON) website for 'Curriculum Planning', <http://bktpabson.org.np/>
- Feedback mechanisms that do not just rely upon continuous testing should be developed and put in place. These should measure both performance in class work or homework and participation in the class, as well and factual knowledge gleaned from tests.
- Support for teachers needs to come from the supportive leadership of the school and effective administration. Head teachers, administrative staff and School Management Committees (SMCs) usually lack formal training in their roles and may benefits from this.

iv) Processes

- In addition, administration requires absolute transparency of finances and all stakeholders should have access to financial records in order to ensure correct practices.
- Finally, language impacts upon learning and results. Currently, English language is the teaching medium in most Private School and is popular with parents who see English language as the key to higher learning and better job opportunities. Current low SCL scores in Public Schools are partly due to failing in English in particular one of the five SLC subjects.

v) Outcomes

Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. UNICEF

- Outcomes should go beyond literacy, numeracy and SLC results to include students attitudes and expectations for themselves and their society.
- Outcomes should include education for citizenship, such as using critical thinking and problem solving skills in application to community problems, in addition to feeling confident in participating in the classroom.
- Testing and assessing students can help to show teachers where students are weak and where extra teaching focus is needed. Assessment should not only exist to assess students' progress, but should be used by teachers to see where they need to focus more attention and might also indicate where teachers need additional training themselves.

v) Outcomes

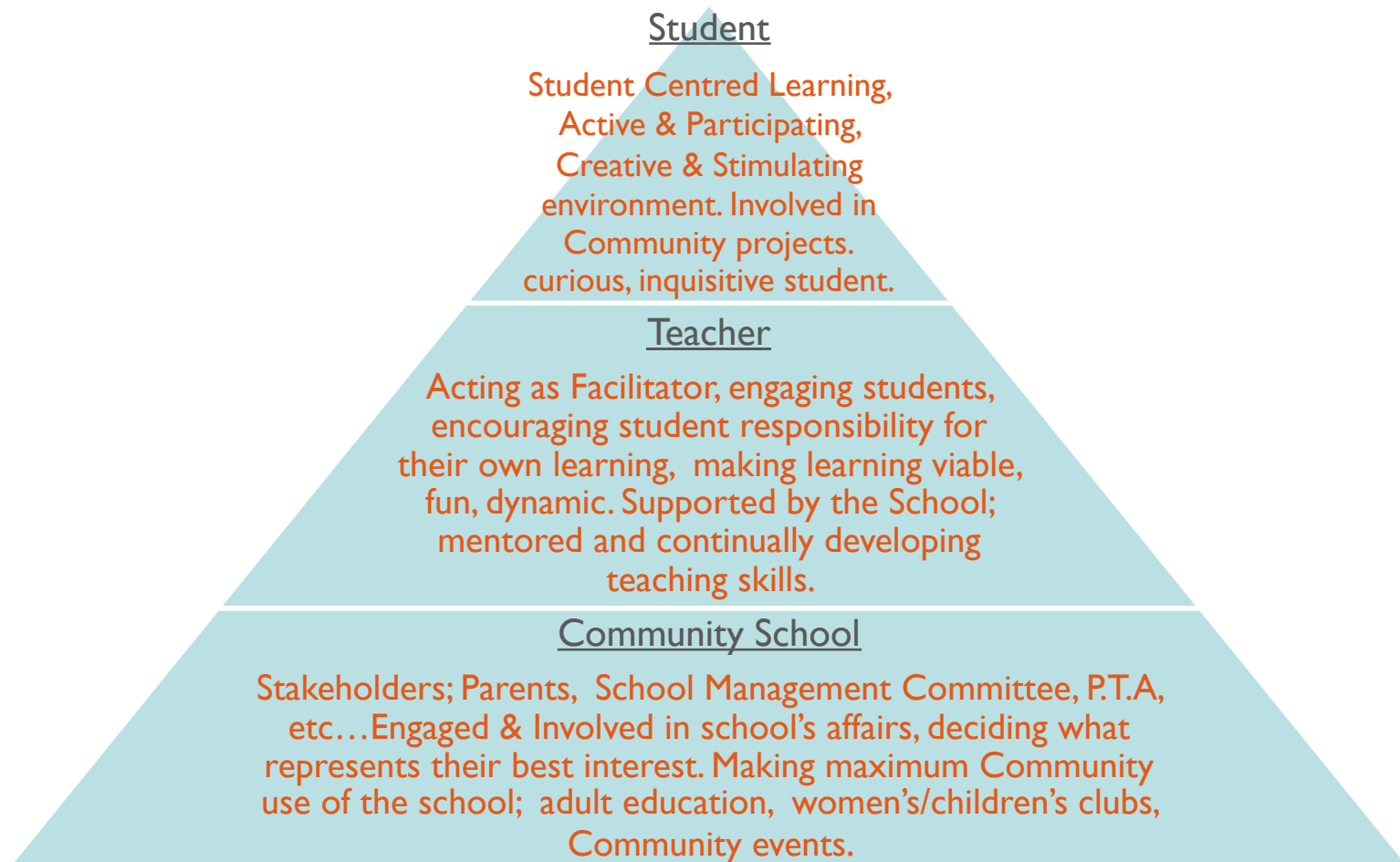
- Parents tend to look at outcomes in terms of SLC results in the hope of the betterment of their children's future employment opportunities and position in society. Therefore a school's primary objective must be the improvement of SLC results in order to compete with other local schools, Private or Public.
- Failure at secondary school level in developing countries, such as Nepal, can have a far greater negative impact than in developed countries where opportunities are greater and second chances are more freely given. This year, 2013, for example, seven girls who failed their SLC exams committed suicide due to the pressure they felt to succeed.
- There is much criticism of the current SLC system, popularly named 'the Iron Gate' - particularly that it is too difficult and too rigidly focused on science and maths. However, this situation seems unlikely to change in the near future.

v) Outcomes

- If SLC passes from Public Schools are very low, and parents can not afford the Private alternatives, they will increasingly feel that children are better off without any Secondary Education at all.
- Greater incorporation of learning that is relevant to the Community, such as Community Projects run by the students themselves, may help the image of Public Schools as parents see the benefits of education directly in their Community.

2.6 The Ideal Public Secondary School Model

To summarise, the ideal Secondary School model would place the student at the top being supported by teachers and the Community School.



2.6 The Ideal Public Secondary School Model

- This is the school model that the highest achieving Private Schools in Nepal, such as Rato Bangala, have adopted at the Teacher and Student level. Indeed, Rato Bangala School in Kathmandu has been so successful that it now runs courses for teachers from other schools on student centred methods.
- However, this model takes time, dedication, patience from teachers and funding to achieve. Without commitment and funding it is very unlikely to be achieved:

“Some educationalists have also reinvented the pyramid of learning by placing the students at the top as resource, and placing the teachers in the middle as the catalyst and placing the community at the bottom as foundation. This is intended to optimise learning by making it more interesting, and more creative. But this model requires adequate resources such as well-stocked libraries with adequate reference materials, access to internet facilities, adequate teaching learning materials and professional satiety and motivation among the teachers who are well trained for its effective implementation and success. In the absence of institutionalisation of periodic teacher performance evaluation, lack of positive and negative sanctions it proves just yet another hype and hoopla in the contexts of developing and under developed countries where governments struggle to provide for one set of text books to their students” [14]

Babu Ram Neupane, The Himalayan Times: Craving for Quality Education: Role of Teachers, 20.5.2013

3. Strengths/Weaknesses, Opportunities/Threats of Public Schools vs. Private Schools in Nepal

And how Quality is measured – Rationally and Emotionally

3.1 SWOT Analysis of Public vs. Private Secondary Schools in Nepal

- Using a Strengths/weaknesses, Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis to identify the differences between Public and Private Secondary Schools in Nepal we can see the areas in which Public Schools are lacking and falling behind and potential areas where they may gain some advantage over Private Schools.

Strengths

Public

- Affordable education with nominal fees for stationary, school uniform and other smaller items.
- Some grants available for poorer students.
- Government regulated.
- Stakeholders Involvement; Parents, Community.
- Some Public Schools are achieving good results and have a individual good reputation.

Private

- Financially autonomous; direct funding from fees.
- Achieving good SLC results.
- Offering higher education (year 11+).
- Good facilities; science, IT, library, etc
- Teaching in English Language.
- Teacher Performance linked to pay and job security.
- Extra curricular activities
- Some International syllabuses available; Baccalaureate, O/A Levels, etc.

Weaknesses

Public

- Poor SLC results – especially Maths, Science and English elements.
- Lack of funding, poor facilities.
- Lack of funding for on-going Teacher training.
- Teacher absence/less time on task.
- Less official & unofficial school days annually.
- Weak management/weak administration.
- Incompetence/poor service.
- Inability to dismiss poorly performing Teachers.

Private

- Varying in quality.
- Rote learning & coaching to get results.
- Extreme pressure on students to succeed.
- Little parent/community involvement.
- Attracting mostly male students as parents are reluctant to pay for girls' education.

Opportunities

Public

- Greater demand for education overall and raising expectations by parents and students.
- Funding from charities/NGOs.
- Attracting more female students/minorities.
- Partnering with Private Schools.
- Greater opportunity to offer Technical Education and Vocational Training.
- Teaching in English language.
- Support from stakeholders.
- Monitoring performance & giving financial incentives to better teachers.

Private

- Rising demand for Private Education as Public Schools quality declines.
- Funding from charities/NGOs.
- Little competition from Public Schools, ever increasing popularity.
- Offering a more global perspective.

Threats

Public

- Private competition, decrease in demand.
- Lack of staff mobility, tenured jobs.
- No performance incentive.
- Good teachers moving to Private Schools for better pay.
- Gap between constitution, policy, law & practice.
- Sabotage by radical political groups.

Private

- Increasing competition within Private Education sector.
- Little regulation, varying in quality.
- New capping of fees in accordance to results.

3.2 Comparison between the SWOT Analyses of the Public and Private Secondary Schools

- A direct in depth SWOT comparison of the Public Secondary School versus the Private Secondary School system is difficult. The two systems are so different and the strengths of the Public system are in reality few while the weaknesses are many.
- Therefore, it appears more fruitful to look at each separately.
- We see three particular themes coming out in this section;
 - Financial Considerations
 - Education Delivery Considerations
 - Service Delivery Considerations

3.3 Public Schools - SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Affordable education; Nominal fees
- Stakeholder involvement
- Management committees
- Government regulation
- Some schools achieving good results

Weaknesses

- Poor SLC results - esp English, Maths
- Lack of funding, poor facilities
- Teacher absence/less of time on task
- Less on going Teacher training
- Weak management/poor administration
- Incompetence/ poor service
- Less days open annually

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- Greater demand for education
- Funding from International aid/NGOs/Govts
- Attract more female/minority students
- Partnering with Private Schools
- Support from stakeholders
- Offer vocational training
- Teach in English language
- Monitoring performance & financial incentives

Opportunities

- Private competition, decreased demand
- Tenured jobs, lack of staff mobility
- No Performance vs. incentive link
- Teachers moving to Private Schools
- Gap between constitution, policy, law & practice
- Sabotage by radical political groups

Threats

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Financial Considerations

Strengths

- Public Secondary Schools offer an affordable education that is open to even poorer students. This is often the only option for girls as parents are less likely to spend money on the Private School education of girls. It is also the only option for Secondary Education for many other poor minority groups such as Dalits.
- Nominal fees can be charged to cover things such as stationary, books, travel, uniform and exam fees.
- Governmental Grants/Scholarships for poorer students are available, but may not cover all Student's costs.
- There are also charities that help and support poor children such as 'The Fishtail Fund' <http://www.fishtailfund.com>;

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Financial Considerations

Weaknesses

- However, the reality for Public Schools in Nepal, which is after all one of the poorest countries in the world, is that teaching standards tend to be low and facilities and teaching materials are virtually non-existent in many Public Schools.
- Government investment in education represents 17% of its total annual budget. However, little of this goes to Secondary Education as the focus tends to be on basic literacy skills at Primary School level.
- Of secondary schools total annual budgets, approximately 72% will go on teachers salaries. This leaves only 28% for the upkeep of the buildings and providing facilities like libraries, computer labs, science labs and other vital tools for a modern education.

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Financial Considerations

Threats

- The main threat to Public Schools is Private School competition, even some poorer families are opting for Private Education these days as standards fall in the Public Secondary Schools.

Opportunities

- Public Schools can appeal for funding from charities, and private charitable donations if they are well organised enough to present a financially viable case that will deliver real benefits. However if there is no guarantee that money will be spent appropriately, this can create a barrier to donating.

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Education Delivery Considerations

Strengths

- Measured in terms of SLC results, on average 1 in 3 Students from Public Secondary Schools across the country pass the examinations. This can even be with Distinction, depending upon the particular Public Secondary School.

Weaknesses

- Recent SLC results hit a low of 36% passes from Public Schools, down 10% from 2011's results. ^[15] This is mainly due to failing the English, Science and Maths components of the SLC exams.
- Many Public Schools teach in Nepali* or local language with English learned as a second language. While it seems perfectly reasonable to preserve ones language by teaching in it, it does not fulfil the requirements of the SLC exams or prepare students for a globally competitive work environment.

** 75.6% Nepali language teaching in Public Schools versus 20% in Private Schools [Sharma p108]*

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Education Delivery Considerations

“The rise of English as a prerequisite for social and economic inclusion is a major phenomenon in Nepal today, and one that the government education system has largely ignored. Unfortunately it is one of the unintended but negative consequences of the dominance of international aid as an ‘industry’ in Nepal. Employers, including government and many NGOs, stipulate English as a necessary qualification. Private Schools have moved forward quickly to meet this need but government schools have been left behind. The result is a two-tier system, representing a deep social divide.” [16]

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Education Delivery Considerations

- English tends to be the preferred language by Parents and Students for learning due to the perceived advantage it gives students. However, many teachers do not have a good enough mastery of English to teach it well nor can many schools afford sufficient English books to aid its teaching. Teaching in English can also slow up learning if students do not understand it.
- In addition to English, many teachers struggle to teach Science and IT as the facilities are either non-existent or very poor:

“The reasons for failure in the SLC examination relate to deficiencies in government schools and in the examination system rather than any fault of the children. Most children from government schools faced with a practical test in science will inevitably fail if their school had no laboratory or scientific equipment. They fail English because it was not used regularly in the class room and the expected standard is now based on the practice of Private Schools where English is the medium of instruction” [16]

‘Education for All – Nepal’, Review from a conflict perspective, March 2006, International Alert.

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Education Delivery Considerations

- Teachers from Public Schools may have fewer additional training days to update their skills and may be less motivated to do class preparation over and above existing teaching materials. This results in even more reliance on traditional rote teaching to make up for gaps in knowledge and to save on lesson planning time.
- In addition teaching time students receive in Public Schools is also substantially below that of Private Schools:
 - Public Schools are open for less days a year; *‘Private Schools were, on average, open for 24 more days than Public Schools in the 2003/04 academic year,’* ^[17]
 - Teaching time is lost due to school closure, teacher absence, poor time use and low time on task; *‘In sample schools in Nepal, the equivalent of 45 per cent of available school days is used for instruction’* ^[18]

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Education Delivery Considerations

- Days lost also represents an enormous waste of financial resources:

“In Nepal, 55% of an average school budget of \$25,075 is wasted (UNESCO 2008). Time-off –task equates to 30% of the budget (or 58 days of instruction) wasted and unplanned school closures waste an additional 9% (or 18 days of instruction). The Nepali sample consisted of 23 institutions, and does not include data on student attendance, so in fact over-estimates the opportunity to learn”
[19]

Policy Brief, ‘School Effectiveness: Improving the Use of Financial Investment in Education’ USAID

Threats

- Tenured jobs for many teachers means there is little pressure to perform well and schools will find it difficult to dismiss those who are underperforming. Indeed, in Public Schools there is no performance link to pay so incentive is lacking.
- Added to this, the better Public School teachers are often tempted away to work in Private Schools.

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Education Delivery Considerations

Opportunities

Opportunities for Public Secondary Schools include:

- Partnering with Private Schools to get inspiration, learn child centred teaching methods and generally improve teaching standards.
Schools like Rato Bangala run teacher training courses at Secondary level with a focus on English, Maths and Science. 18% of their annual budget goes on offering this training for free.
- Teaching in English language or a mix of English and Nepali to compete with Private Schools and attract many more parents.
- Diversification away from the rather narrow, SLC focused vision of Secondary Education in Nepal today and creating vocational training.

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Service Delivery Considerations

Strengths

- Public Schools are regulated by Ministry of Education and the Department of Education to a greater degree than Private Schools. Supervising, monitoring and evaluating schools is done by the District Education Office, ideally this should ensure standards.
- The governing bodies include; School Management Committees (SMC), Parent Teacher Associations, Alumni Associations and Village Development Committee groups. In an ideal world, their inclusion should ensure that the school's best interests are represented.
- Community managed Schools, in theory have more autonomy in teachers' recruitment, reward and discipline compared to schools that are still managed by Central Government. However, this may not be the case in practice, as they have little power to discipline poorly performing Teachers.

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Service Delivery Considerations

Weaknesses

- Public Secondary Schools can suffer from weak management; poor accounting, lacking transparency in distribution of funding, lack of control over teachers, and so on.
- They may also be typified by a culture that lacks an understanding of the concept of either management beyond day to day ‘fire fighting’ or of service delivery.
- School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Association members may not feel it is their place to ask questions regarding teachers or management about either teaching practices or the running of the school.

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Service Delivery Considerations

Threats

- There is a gap between constitution, policy, law and practice. There is limited compliance with government initiatives such as the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) as schools are too busy just trying to survive rather than planning new initiatives.
- Public Secondary School compliance and management transparency can be further decreased when schools receive private funding from NGOs and local contributions.

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Service Delivery Considerations

- Currently only 30% of the present stock of Secondary teachers (years 9-10) fulfils the SSRP upgraded qualification requirement (to Master Level). By 2015 those teachers who do not have their Master Level will only be allowed to teach lower Secondary grades. This may, in turn, create even greater drop out or re-take rates as teaching standards fall in lower Secondary years.
- Low teacher effectiveness and defaulting teachers can be problematic, but especially where SMCs and head-teachers are blocked from disciplinary action by politicised Teacher Unions.

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Service Delivery Considerations

“Disciplinary actions against defaulting teachers are reported to be blocked in some cases by politicised teacher unions. There is evidence of absenteeism and poor time-keeping. This culture also undermines the ability of district education officers and school officials (head teachers and SMCs) to demand productivity.” [20]

‘Mid Term Evaluation of the School Sector Reform Program’, March 2012, Government of Nepal

“Widespread corruption and politicisation of the education sector is blamed. Teacher appointments are made by political parties, funds are mismanaged by district education officers and numerous political groups hold education to ransom by staging strikes which regularly force the closure of schools across the country.” [21]

101, East, Aljazeera, ‘School for a Dollar’, 21st October 2012

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Service Delivery Considerations

Opportunities

- Raising the profile of Public School education by raising standards, especially SLC results. This requires Public Schools fund raising through private channels.

- Ensure that spending of donations is done thoughtfully with planning for long term learning outcomes in mind:

“All their attention (School Management) was confined in getting more and more financial support so that they could improve their physical facilities, in increasing the number of students, and in making efforts for better student results. These were their strategies to compete with Private Schools and they were getting some success in their endeavour. There was not at all (no) or very limited attention on how to improve cognitive as well as (and) psycho-social development of the students” [22]

Understanding School Processes in Nepal: A School Level Status Study of Policies and Practices of School Sector Reform Program, January 2012

Public Secondary School SWOT Overview

Service Delivery Considerations

- The increased involvement of the School Management Committee (SMC) and other stakeholders in management appears necessary to ensure transparency, the good management of the school, and that they are representing the needs of the Community.
- Increasing supervision and support for teachers should help in keeping standards raised and assuring that the SSRP and the curriculum is being adhered to.
- In short, schools with private funding tend to start acting more like Private Schools (which is not necessarily a bad thing).

3.4 Private Schools - SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Autonomous, direct funding from fees
Preparing students for higher education
Good SLC and +2 results
Good facilities; science, IT
Results oriented Teachers for SLC
International exam board syllabuses
Extra curricular activities
Teaching in English

Weaknesses

Fees are prohibitive for most
Rote learning & coaching to get results
Pressure on students to succeed
Lack of parent & community involvement
Attracting more male/less female students

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Funding from charities/NGOs
Partnering with Public Schools
Global vision
Little competition from Public Schools

Unregulated, varying in quality
Increased competition in private education
Capping of fees according to results
Opposition from political groups

Opportunities

Threats

Private Secondary School SWOT Overview

Financial Considerations

Strengths

- Private Schools are mostly financially autonomous with funding coming directly from school fees, although some also rely on charitable donations and individual student sponsorship. They are also free to choose how to best spend these funds.
- As well as being able to profit if they are doing well, they are also able to re-invest in their schools through advertising, improving facilities and employing better teachers, which in turn attracts more students.

Weaknesses

- High private fees means that more boys than girls attend Private Schools as parents are less likely to pay for girls' education.
- High fees and competition between Private Schools results in schools and parents putting great pressure on students to succeed.

Private Secondary School SWOT Overview

Financial Considerations

Threats

- Private Schools have become big business in Nepal as Public Secondary Schools appear to be failing, however standards greatly vary and fees are not necessarily reflective of quality. In the Kathmandu District this has recently lead to a system of grading schools and capping fees accordingly.
- Private Schools are required by the Department of Education (DoE) to provide scholarships for 10% of their students. These students are supposed to come from under privileged backgrounds, however, misuse of scholarships has lead to a review of the system and now the District Education Committee (DEC) will be responsible for the choice of 3% of those scholarships. The other 7% will still be at the schools discretion. ^[23]

Private Secondary School SWOT Overview

Financial Considerations

Opportunities

- Private Schools are growing in popularity. As they are able to take students from wealthier homes who often have an academic advantage to start with due to socio-economic factors like; educated parents with higher expectations and aspirations, homes with books and possibly computers, pushing up standards overall.
- Needless to say, this is to the detriment of Public Schools whose standards are falling as a consequence of not being able to compete, and instead tend to attract lower socio-economic household students with less ability. For now, at least, Private Schooling looks set to keep growing and increasingly set the national standard of education.

Private Secondary School SWOT Overview

Education Delivery Considerations

Strengths

- The quality of education at Private Schools, as measured by SLC results, is way beyond what most Public Schools can offer:

“In 2011, only 46 % of students from Public Schools appearing in the national School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exam passed, compared to 90% of those from Private Schools. No wonder, many parents, even from relatively poor background, vote with their wallets to send their children to Private Schools instead of supposedly free and more readily accessible Public Schools.” [24]

Kul Gautam, Enhancing Quality Education for All in Nepal, April 2013

- These results are achieved by a combination of having more highly qualified teachers, teaching in English and having good facilities such as well stocked libraries, computer and science labs.

Private Secondary School SWOT Overview

Education Delivery Considerations

- Some of the top Private Schools teach international syllabuses such as Baccalaureate or the English O'Level and A'Level courses as an alternative to SLC and +2, although these are exclusive and prohibitively priced.
- Private Schools can also offer more extra curricular activities than Public Schools where resources are limited.
- Another advantage of Private Schools is that teachers can easily be dismissed and replaced if their students are not achieving the necessary grades.

Private Secondary School SWOT Overview

Education Delivery Considerations

Weaknesses

- Private Schools have been criticised for varying a lot in quality. The new capping of fees goes some way to addressing this problem, but many parents, especially those from poorer families whose own education may be very limited, may not know how to make an informed choice.
- While Private Schools vary enormously in their approach to teaching, there is a tendency to rely on rote learning and coaching children through exams. This together with extreme pressure on students to succeed produces good exam results but does not necessarily produce independent learners or creative thinkers.

Private Secondary School SWOT Overview

Education Delivery Considerations

Threats

- Currently the main threat to Private Schools mostly comes from competition by other Private Schools.
- Private School closures due to schools being held to ransom by political groups also occur regularly. These are named 'strikes' or 'bandh', although they are not called by staff. However, Private Schools overall have more power and autonomy than Public Schools, even from the political agendas of radical groups, as they are somewhat protected by the fact that those in power educate their children privately and care what happens there.

Opportunities

- While Public Schools are failing, demand for Private Schools increases.
- With their greater resources, Private Schools can offer a more modern and globally relevant education.

Private Secondary School SWOT Overview

Service Delivery Considerations

Strengths

- Private Schools have greater autonomy and can allocate their budgets as they please. They are not reliant on government funding.

Weaknesses

- Parents and Communities are even more likely to be left out of the process of education at Private Schools. School Management Committee (SMC) meetings are far fewer, while Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) are non existent in most Private Schools; *'...65.6% of Public Schools had a PTA while only 10% of Private Schools has a PTA' [25]*.

Private Secondary School SWOT Overview

Service Delivery Considerations

Threats

- Threats to the Private Schools system are few and usually come from competition from neighbouring Privates Schools.

Opportunities

- Affordable Private education in the form of Charity supported Private Secondary Schools is also emerging. The Bamboo Schools for example are now among Nepal's largest Private education providers. They try to offer an education at prices that even some of the Poor can afford.
- In addition other important Private Secondary Schools declare themselves as taking a "Not for Profit" stance, rather than considering education to be a mere commodity, and are open to collaboration with Public Secondary Schools.

4. How Quality is Measured

4. How Quality is Measured Rationally & Emotionally

- While SLC results may not be the most helpful measure in terms of developing better or more relevant education in Nepal, they are currently the main measure of Quality, especially by parents.

“...the national level examination in particular may have some undue negative consequences. It receives an inordinate amount of attention across the country acting as a gateway to higher education, for jobs, and even to find a suitable and able bridegroom for marriage for female students.” [26]

‘School Evaluation for Quality Improvement’ ANTRIEP Report, 2002

- The other substantial measure of Quality is fluency in English language.

Measures of Quality

Rational Measures

- SLC exam results; proof of ability, the key to higher education or better employment prospects.
- Fluency in English is another key to higher learning; access to a greater number of texts, greater exposure to international and modern content, the key to critical thinking and diversifying knowledge.

Emotional Measures

- SLC exam results; named 'The Iron Gate' to emphasise its difficulty and finality in deciding the future of its participants. It can represent the gateway to a middle class future and escape from poverty.
- Fluency in English gives Kudos; it can be a sign of Private education, a middle class aspiration, a display of wealth and knowledge. Often accompanied by an altruistic desire to impart their learning to others.

Measures of Quality

- For the privileged, the meaning of Quality in education also includes extra curricular school activities or child centred teaching methods that help to expand students minds.
- It is widely recognised, even by the Government of Nepal itself, that in Public education in Nepal there has been a systemic failure to monitor schools, evaluate teachers and that attention to curriculum design is lacking.
- In addition, having up to date and adequate facilities particularly for Science and IT as well as access to books, either physically or electronically, is also an important measure.

5. The Structure of Secondary Education in Nepal in terms of Private vs. Public Schools

A look at Funding, Management, Entry System, Advertising, etc....
in order to understand the concept of “Unhealthy/Unnatural Competition” which appears to exist between Private and Public Schools in Nepal.

Decentralisation and the Administrative Structure - Levels of Administration

There are three levels of management under the decentralised system (introduced since 2001); the Central Level managed by the **Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)**, the Regional Level managed by the **Regional Education Directorates (REDs)** and the District Level managed by **District Education Officers (DEOs)**.

i. Central Level: The MoES is responsible for overall policy development, planning, monitoring and evaluation. The Department of Education (DoE) has full administrative and financial authority and is responsible for implementing and monitoring educational programs. The DoE has its line of command through the REDs and DEOs.

ii. Regional Level: The REDs are responsible for coordinating, monitoring and supervising school level learning and teaching, as well as regional planning.

iii. District Level: The DEOs manage the planning and implementation of educational development. They supervise and monitor teaching/learning processes at district level in accordance with national policies.*

* Source: 'Secondary education regional information base: country profile – Nepal, UNESCO, Bangkok, 2008

Community School Management

- In order to de-centralise the education system, as stipulated in the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP), management and restructuring changes have been made giving more power to local government, schools and stakeholders.
- At the local level the new decentralised system gives the bulk of responsibility for school management to the School Management Committee (SMC) and Head Teacher, under the administration of the District Education Office.
- Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) remain largely ineffectual thus far. This is mainly due to parents historically having no legal say in relation to school management.
- However, the SMC must have three parents or guardians on its committee, including the chairperson, so this gives parents some say in school management.

School Management Committee's Role

- The SMC is made up of parents, community members and school administrators. It takes the leading role in interactions with local government through the District Education Office and works within the framework of national and local government.
- SMC responsibilities include:
 - Implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP).
 - Resource generation, mobilising community and parental support.
 - Dealing with access, inclusion e.g. of girls, Dalits and other minority groups.
 - Giving policy direction to the school regarding; curriculum, school calendar, quality and performance targets for the school, head-teacher and individual teachers.
 - Selecting teachers and head teachers. SMC's ability to hire and fire has resulted in somewhat better teacher regularity.
- However, the main focus of the SMC is on quality, internal efficiency, teacher and school performance.*

*All the above data is from Govt of Nepal, Ministry of Education, School Sector Reform Program 2009-1015

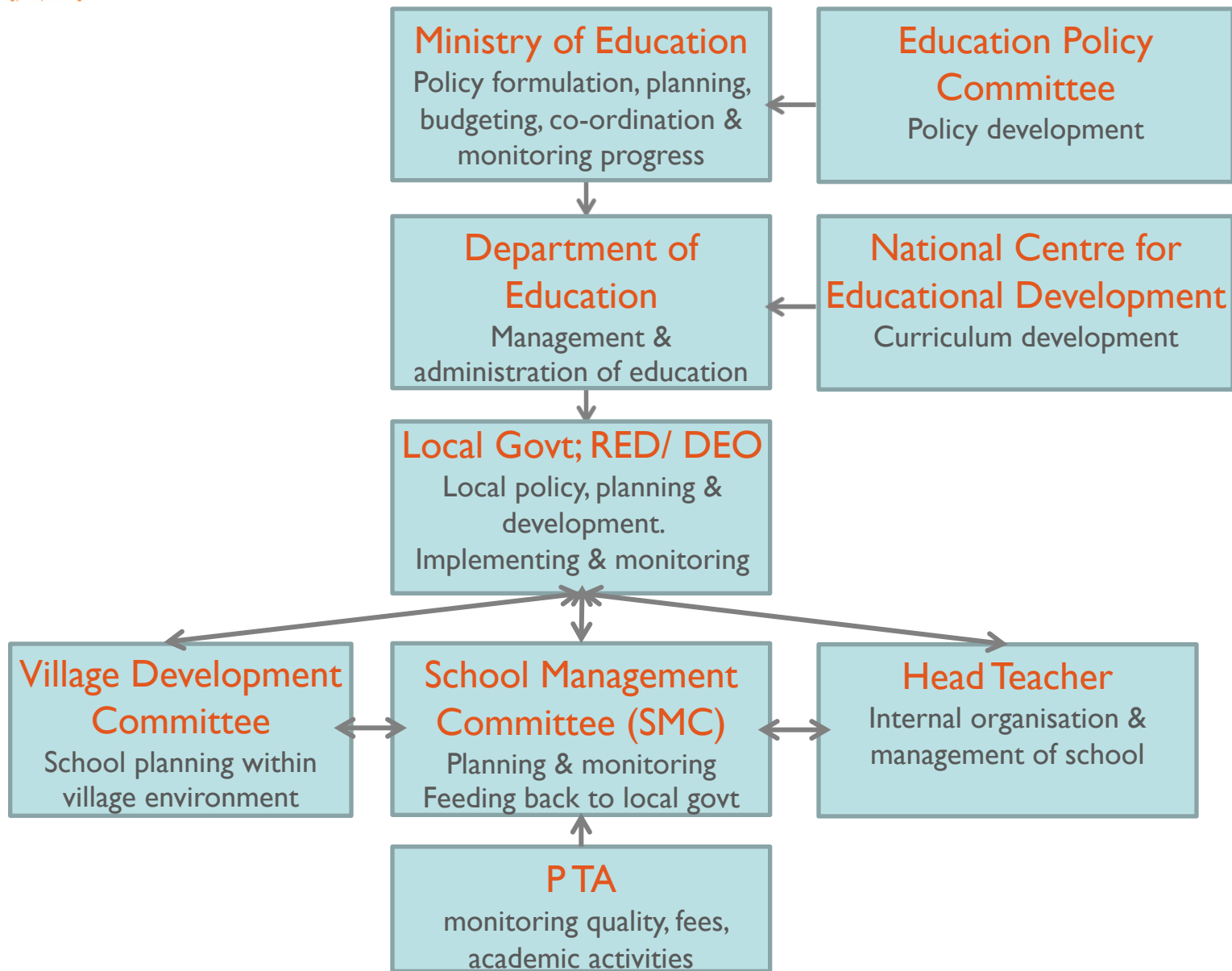
Head Teacher's Role

- The Head Teacher's role is more focused on internal organisation and management, although Head Teachers also serve as Member Secretary of the SMC.
 - The Head Teacher's role includes responsibilities for:
 - Administrative activities; financial management, management and evaluation of all staff, planning school calendars and daily schedule. Maintaining school data, records, liaisons with other agencies.
 - Setting and implementing the schools Policy and Code of Conduct; behaviour, dress, etc..., in line with government recommendations, e.g. no corporal punishment.
 - Preparing Annual Implementation Plan based on the SIP recommendations.
 - Academic activities such as; teacher assignment, professional supervision, setting school standards, deciding content and structure of curriculum, instructional methods, etc...
 - Setting of performance targets for individual teachers.*
- * All the above data is from Govt of Nepal, Ministry of Education, School Sector Reform Program 2009-1015

PTA's Role

- Despite having rather a weak role currently, the PTA hypothetically plays a supporting role to the SMC for enhancing quality education.
- The PTA's role should include:
 - The enhancement of the community's participation in education. Strengthening the relationship between the community and school.
 - Strengthening the quality of teaching through parents and teachers interaction.
 - Advising on school fee structure (on fees for stationary, uniforms, etc...)
 - Communicating to parents about the educational programs of the school.
- In reality, the PTA risks not having any authority, and its standing can be little more than a formality.

Structure of Public Education Management for Community Managed Schools



Main Issues to be Overcome

- An interesting dynamic in the Public School system is that virtually all government employees send their children to Private Schools, therefore, they have little or no personal stake in the success of Public Schools.
- Many of the barriers to progress stem from the traditional hierarchies within the administrative system, as well as the caste system. This tends to create an attitude of dominance from those in authority and subordination for the recipients of education. Those being served, i.e. parents and students, tend to feel that they have little power.
- In addition the point of view of females as members of the Community, as Teachers, Parents and as Students may not always be sufficiently taken in to consideration.
- The situation may also be similar for minorities like Dalits.

Issues Concerning Teachers and Learning Outcomes

- Many Public Schools have to employ additional teachers locally and on an informal basis in order to keep to recommended class size. This eats into the school budget for the physical upkeep of the school as budgets are low and most of the money is spent on teacher salaries.
- The number of teachers that are female, Dalit, Janajati or other minority groups are under represented. Female teachers represent just 17% in Lower Secondary and 13% in Higher Secondary of the total teaching staff.^[27] These figures are gradually increasing over time as education trickles down to those marginalised groups who have traditionally been left out of education. In the mean time, having mostly male teachers from higher castes can alienate certain minority students and be a cause of girls not being sent to school.

Issues Concerning Teachers and Learning Outcomes

- One concern is Teacher Morale; low wages, late payments, poor qualifications, lack of motivation and direction, and lack of support or continued updating of skills can undermine quality in the classroom. Teachers defaulting and actual teaching time is all affected by this.
- Teacher performance has been shown to increase with parental involvement in schools through both monitoring and support.
- Therefore, an efficient PTA and SMC in Public Schools may contribute to improving education standards.

Structure of Public Education Funding for Community Managed Schools

- Government funding for Community Schools is a complex matter with many stages and layers of bureaucracy before funding actually reaches the Community Schools.
- This process starts with the Ministry of Finance allocating approximately 17% of the national budget to education. Incidentally, of the total national budget, 47% is spent on administration, giving the Nepali saying 'watering sand' true meaning.
- Contributions through donor sources equal approximately 26%. ^[28] These are mostly in the form of donations from Foreign Governments, the Department for International Development (DFID), the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and UNICEF.

Structure of Public Education Funding for Community Managed Schools

- Of the total annual education budget, 15% is designated to Secondary School Education and 5% of this is for Plus Two (+2) Higher Secondary Education.
- It is worth mentioning that, Private Schools are required to give 1.5% of their budget to Public Rural Education development annually, although there is much objection to this from some Private Schools. ^[29]
- Individual schools may raise money through charitable donations. This is usually vital as teacher remuneration consumes about 72% of the total central government funding to schools leaving very little for all the School's other expenses. ^[30]

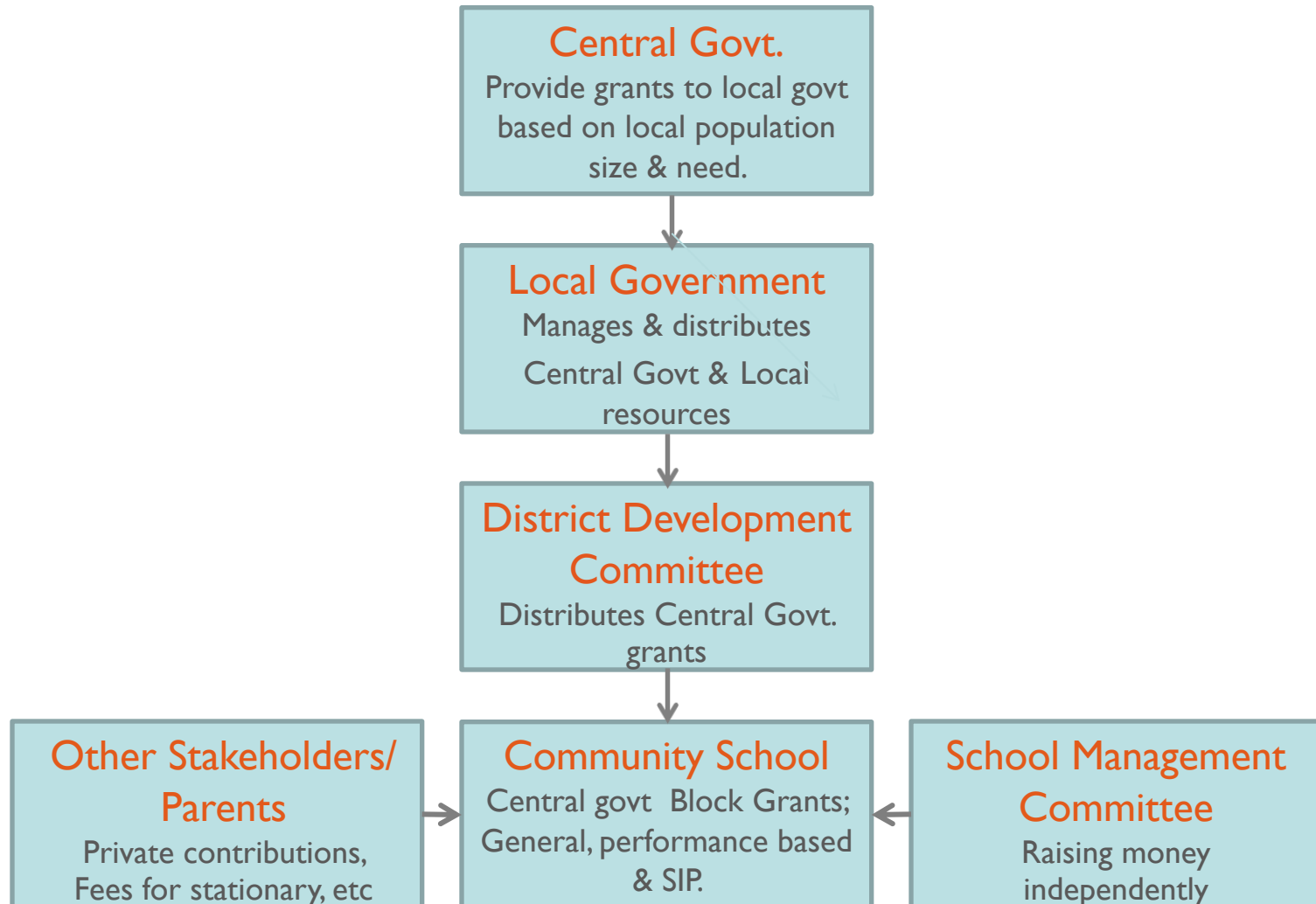
Structure of Public Education Funding for Community Managed Schools

- The process of transferring money from the national budget down to schools appears to require 33 steps* of administration through different departments. This can cause delays of up to 4 months in funding arriving at schools.
- Prior to receiving their money, the SMC and head-teacher of a school must prepare a School Improvement Plan (SIP) Report detailing planning, school programs, resources and educational outcomes. This can end up looking like a 'shopping wish list' as government resources are so few in reality.
- In addition the school must submit a Flash Report detailing the schools statistics such as number of students, number of students eligible for grants, etc.
- School grants are allocated based upon the information in SIP and Flash Reports. (See page 100 Grant details).
 - Data from 'Improving Local Service Delivery for the MDGs in Asia: Education Sector in Nepal', Dr. Lekh Nath Belbase et al, a joint study by the FHD & RIDA, 2009.

Structure of Public Education Funding for Community Managed Schools

- The SMC also raise money at community level and this tends to go towards the physical upkeep and improvement of the school buildings, furniture and playground, etc. Schools with strong SMCs that are active in fund raising have managed to turn underperforming schools around by funding the building of libraries, science labs, computer labs, etc.
- In addition School Fees are charged for students, with the exception of girls, Dalits, poor families and other minority groups for whom the school can claim scholarships. Fees have been increasing over the past few years, this is generally due to a lack of adequate government funding. However, increases in fees have hindered the efforts of the 'Education for All' program objectives by narrowing the gap in fees between the cheaper Private Schools and the Public Secondary Schools which can make Private School education all the more appealing.
- Social Auditing, which provides information on the financial and educational activities of the School, is conducted to make activities more transparent and it has gone some way to better informing parents on schools activities.

A Simplified Structure of Public Education Funding for Community Managed Schools



Types of Grants Received by Community Schools

EARMARKED GRANTS

Teacher salaries
Grant to SMC
Scholarships (for some girls,
Dalits & other minority
groups)
Infrastructure development

(Conditional Grants)

For Construction,
Improvements &
furniture, etc...

BLOCK GRANTS

- General administrative support

SIP Grants

- Per child funding for textbooks & other learning Materials

Performance Grants

- Reward grants based upon performance indicators

- Data from 'Improving Local Service Delivery for the MDGs in Asia: Education Sector in Nepal', Dr. Lekh Nath Belbase et al, a joint study by the FHD & RIDA, 2009.

Public School Entry System

- In order to enter lower secondary school (grade 6), students must have obtained a minimum of 32% in their final Primary School exam at end of grade 5.
- Students are tested at the end of each trimester as well as taking end of year exams. These exams are conducted by the subject teachers and based on these results students are either promoted to the next year or held back. In order to qualify to take the exams students must have had a minimum 70% attendance over the year.
- School leaving exams are taken at the end of grade 8, then the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exams at grade 10, and the higher secondary education exams; Plus Two at grade 12.
- There are some scholarships to help female, Dalit and other disadvantaged students attend Secondary School.
- Importantly, it is no longer necessary to have a birth certificate to enrol in school, although this may still need to be publicised as some parents may be unaware of this change.

All data on this page taken from 'Secondary education regional information base: country profile – Nepal, UNESCO, Bangkok, 2008

Public Secondary Schools - Summary

- A major hurdle for Public Secondary Schools is the layers of bureaucracy that exists. The de-centralisation of the education system has added additional layers especially at the bottom, at district level and school level. Roles seem to be unclear and/or more responsibilities are being piled upon already over worked teachers, staff and administrators.
- Community and Parent roles in school management would appear to benefit from more involvement from females and minorities, developing a sense that education is a 'Service' and also a 'Right', rather than a Privilege.
- The ability of Community Schools to raise their own funds to improve their facilities is crucial to their success, as government funding is low and scholarships are nominal.

Private School's Management and Governance

- Private School numbers are growing rapidly, especially in urban areas.
- In the Kathmandu area Private Schools now outnumber Public Schools. Indeed Private Schools are becoming big business. In the Kathmandu Valley there are believed to be 1,200 Private Schools and only 300 Public Schools. *
- This rapid growth in Private education has lead to calls for more regulation from the Government due to accusations of irregularities in service delivery in the Private education sector. These ranges from; unqualified teachers, creating barriers to changing schools, hidden charges, to yearly re-enrolment fees, and charging large amounts for enrolment forms.

- Kul Chandra Gautam, 'Enhancing Quality Education for All in Nepal', Rato Bangala Conference on School Education, Kathmandu, 6th April 2013.

Private School's Management and Governance

- Currently Private Schools must pay a fee and register with the District Education Office (DEO) in order to start a Private School. They are then monitored by the DEO.
- Private Schools must teach the national curriculum and use books that have been authorised by the Ministry of Education. Both the Private and Boarding School's Organisation Nepal (PABSON) and Rato Balgala School publish their own teaching materials for general sale.
- Teachers at Private Schools are required to be certified by the Teacher Service Commission (TSC), but they are not always adequately experienced.

Private School's Management and Governance

- A recent initiative by the Department of Education (DoE) to set up the 'Institutional School Criteria and Operating Directive 2012', which was to regulate institutional schools, has been met with opposition by the PABSON. The DoE is currently amending the directive in line with PABSONs suggestions in order to make it more favourable. For example, one ruling they are contending stated that there should be a minimum of 22 children in the class room, less than this number and the school will have to merge with another school.
- It appears that PABSON and other Private School organisations hold a good deal of sway over the Government. Indeed, some Private Schools have been able to operate as unregistered schools, as there are so few checks.
- Most Private Schools have SMCs, but only 10% have PTAs*, so parental control of what goes on is very limited. Certainly PABSON appears to have far more weight than the Guardian's Association, whose power seems to be limited to complaints about over charging.

* Source Uttam Sharma 'Essays on the Economics of Education in Developing Countries', January 2012, p. 113

Private School Funding

- Funding for most Private Schools comes exclusively from school fees and other school charges. There are also some schools that operate as charities collecting private donations and who charge lower fees (for example the Bamboo Schools).
- The Kathmandu Fee Fixation and Monitoring Committee (FFMC) has set a limit on the amount that Private Schools can charge. The FFMC is chaired by the District Education Office, and includes groups of stakeholders such as; the Guardians Association, Private School's Association and Teachers Association. The fees are determined by the grade that the school is given, these grades go from A-D and they are determined by the schools capacity, assets and infrastructure and performance.

Private School Funding

- However, despite fee capping, some schools continue to ignore this, charging parents and guardians without re-investing the into the school. There are many accusations of Private Schools overcharging for profit while underpaying and exploiting teachers. Indeed, many schools are making up their fees on hidden additional charges:

“Private Schools hide the true cost of education by lowering tuition fees but increasing other fees like admission fees. They force parents to buy expensive books and uniforms for which the school gets a commission. Often, to the surprise of parents, schools charge a new admission fee every year—for students that have been admitted for years.” [31]

Jha Anand ‘At What Cost? – Regulating Private Schools’, Educate Nepal, March 2013

- School fees have also been frozen for the coming year due to some schools charging very high fees. In addition, there has been a ban on schools selling books; instead schools must issue a book list a month before the start of the academic session so that books can be bought outside the school.

Private School Advertising

- As competition between Private Schools increases so does advertising. From billboards outside schools to print ads, the amount of advertising and marketing has increased, all paid for by school fees. As objections grow, not just from parents, but also from student unions and other political groups protesting by burning advertising hoarding boards placed outside schools, the MoE has reacted by placing a limit on the amount that schools can spend in a year on advertising. For Secondary Schools this is 500,000 Rupees a year (US\$5,050), which is still a substantial amount.
- From the start of this academic year, schools are banned from placing advertising billboards outside their schools to promote themselves, with the exception of advertising a few weeks before taking admissions for the academic year. However it appears the government are under pressure from Private Schools to revoke this ruling.

Scholarships in Private Schools

- Private Schools are required to provide 10% scholarship places. Traditionally these were allocated by the schools, but due to allegations of misuse of these scholarships that should have been set aside for students from poor and marginalised communities, this has been revoked. The District Education Committee will now decide on 3% of the scholarship allocations itself, while the schools will still control the other 7% .
- Entrance exams are required for entry into most Private Schools. Another issue is charging parents up 1000 Rupees (US\$10) just for the entrance forms despite government capping of admission fees to 100 Rupees only and 25 Rupees for the forms.

Issues Concerning Teachers and Learning Outcome

- Teachers in Private Schools tend to achieve better results in SLC. There appear to be a number of reasons for this*:
 - Teachers at Private Schools are not on tenures (they do not have a “Job for life”). Private School Teachers can be hired or fired if results are not up to expectations, and so are under pressure to get results from students.
 - In addition, in some better-off Private Schools financial incentives are given to higher performing teachers to help raise and maintain standards.
 - In Private Schools time spent on task in the class room can be higher than in Public Schools.
 - Private Schools have a substantially longer school year than Public Schools.
- In terms of learning outcomes and SLC results, the two huge advantages that Private Schools tend to have over Public Schools are:
 - Teaching in English language.
 - Science and Computer labs.

* Source Uttam Sharma ‘Essays on the Economics of Education in Developing Countries’, January 2012, p. 130

- Time spent on task in the class room is significantly higher than in Public Schools; teachers attend regularly and are more likely to spend the whole period teaching.
 - Private Schools have a substantially longer school year than Public Schools.
- In terms of learning outcomes and SLC results, the two huge advantages that Private Schools tend to have over Public Schools are:
 - Teaching in English language.
 - Science and Computer labs.

Summary

- Private Schools have become profitable enterprises that benefit from a high degree of autonomy; they can control their own environment and set their own agenda with barely any hindrance from the DoE or any other government body. (For example there appears to be total freedom regarding the naming of Private Schools). Indeed, Private School bodies like PABSON appear to have a powerful enough lobby to be able to persuade the government to amend certain directives that directly threaten them as businesses.
- An interesting phenomenon with the increasing numbers of Private Schools, especially in the Kathmandu Valley area, is that competition appears to be making Private Schools compete harder with one another pushing standards ever higher and putting ever increasing pressure upon the remaining Public Schools.
- In addition some important Private Secondary Schools declare themselves as taking a “Not for Profit” stance, rather than considering education to be a mere commodity.

Summary

As Tharp* points out:

“First, Private Schools might be more competitive and efficient. As discussed in chapter 2 of this dissertation, this could be due to various reasons such as better administration and management, better teacher quality, better school climate and better motivated students in Private Schools as compared to Public Schools. As a result of competition itself, it could be that Private Schools are getting better. Moreover, following Hirschman’s (1970) idea of ‘exit’, competition could also be forcing the inefficient Private Schools to exit, and as a result making the educational market more efficient.”^[32]

Amrit Tharp, ‘Does Private School Competition Improve Public School Performance? The Case of Nepal’ 2011

- The DEO is even trying to limit the number of Private Schools allowed to operate in each Municipal Ward, at least until they have managed to complete the mapping of existing schools. It appears that the DEO are not in full control of the spread of Private Schools.

- Meanwhile Public School SLC results are falling year on year and this downward trend looks set to stay as school standards, particularly SLC results, are increasingly being set by Private Schools. This discrepancy in results between Public Schools and Private Schools means ever increasing demand for Private Education.

Initial Conclusions

Initial Conclusions

1. Based upon the evidence collected in this desk research study into the Nepalese Education System today, Private Secondary School competition in Nepal is having a negative impact upon the perceptions of Public Secondary Schools. As a result Public Secondary Schools are struggling to compete with Private Schools as parents are increasingly opting for Private Secondary Schooling for their children, particularly boys.
2. It appears to be difficult to be able to reverse this situation in the near future without the help of additional funding and the promotion of the benefits of Public Community Secondary Schools. Indeed taking advantage of collaboration opportunities with Private Secondary Schools who declare themselves as taking a “Not for Profit” stance.
3. Private charitable contributions, if properly allocated and spent, can give Public Secondary Schools the autonomy that they need to improve their facilities and motivate their teaching staff. Indeed, they will then be better placed to compete with Private Secondary Schools.

Initial Conclusions

4. The research suggests that a well funded and well managed Public “Community” Secondary School would have the potential to rival Private Secondary Schools in terms of SLC results, and achieve an equally good image and reputation. It would also have the advantage of serving the whole Community due to its inclusive nature.

This in turn could create more interest from local parents to send their children to such a “Community” School. This may be particularly true for parents of girls and children from marginalised groups who can not afford Private Schooling and may be reluctant to send them to an “average” Public Secondary School.

5. Popular perceptions of Quality clearly point to the importance of good SLC Results and English Language being taught to a high level.

Indeed it is clearly expected that a good Public Community Secondary school should also have adequate modern facilities for Science and IT, as well as access to books, in order for Pupils to be adequately prepared for the SLC exams.

Initial Conclusions

6. However in defining sustainable 'Best Practise', we should look also at standards that are independent of SLC results in defining Quality in Education. An inspiring example is the five key factors identified by UNICEF:
- i. **Learners** who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;*
 - ii. **Environments** that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;*
 - iii. **Content** that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the area of literary, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and peace;*
 - iv. **Processes** through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;*
 - v. **Outcomes** that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. ^[10]*

Overall, this research appears to indicate that a Community School, like Kankali Secondary School, may be particularly fertile ground for developing this model.

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