



Moving From Access to Quality:

Perception and Practices

Drive of Aasaman Nepal Toward Quality Education



✓ Education
✗ Child Labor

Aasaman Nepal

Moving From Access to Quality: *Perception and Practices*

Drive of Aasaman Nepal Toward Quality Education

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Monograph 2

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शिक्षा मन्त्रालय
शिक्षा विभाग

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जिल्ला शिक्षा कार्यालय धनुषा, जनकपुर

पत्र संख्या:-
चलानी नं.:-

मिति:.....

विषय:-

Foreword

I feel delight that Aasaman Nepal is going to publish "Moving from Access to Quality: Perception and Practices, Drive of Aasaman Nepal toward Quality Education". The education institutions always remain at the forefront in ensuring quality of education.

We all are familiar with the fact of meaning less improvement in the area of quality, access and management of education in spite of all efforts made by national and international level. It is due to lack of appropriate planning, implementation of policy. In this context initiation of Aasaman Nepal for quality education is such as significant.

To ensure quality education to all children this publication should be really helpful to all community, district and national level stakeholders. Finally, I wish Aasaman Nepal for success in implementing quality education programs in coming year 2069.

Thanks

District Education Officer,
Janakpurdham, Dhanusha
Nepal





नेपाल
शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य
शिक्षा विभाग
महोत्तरी, जलेश्वर

फोन नं. ०४४:५२००५९
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जिल्ला शिक्षा कार्यालय

महोत्तरी, जलेश्वर

पत्र संख्या :- ०६३/०६९

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विषय:-

श्री.....Aasaman~Nepal, Jankpur.....

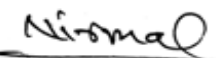
Foreword

It gives me as immense pleasure to know that Aasaman Nepal is going to publish " **Moving from Access to Quality: Perception and Practices, Drive of Aasaman Nepal toward Quality Education**". The education institutions always remain at the forefront in ensuring quality of education. This is particularly true in their role of providing education to change their attitudes and behaviors. Quality education is crucial to create as enabling environment for children and support people living with dignity. Moreover, the role of the education sector is pivotal in ensuring quality education as envisaged in Millennium Development Goal.

The District Education Office is firmly committed to achieving national commitments and goals on quality education. One way of achieving these is through proper information dissemination to SMC, PTA, teachers, parents in the community and at district and national level stakeholders that is particularly susceptible to change behavior. I appreciate the opportunity that this documentation presents efforts made in the quality education sector, and discussion of gaps and ways forward.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Aasaman Nepal for initiating such as important process documentation of quality education. Finally, I wish success in implementing recommendations for quality education in coming year 2069.

Thanks.


District Education Officer,

Mahottari, Jaleshwar

Nepal

Acronyms

ASN	:	Aasaman Nepal
BC	:	Bridge Course
CC	:	Child Club
CAS	:	Continuous Assessment System
CRPF	:	Child Right Protection Forum
DEC	:	District Education Committee
DDC	:	District Development Committee
DP	:	District Person
EFA	:	Education for All
ECM	:	Each Child Monitoring
EMIS	:	Education Management Information System
ECD	:	Early Childhood Development
HT	:	Head Teacher
IEC	:	Information, Education and Communication
LPP	:	Liberal Promotion Policy
MG	:	Mother Group
NGO	:	Non Governmental Organization
PTA	:	Parent Teacher Association
PT	:	Physical Training
RC	:	Resource Center
RP	:	Resource Person
SMC	:	School Management Committee
SZOP	:	School as Zone of Peace
SSRP	:	School Sector Reform Plan
SIP	:	School Improvement Plan
SOP	:	School Outreach Program
STR	:	Student Teacher Ratio
SCR	:	Student Classroom Ratio
TDC	:	Tole Development Committee
VDC	:	Village Development Committee
YC	:	Youth Club

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The Acces to and Quality of Education:

The Access to and Quality of Education:

Context: The universal primary education (UPE) has been a major global concern since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. UPE was to be made freely and compulsorily available for all children in all nations irrespective of their cultural, social, economic and linguistic background. The world conference on education for all (EFA) in 1990 gave a thrust to access to ensure every one's right to basic education. Even at the turn of 20th century, the major international declarations - the Dakar Framework for Action and Millennium Development Goals, did not explicitly underscore the importance of quality in education though there were references to concept of quality. Therefore, quantitative aspects of education remained as a main focus of attention for policy makers for quite sometimes. This notion continued to shadow the quality perspective to

education for quite sometime, especially in the developing countries marked by the rhetoric of inequitable access to educational opportunities.

One of the six goals set out in the Dakar Framework however commits nations to the provision of primary education 'of good quality'. Similarly the sixth goal of EFA includes commitments to improve all aspects of education including quality so that everyone can achieve better learning outcomes, 'especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills'. It seems that these declarations have realized the need to address both access and quality issues of education from right based perspective.

As education is defined qualitatively as a set of processes and outcomes, the two United Nations international conference declarations on education gave some

importance to its qualitative dimension. The Jomtien Declaration in 1990 and, more particularly, the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000 recognized the quality of education as a prime determinant of the success of Education for All movement. Quality education perceived in the Jomtien Declaration in 1990, noted the need to generally improve the poor quality of education and recommended that education be made both universally available and relevant. The Declaration also identified quality as a prerequisite for achieving the fundamental goal of equity. While the notion of quality was not fully developed, it was recognized that expanding access alone would be insufficient for education to contribute fully to the development of the individual and society. Emphasis was accordingly placed on assuring an increase in children's cognitive development by improving the quality of their education. The Dakar Framework for Action declared that access to quality education was the right of every child and affirmed that quality was 'at the heart of education' - a fundamental determinant of enrolment, retention and achievement. Its expanded definition of

quality set out the desirable characteristics of learners (healthy, motivated students), processes (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content (relevant curricula) and systems (good governance and equitable resource allocation).

The achievement of universal participation in education will be fundamentally dependent upon the quality of education available. Quality of education is related on how well pupils are taught and how much they learn. Parental decision to send their children to school is likely to depend on their judgment about the quality of teaching and learning, and whether attending school is worth the time and cost for their children and for themselves. The instrumental roles of schooling - helping individuals achieve their own economic and social and cultural objectives and helping society to be better protected, better served by its leaders in more equitable ways - will be strengthened if education is of higher quality. Accordingly, analysts and policy makers alike should also find the issue of quality difficult to ignore.

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Conceptualizing Quality in Education:

Conceptualizing Quality in Education:

The meaning of quality education differs from person to person, context to context and situation to situation. It carries even distinct meaning for elite and non-elite community. NGO's perspectives could be different from other while defining quality education. A country's perspective of quality education could be different from other countries. Key stakeholders usually hold different views and meanings of quality education. However, quality education often revolves around building child's emotional, sentimental, physical, spiritual, mental, moral, psychosocial and cognitive strengths to acquire the learning what they need to learn, for learning throughout their life.

In all aspects of the school and its surrounding education community, the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation are at the centre. This

means that the focus is on learning which strengthens the capacities of children to act progressively on their own behalf through the acquisition of relevant knowledge, useful skills and appropriate attitudes; and which creates for children, and helps them create for themselves and others, places of safety, security and healthy interaction (Bernard, 1999).

The terms efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used synonymously (Adams, 1993). Considerable consensus exists around the basic dimensions of quality education today, however. Quality education includes:

- ▶ Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;
- ▶ Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and

provide adequate resources and facilities;

- ▶ Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace;
- ▶ Processes through which trained teachers use child-centered teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;
- ▶ Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.

The quality of education is determined by a holistic concept that draws from taxonomy of educatedness, inputs and process that ensures development of culturedness, emancipation, self-actualization of all aspects of human potentials (Mukhopadhyay, 2005).

Similarly, according to Arcaro (1997), quality is creating an environment where educators, parents, government officials, community representatives, and business leaders work together to provide students with the resources they need to meet current and future academic, business and societal challenges.

Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow, the report of the International Commission on the Development of Education (UNESCO 1972) identified the aim and content of education as being associated with new features of society and democracy along with 'lifelong learning' and 'relevance' by emphasizing science and technology. The Report stressed on improving the quality of education where principles of scientific development and modernization could be learned to respect learners' socio-cultural contexts.

The Delors Report to UNESCO (Delors et al., 1996) saw education throughout life as based upon four pillars: Learning to know; learning to do; learning to live

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Traditional notions of
quality in education:

Traditional notions of quality in education:

Different education thoughts have outlined different relativist approaches to quality education. Relativists' approaches to quality education emphasize the perceptions, experiences and needs of those involved in the learning experiences to determine quality. The following education traditions perceive quality education through different perspectives:

Humanist tradition: Standardized, prescribed, externally defined or controlled curricula are rejected because of undermining the possibilities for learners to construct their own meanings and educational programs are to remain responsive to individual learners' circumstances and needs. The role of assessment is to give learners information and feedback about the quality of their individual learning. It is integral to the learning process as self-assessment and peer assessment are welcomed as ways of

developing deeper awareness of learning. The teacher's role is more that of facilitator than instructor. Social constructivism, while accepting these tenets, emphasizes learning as a process of social practice rather than the result of individual intervention.

Behaviorist tradition: Standardized, externally defined and controlled curricula, based on prescribed objectives and defined independently of the learner, are endorsed. Assessment is seen as an objective measurement of learned behavior against preset assessment criteria. Tests and examinations are considered central features of learning and the main means of planning and delivering rewards and punishments. The teacher directs learning, as the expert who controls stimuli and responses. Incremental learning tasks that reinforce desired associations in the mind of the learner are favored.

Critical tradition: Critical theorists focus on inequality in access to and outcomes of education and on education's role in legitimizing and reproducing social structures through its transmission of a certain type of knowledge that serves certain social groups. Accordingly, these sociologists and critical pedagogues tend to equate good quality with: education that prompts social change; a curriculum and teaching methods that encourage critical analysis of social power relations and of ways in which formal knowledge is produced and transmitted; active participation by learners in the design of their own learning experience.

Indigenous tradition: Indigenous approaches about the quality of education reassert the importance of education's relevance to the socio-cultural circumstances of the nation and learner. The implicative principles suggest that mainstream approaches imported from Europe are not necessarily relevant in very different social and economic circumstances. Assuring relevance implies local design of curriculum content, pedagogies and assessment. All learners have rich sources of prior knowledge, accumulated through a variety of

experiences, which educators should draw out and nourish. Learners should play a role in defining their own curriculum and learning should move beyond the boundaries of the classroom/school through non-formal and lifelong learning activities.

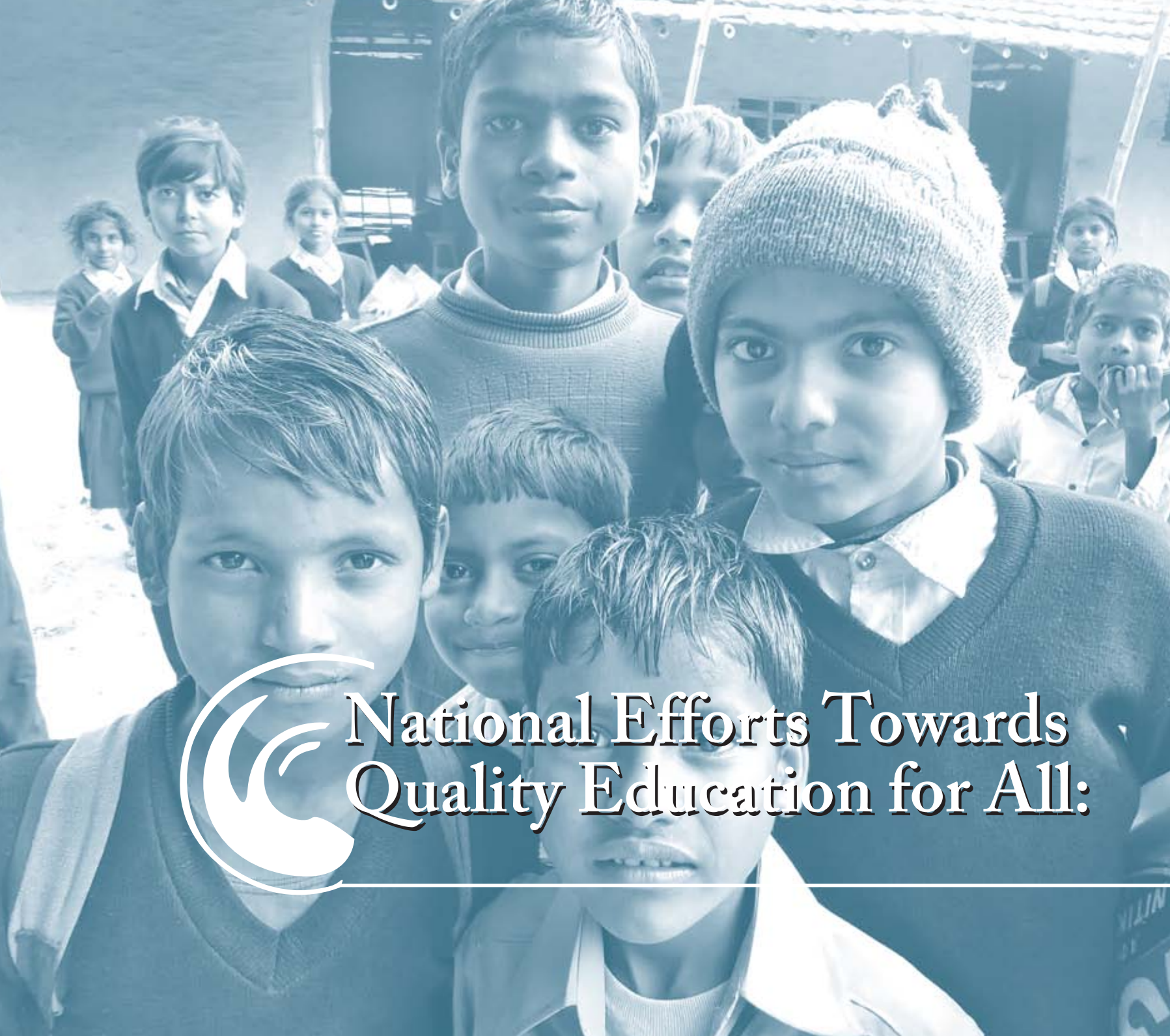
Adult education approaches: In the adult education tradition, experience and critical reflection in learning is an important aspect of quality. Radical theorists see learners as socially situated with the potential to use their experience and learning as a basis for social action and social change.

Notwithstanding the growing consensus about the need to provide access to education of 'good quality', there is much less agreement about what the term actually means in practice. As important qualities of education along with its content and practice differ, two key elements characterize the approaches to bridge the gaps between differing opinions on quality education:

First, cognitive development is identified as a major explicit objective of all education systems. The degree to which

systems actually achieve this is one indicator of their quality. While this indicator can be measured relatively easily - at least within individual societies, if not through international comparison - it is much more difficult to determine how to improve the results. Thus, if quality is defined in terms of cognitive achievement, ways of securing increased quality are neither straightforward nor universal.

The second element is education's role in encouraging learners' creative and emotional development, in supporting objectives of peace, citizenship and security, in promoting equality and in passing global and local cultural values down to future generations. Many of these objectives are defined and approached in diverse ways around the world. Compared with cognitive development, the extent to which they are achieved is harder to determine.



National Efforts Towards Quality Education for All:

National Efforts Towards Quality Education for All:

One of the objectives of school education in Nepal is to ensure quality education while providing free basic education (grade 1-8) to all and expanding equitable and inclusive access to secondary (9-12) and higher education. Education is viewed as something to be accessible to all and as a means to effect positive social change at all levels. The EFA goals are part of the comprehensive national vision regarding implementation of basic and primary education in Nepal. Nepal envisages that by 2015 there should be universal access to quality basic education for all.

In order to fully achieve the EFA goals by 2015, the overall strategies are to co-ordinate and streamline all the ongoing programs including those undertaken by the government, local

bodies, communities, NGOs and others

concerned. The ongoing programs will be reinforced, the system capacity enhanced, and new programs launched, where necessary. There will be networking of educational institutions such as schools, Community Learning Centers, Community Based Organizations, and other Non-Governmental Organizations that will be continually generating knowledge and disseminating information. There will be a social web to ensure that all the children, youths and adults have at least basic knowledge, skills and information for sustainable living with dignity. EFA NPA(2001-2015) has envisaged overall development strategy as immediate, medium term and long term strategies.

Immediate Strategy: BPEP Phase II (1999-2004) was the major government program for basic and primary education sub-sector as an immediate strategy to meet the targets set for 2005. The GoN's

Tenth Plan (2002-2007) also constituted the immediate strategy for achieving EFA. The EFA programme (2004-2009) was initiated as successive programme of BPEP to meet the EFA set targets by consolidating EFA program to make it more effective and encompassing.

Medium-term Strategies (2005-12): The major actions during the medium term plan strategy focused on quality and a satisfactory level of learning with life relevant skills, specifically emphasizing on: community-based ECD and school-based ECD, free and compulsory primary education of reasonable quality, open learning opportunities to enhance life-long learning, income generation program for the parents, completion of infrastructure for the initiation of basic and primary education up to grade 8, increasing the minimum qualification of teachers (12+ years of education with 10 month training). SSRP (2009-2015) came as a successive plan of the EFA programme (2004-9) to continue the thrust of EFA after 2009.

Long-term Strategies (2012-15): By 2015, all the children of current primary school age group (6-10) will participate

in and complete primary education achieving a satisfactory and acceptable level of learning. The exercises for extending basic and primary education will be continued. The major actions during the long-term plan will include: extension of basic and primary education up to grade 8 (grades 1-8), decentralized curriculum and textbooks with adequate life skill-related content, improvement in the school curriculum practices as per the national curriculum framework, ensuring promotion of teacher qualification and training, introduction of information technology-based education at the basic and primary level, comprehensive approach to development of school education including preprimary, primary and secondary education, drawing the support of the stakeholders focused on the contextual needs of children's learning.

In this stage the School Sector Reform Program will address EFA activities comprehensively including quality and sustainability aspects. The major focuses of the SSRP initiatives include: rights based approach to quality education, ensuring inclusive classrooms and school environment, developing provisions for

primary education in mother tongue, developing national framework of norms and standards for quality education, enhancing teacher capacity and qualification, re-structuring school education to consider 1-8 grades as basic and primary and 9-12 as secondary education, decentralizing school management with the focus on school based management to empower local bodies and ensure participation of the local community in school improvement, improving school management with emphasis on development of capacity of head teachers and the SMCs, promoting public-private partnership and linkages with NGOs/INGOs for expanding resource base and ensuring equitable access of the disadvantaged to quality school education.

Quality of education in general and that of primary education in particular has remained an overriding concern for all. A comprehensive definition of quality of education is the desired need but the contextual variation that makes it so difficult to arrive at a common concept makes it all the more an interesting issue of wider debate. The EFA-NPA, national development plan, EFA core document

and SSRP have underscored this difficulty yet its indicators have been roughly outlined. It is realized that bringing together the many dimensions-learners, environment, content, process and outcome of educational quality is a difficult task which requires knowledge, resources, commitment and willingness to change (UNICEF, 2000).

The policy of the government on improving the quality of education, especially after the commitment on implementing the Dakar framework on EFA, relates to ensuring gender parity, reaching and bringing in the mainstream the disadvantaged children, advocating right-based approach to education, increasing public investment in education, updating curriculum reform and teacher training, upgrading physical environment of the school, promoting inclusive approach in education and decentralized management of education services.

The EFA-NPA has broadly categorized the indicators of quality primary education as being enhanced efficiency in the management of education, improved primary curriculum and assessment system, improved physical

facilities and learning environment and increased education expenditure. Analysis of these indicators shows that initiation has already been taken to delegate school management authority to community, Headteacher training as a certification training is already in place, teacher management system is already effective in terms of upgrading the qualification of the teachers, providing 10 month training, implementing teaching license as a mandatory practice and establishing requirement for teacher accountability, supervisory services are brought nearer to school to provide professional support to the teachers and monitoring of the standards for quality education including the establishing of reporting requirements is initiated. Similarly, primary curriculum was revised in 2004 and 2009 and teachers' guides and teacher support materials based on the national curriculum were developed. A national curriculum framework was developed; however, marked shift from existing textbook based assessment to curriculum based assessment is yet to take place. Construction and rehabilitation of school physical facilities and ensuring minimum learning

environment have been the prime concern of the government but visible improvement in the school environment is still desired.

Educational expenditure has remained another major concern of quality education. Quality is often associated with increment in expenditure. The available financial data indicate that demand for quality education has not been sufficiently met by a corresponding demand for increasing educational expenditure. Increment in the share of national budget to education has always been a concern. It will be difficult to wholly address the issue of quality education with the continuation of existing restrictive budgetary provision for education.

The pronounced goal of EFA to improve quality of education with focus on raising the competence/qualification of teachers, improving teaching learning environment in classroom, enhancing the quality of curricula and textbooks with their timely distribution, developing school based autonomous supervision and monitoring and ensuring decentralized management of schools is very much challenged by the

existing near absence of continuous investigation of quality components as they relate to curricular transaction in the classroom.

Further, scanty efforts to effectively apply measures such as capacity building of both the institutions and individuals, linking outcomes of educational research to further educational plans and programs, strengthening professional support mechanism, devolution of educational authorities and services to the school level and making available disaggregated data on different quality components through a well-established EMIS system at the district level remain as big challenges to

quality primary education.

Local efforts as envisaged in EFA NPA, Three Year Development Plan (2011-2013), SSRP in the form of Private, Government and Cooperative/Community Sector Partnership including I/NGOs can play major role for ensuring quality education for all at the grass roots level contributing national endeavor for the achievement of EFA. Furthermore, local NGOs can directly contribute to address the challenges of poor quality education and lack of reliable educational statistics at all levels as underscored by the three year development plan.



Aasaman's Drive for Quality Education: An Institutional Perspective

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Aasaman's Drive for Quality Education: An Institutional Perspective

Ensuring quality includes four broader components such as commitment to change, clear understanding on existing status of institutions, clear vision for the future and plans and programmes for the implementation (Arcaro, 1997). Both the internal and external environmental factors are crucial for institutionalizing

the process for quality education. Aasaman Nepal, an NGO working in many Terai districts of Nepal has endeavored to bring working children into schools in order to ensure compulsory and inclusive education for them focusing on quality education in the community schools where they study.



Ensuring Access to Education: the First Quality Measure

Ensuring Access to Education: the First Quality Measure

The motto of ASN is a child labor free society with the slogan "Kaam chodau, school pathau". ASN is particularly concerned with the development and education of children from poor, marginalized, Dalit and disadvantaged community. Over the years working initially in two terai districts - Dhanusha and Mahottari, ASN realized that it is possible to abolish all forms of child labor in the community including Dalit, disadvantaged and girls. This is supported by the evidence of 49 percent out of school children, aged 5-14 years, in 2003 has been reduced to 19 percent in 2006. Similarly, this percentages has been reduced to 15 in 2010. It is marked that no single school age child is out of school and engaged in any form of child labor. Many villages in its working area have now claimed as child labor free villages.

ASN's efforts for ensuring education for out of school children can be considered a social movement to overcome all forms

of discrimination based on established power structure, caste system, gaps between economic quintiles, location and gender etc. It took quite sometimes for ASN to uncover one of the myths of the poor people that poor cannot send their children to school.

As the philosophy behind the EFA is school for all, ASN's movement towards ensuring access to the most disadvantaged and marginalized children including girls from terai proved to be a success story to address socio-cultural issues that prevented children from attending the school thus contributing to the national efforts towards ensuring UPE for all by 2015.

Nevertheless, this tremendous success was challenged by the problem of retention after they were brought into the school. To impart quality education in order to retain the children in the school, there is a need to create an enabling and conducive school environment for all children.



Contextual Interventions of Aasaman Nepal (ASN) on Education Access:

Contextual Interventions of Aasaman Nepal (ASN) on Education Access:

Following the global commitment of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1990 and Education for All (EFA) by 2015 in the year 2000, the country's primary focus and priority was oriented towards increasing education access to all school going age children in Nepal. Most of the educational plans and programs greatly focused on attaining the goal of increasing education access in the country for the last one and half a decades. Corresponding to the national priorities and goals, Aasaman Nepal (ASN) also gave

identical focus on increasing education access especially concentrating on bringing out of school dalit and girls children to school education. The preliminary interventions were mainly oriented

towards increasing access to education keeping quality concerns as the secondary focus. The attentions and priorities gradually shifted from access to promoting quality education in the country taking into account the holistic approach of focusing on both access and quality.

Early school dropouts and retention problems have surfaced on the quality performance of

One time support of a pair of school dress, copies and pen, a pair of shoes, a geometry box/book is not that much of importance for me, but the reinforcement and motivation given to me to join the school again guided me from the dark arena to the bright future, a school dropped out girl, who again joined the school said proudly.

community schools in Nepal. One of the objectives of the EFA program was to reduce dropouts and increase the retention rate of children especially in basic and primary education. In order to achieve this objective the GON implemented several intervention programs such as Liberal Promotion Policy (LPP), scholarship distribution, day-meal distribution, community awareness campaign and dropout reduction campaign etc. To complement the government policies, the ASN also visualized the problems of school dropouts and retention problems in the ASN supported districts and carried out various measures at local level such as enrollment campaign, dropout reduction campaign, social mobilization, flexible schooling through the conduction of bridge course for school dropout children, education materials and scholarship supports to children including

dalits and girls belonging to low income families. In addition, the ASN also provided financial supports to several schools on account of infrastructure development and external environment improvements such as the construction of new classrooms, school toilets, fencing and compound wall etc.

A SMC Chairman said, "Dropouts are still high in dalits, janajati and girls children. Dropouts occurred due to inability to continue the education and deep rooted belief that education will not yield anything for the poor. However, the situation is getting better and better in recent years".

After the ASN's interventions, mostly all parents including dalit, janajati, low income families etc., were more conscious about sending their children to school. Wider participation of relevant school actors in enrollment campaign inspired all parents to send their children to school. The operation of Bridge Course has also resulted in increasing enrollment

of dalits and girls children to primary education. ASN's planned approach produced remarkable effects in

readmitting several schools' dropped out children to school.

The ASN's intervention on increasing education access of dalits and girls of school-going-age dramatically increased the primary enrollment rate in Dhanusha and Mahottari districts. The baseline data in the year 2008 showed that only 73% of the total 5-14 years age children were going to the schools in the ASN supported schools under Brightness of the Knowledge (HOSONO) project area. Thanks to the effective social mobilization carried out and various kinds of supports

provided by ASN at local level to encourage marginalized parents to send their children to Bridge Course and Primary schools, the primary school enrollment of 5-14 years age children went up to 91% in the year 2011. Similarly, during the same period, the school going rate of dalits and girls also increased significantly to 90% against the targeted goals of 85% of dalits and 86% of girls. The effects were much more impressive in dalits dominated school, where dalit parents were much conscious than others in sending their daughters to the schools.

A Landmark Movement of "Kaam Chhodau, School Pathau (From Workplace to School)" Program:

Child labors have had remained to be the serious challenges in Nepal, which caused thousands of school going age children forcibly engage in labor intensive jobs that not only darkened their bright future but also deprived them of ensuring their fundamental right to education. The situation was equally critical in terai districts such as Dhanusha and Mahottari. The intensity of child labor was much acute in dalits and low income families in which more children remained out of school. Under these contexts, Aasaman Nepal's intervention on education was mainly guided by reducing child labor in the districts by bringing school-going-age out of school dalits and girls children to school education. The

local drive for increasing education access in the districts like Dhanusha and Mahottari was tantamount to national priority. The planned interventions on bringing out-of-school children working in teashop, household works, brick factory, agriculture field, public transports etc., into school education resulted in many such children getting enrolled in formal education system.

Despite the fact that the standard definition of child labor differs from country to country, the ASN developed a common understanding of child labor and their rights to education:

- ▶ All children of school-going-age should attend the formal school all

the time but not less than 70 percent of school days.

- ▶ Any child who is out of school is child labor.
- ▶ S/he should not be working anywhere i.e., at their own vicinity or outside.
- ▶ Children should not be prevented from going to school by involving them at work in order to ensure their future development.
- ▶ Getting education freely and without any interference could only ensure children's right to education; hence, every child must be going to school.

With this common understanding developed about the essence of bringing out of school-going-age children into formal school system, ASN succeeded in rescuing 275 children who used to work as a child labor in the brick factory and

teashops and as a house servant in well-off families. ASN's planned efforts to release school-going-age children from their respective bonded workplace resulted in rewriting the future of these children. The "Kaam Chhodau, School Pathau" movement was extensively launched in some of the ASN districts with low

literacy rates as compared to the national average, which proved to be an effective movement to bringing working school-going-age children to formal education system.

The ASN's "Kaam Chhodau, School Pathau" program proved to be a landmark movement for creating bright future of working children by bringing them into formal school education system.

The essence of quality education calls for ASN to transform from its earlier role of providing education access of marginalized out-of-school children to promoting quality education in the ASN supported schools. The

shift in the focus has been visible since last half a decade in which ASN has laid focus on priorities to create enabling environment for quality education at the local level.



Shifting From Access to Quality: The Second Quality Measure

Shifting From Access to Quality: The Second Quality Measure

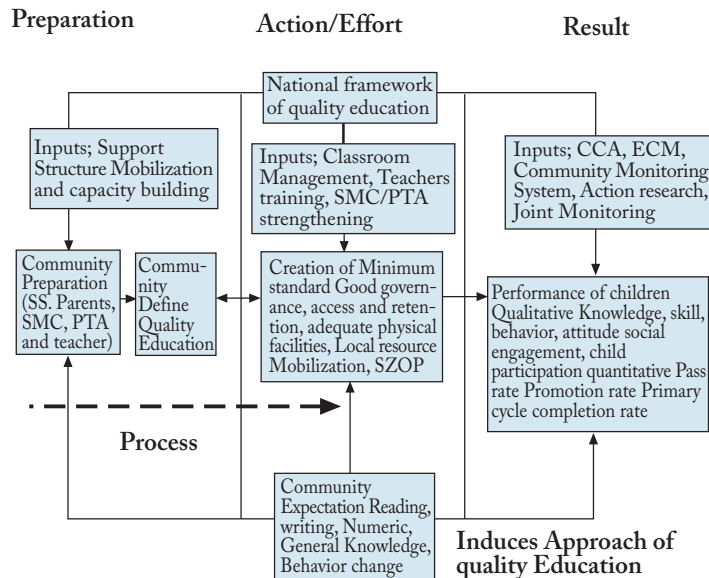
S As one of the EFA goals intends to ensure access to complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality for particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, ASN's efforts at community level are directed to ensure equitable access to education for the targeted community children and adults.

ASN took these measures: creation of enabling environment, supporting to infrastructure facilities, providing human and financial resources, improving school governance, emphasis on participatory planning, capacity building of teachers, joint monitoring school activities, building effective school community relations, mobilizing community for school improvement, strengthening PTA and SMCs as strong initiatives to ensure quality education for targeted groups.

ASN observed that poorly trained and lowly motivated teachers, large classrooms, little knowledge on inclusive and child friendly teaching learning, disregard of the significant potential input that children can bring to the development of quality education programs, unprepared school management, teachers and community towards the quality education, poor linkage of MDC/VDC and DDC with teaching learning process in the schools, lack of regular monitoring and supervision from the concerned authorities i.e. District Education Office, school supervisors, Resources Centers, political interferences on SMC and PTA formation and functioning including the recruitment and transfer of teachers stand as barriers to quality education.

In the light of the above barriers to quality education, ASN considered teacher as a key player for ensuring quality education

for all children and consequently, advocated this slogan "quality education is possible, without teacher impossible". While translating this slogan into practice, ASN came up with a support structure known as Inclusive approach to quality education which includes preparation, action/effort and result level initiatives and strategies as presented in schematic form below:



While analyzing the above schematic chart, it becomes evident that quality education is an all-encompassing phenomenon that covers a range of factors from representative school management

to basic skills of students such as reading and writing. The scheme demands that a host of activities at awareness, action and result levels are to be initiated, executed, monitored and evaluated to ensure that their satisfactory delivery is achieved by addressing the needs of the community.

To this effect ASN in collaboration with district and community level relevant stakeholders has implemented various activities in a coordinated way as identified through field experiences and demands of the targeted people. The main activities include formation of support structure and mobilization of SMC and PTA, improvement of SIP, educational campaign for retention, school mapping, training and capacity building of SMC, PTA School Head teachers and teachers and community leaders, conduction of SOP, ECD, bridge courses for school drop outs and out of school

children, support to the school renovation and infrastructure building, library support, scholarship support, educational materials supports, extra coaching for targeted

student, establishment of child clubs and child empowerment centers, establishing institutional linkage with relevant stakeholders, advocacy and sharing of knowledge, monitoring, establishing code of conduct for teacher and students, advocating for school as zone of peace, development and use of IEC materials in local languages, each child monitoring, community monitoring, joint monitoring, action research and policy review etc.

These interventions can be broadly grouped into the areas of capacity building, improvement of local level planning, support for infrastructure development, material development, school governance and management, advocacy and awareness raising, child empowerment, community mobilization, joint/community monitoring and promoting children participation in school activities.

While analyzing the above interventions it becomes clear that quality is a composite and complex phenomenon which can be achieved through the adoption of multipronged approach including intervention at multiple fronts. In other words, interventions to be made are to be need based, contextual, inclusive,

comprehensive, holistic and localized.

The interventions made by ASN for quality education have made major departures from the previous situation of schools, community, children, parents and women. The departures are visible in the areas of regular joint monitoring of children, increased school workdays, reduction of corporal punishment, and community support to children, parental awareness and monitoring and women participation in school affairs. These departures have significantly contributed to increased school enrolment, promotion and retention of children along with their empowerment. This is indicative of the fact that parental and community ownership of school along with their participation has resulted into more enabling school environment-one of the staunch indicators of quality education.

1. ASN's Awareness Level Drive for Quality Education:

It is not enough just to get children into school. The education they receive must be of good quality - that means things like sound physical infrastructure, child friendly environment, child centred teaching, skilled and trained teachers,

reasonable class sizes with appropriate ventilation and light, appropriate curricula, improved average test scores are to be in place. These are what give children opportunities and hope for a better future. In this light, providing quality education has been the growing concern of ASN in recent years as to which it has done a lot of efforts and provided enormous amount of supports at local level by reaching the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged community at a larger scale.

Following the planned interventions of ASN in various terai districts such as Dhanusha and Mahottari, it was realized that parental aspirations toward the education of their children had been changing. They do not only want to send their children to school but they also want them to read and write properly.

Learning they achieve from the schools is reflected in their behaviour. The entire local community expect that the teachers and students are regular and attend the entire classes, the

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*The parents
want their
children to
learn at least
one new thing
in a day.*

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schools have their own code of conducts to be strictly abided by the school actors, students are retained in the schools without any class repetition but with good score in grade promotion, children are engaged in doing school assignments timely and all the school actors including politician should be more accountable to ensuring the right of children to education by creating child friendly environment in the community schools.

The changing aspirations of the parents in recent time put enormous pressures on all school stakeholders to synthesize the new strategies and processes to provide quality education to the children in a manner that the community want for their children. Taking into account the changing contexts, ASN also realized that planned interventions are needed for addressing the issues of quality education and, thus, following processes are adopted in institutionalizing quality education system in ASN working area.

1.1. Each Child Monitoring (ECM): A Tool to Ensuring Quality Education

Each Child Monitoring (ECM) program is the creation of ASN, which is used as



a tool for community mobilization and as a movement for getting all the out-of-school children into formal educational setting with gradual focus on ensuring quality education in community schools. ASN launched a campaign "Kaam Chhodau, School Pathau" followed by "Gunastariya Shikshya Sambhav Chha, Shikshyak Bina Asambhav Chha", which calls for realizing the fact that getting out of school children into a formal schooling system is not enough, rather it is more important to retain them in the school and ensure their continuous regularity in the classrooms. Keeping this realization in mind, ASN started the process of regular monitoring of each child in the village to ensure whether every child is going to school or not, whether he is regular in the classrooms or not, whether

any child has dropped out the school or not and if so what were the causative factors. Additionally, the ECM also monitors to ensure whether the schools are being run smoothly or not, whether the teachers are regular in the classrooms or not and whether every child in the school learns new things every day or not. ASN's conviction on the essence of ECM is mainly guided by focussing on building the foundations and enabling environment to ensure quality education in the ASN supported schools.

The ECM is carried out by the coordinated efforts of all local support structures such as Village Development Committees (VDCs), School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs), Child Rights Protection Forum (CRPF), Teachers' Associations, Child Clubs (CCs), Youth Clubs (YCs), Mother Groups (MGs), Resource Centres (RCs) at local level. ECM is also carried out with the help of other district level support structures such as District Development Committees (DDCs), District Education Offices (DECs) etc. The motto of carrying out effective ECM is quite clear: no child would be left unattended whether at local level or district level. Hence, ASN has

the firm conviction that ECM could be an effective tool to create environment for quality education in the community schools.

1.2. Building a Support Structure at Local and District Level: An Indispensable Approach for Quality Education

ASN's basic working strategy revolves around creating a movement for child-labour-free communities through extensive community mobilization, ensuring that each school going age child is in school, and developing the school as a better place to effective learning. ASN constantly focused on wider participation of local communities in addressing these goals through coordinated approaches, processes and initiatives.

ASN developed an inclusive support structure at local and district level by giving equal importance to dalits, disadvantaged and marginalized youths and women so that elite captures in the existing facilities could be minimized. Several informal forums of youths, women, and dalits were created in the village as a self-help forum with an anticipation of spontaneous participation of all. These forums function as Child



Rights Protection Forums (CRPF) at the local level. These forums play vital role in carrying out social awareness building program through conducting cycle rally, door to door visit, street drama, enrolment and dropout reduction campaign, child labour prevention campaign, child marriage prevention campaign, locating and selecting out of school children and facilitators for monitoring bridge course classes etc. In recent time, these forums are playing important roles on increasing quality education of the community schools.

Furthermore, ASN collaborates closely with SMC and Parents-Teachers Associations (PTA) in order to locate and bring out of school children into formal education setting and promoting quality

education of community schools. Teacher Associations, comprising all the schools of four or five VDCs, are formed with the initiation of ASN. These Associations usually carry out trimester-wise interactive meetings at the block level where good practices, experiences and learning are shared. This has created an opportunity for all to learn from each other and apply one's best practices to promote quality education in the schools. In addition, ASN also collaborates closely with officials of District Education Offices (DEOs), Resource Persons (RPs), VDCs and local political leaders and periodically carries out interactions and discussions with all relevant stakeholders about different educational issues.

Presently, ASN works with more than 12500 community-based formal and informal support structures in nine districts. As ASN is closely working with marginalized, disadvantaged, and excluded communities, ASN has, recently, launched an "Inclusive and Human Rights Based Educational Program" that advocates the child and dalit rights with a coverage of 117,373 children of 5-14 age group in 465 schools across 201 Village Development Committees (VDCs) of all nine ASN working districts. Having

worked closely with community based formal and informal organizations for many years; ASN has been able to establish itself at the grass-roots level of local community. The major focus has been given on promoting quality education that the community defines for itself. The community defined quality education has several indicators as:

- " At least 90% enrolment of children at basic and primary education
- " at least 70% regularity of children
- " Good teaching learning environment ["Pitai Mukta Padhai" (non-violent teaching) and adequate physical infrastructure]
- " Compliance with codes of conducts for all especially for parents, teachers and students.
- " SIP prepared
- " School with SMC/PTA
- " Child Committee formed in the School
- " Regular meeting of SMC and participation of children
- " Good coordination between school, students, guardian and community

1.3. School Improvement Plan (SIP)

ASN has given utmost priority to SIP preparation with wider community participation. The community people including teachers, SMC, PTA, and parents are involved in SIP preparation activities. Extensive discussions and interactions are carried out at local level, where different educational issues are discussed and resource envelope is prepared. Various dimensions of school education are taken into consideration while preparing SIP such as reasons for child absenteeism, importance of teachers' regularity, needs for quality education, importance of community participation in school decision making, reasons of dropouts, necessity of community commitment to send working children to schools, requirements of good school infrastructure and education materials etc.



ASN's approach is to involve community people in preparing SIP so that the community is prepared to own the process and feel the responsibility in the long run. For preparing the SIP, ASN provided three days training to school teachers, SMC, PTA, MG and parents. This has helped quite a lot to understand the SIP and local preparedness to develop it. The SMC, Head-teacher, teachers, community people, PTA etc., were involved in preparing the SIP. In fact, the SIP preparation training significantly oriented the SMC and community people to explore the new resources and avenues for future funding for their schools. It was clearly visible that the SMC including teachers, parents and other school actors demonstrated their confidence in developing the SIP at local level. Similarly, their preparedness in taking the ownership of SIP was also extensively observed by ASN.

The father of a 10 year old boy studying at Grade 4 said, 'I was always inspired by the Social Mobilizer to send my children to school. I decided to send my son to school being motivated by enrollment campaign'

1.4. Enrolment Campaign

ASN also adopted complimentary approach to increasing the access of Dalits and Girls children to primary education by successfully participating in the enrolment campaign with the extensive involvement of students, teachers, parents, SMC members, PTA members, Child



Club members, Youth Club members, Mother Group members by going through door to door of the parents in motivating them to send their children to school. In fact, the Social Mobilizer's role is found to be effective in motivating parents toward the education of their children. Consequently, parents are well aware about the importance of sending their children to school in ASN working area. Thanks to the effective community mobilization initiatives carried out by ASN Social Mobilizers, which made it

possible in Dhanusha and Mahottari districts without any child remaining out of school.

1.5. ECD Interventions

Nepal government has provided supports to 28 ECD Centres in the working area of ASN. Initially, basic training was provided to ECD Facilitators with limited teaching materials. However, lack of effective mechanism of monitoring and proper management of ECD centers has remained to be a weaker part of the government interventions.

Taking into account the ECD's mismanagement, ASN provided different education materials such as mirror, handkerchief, comb, posters, charts etc., to ECD centers in its working area. ASN



carried out regular follow-up and monitoring and supervision of the ECD centres. Following the regular follow-up of ECD Centres by ASN, some noticeable changes as the following were visible:

- ▶ Children are taught in child friendly environment.
- ▶ Activities like dance, song, rhymes, and story are the tools used by ECD Facilitators. They also use alphabetical and numerical cards.
- ▶ ECD Children also do the PT and pray.
- ▶ ECD children know the social values and norms such as paying respect to others.
- ▶ Basic skills are developed in ECD children in identifying fruits, vegetables, days and animals etc.
- ▶ Scholarship is provided to children in ECD center.
- ▶ Children are sitting on Mat and Cushion.

1.6. School outreach program (SOP)

The main objective of SOP (Branch School) is to reach dalit, disabled and girl children who do not have easy access to schools within their vicinity. ASN believes



that the SOP promotes increased confidence among children to study, motivates them to attend school and also prepares parents, teachers and communities at large to acknowledge children's right to school education. For this purpose, ASN has provided enormous supports to SOP

1.7. Bridge Course: Preparing the Children for Formal Schooling

Following the planned focus of ASN, hundreds of working children were rescued from the work and brought into school system. But before bringing such children directly to formal schooling system, ASN realized the needs of developing their preparedness to get into formal schools. For this to take place, ASN introduced the Bridge Course for out of school children.



The major objective of the Bridge Course is to prepare the out of school children for upper grade. The BC students are also oriented towards certain types of school behaviours. The course runs for four hours a day for a total of 18 month period.

However, schooling hour is flexible and hence any child can come at any point of time, and they do not need to be graduated from 18-months course, rather they can be enrolled in school at any point of time once they are prepared. This is, hence, a process of preparing students to receive quality education.

Preliminary initiation of Bridge Course was taken during SIP preparation. Bridge Courses were managed by community with the

support of ASN and schools. ASN provides education material supports required for operating the classes.

2. ASN's Action Level Drive for Quality Education:

2.1. Physical Infrastructure Improvement Supports: A Key to Quality Education

ASN provided notable amount of supports to various schools for either building new classrooms or maintenance of school buildings or construction of toilets or provisioning drinking water etc. The physical infrastructure supports

provided at local level have given new life to the schools, students and to the community as a whole. Some schools were operated under the open sky before ASN intervention, when classes were disturbed quite a lot during the summer and winter season forcing the students to stay at

home. But now the new school buildings constructed through the ASN supports

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"Learning can take place anywhere irrespective of its location but effective learning can only take place in a child friendly environment".



have enough space with sufficient ventilation and light and the school

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A girl student said, 'the picture of the entire village has changed due to the new school building constructed by ASN. We like to go to school every day as we do not have any fear of rain, storm and heat'.

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children go to school regularly without any disruptions of rain, cold and hot. The new classrooms have proved to be a boon for creating learning environment in the classrooms.

The encircled

quotations of some children and teachers are the self-resemblance of how good school building could contribute to effective learning without any fear of natural calamities.

ASN's contribution to promoting quality education was also based on the essence of building congenial external school

environment by providing supports for toilet

construction and provisioning drinking water in the schools.

Similarly, supports for school repair and maintenance, fencing and compound wall contributed a lot to beautify the

external environment in the ASN supported schools. ASN's supports for beautifying the external environment of

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"I used to leave the classes previously as there were no separate toilets for boys and girls and no provision of drinking water in the school. Now I don't need to go to home for toilet and drinking water and I am much regular in the classroom now as my school has separate toilets for boys / girls and drinking water facility, which were provided by ASN" - Statement of a Girl studying at Grade 5.

A HT said, 'we were forced to run the classes under the open sky until ASN provided us 4 classroom new building. It is just like a life regained for our community'.

Similarly, a class 5 student said, "our classes used to be closed in the rainy season as we did not have good school building. It is ASN, which provided us this beautiful building that encouraged us to go to school regularly

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the schools was based on the conviction that the effective learning could be disturbed due to the absence of appropriate toilets for boys and girls, lack of drinking water in the school and unsecured encroachment of school compound by cattle and occurrence of various mal-activities in the absence of compound wall.

education materials such as bags, dresses, pens, books, copies etc. to Bridge Course children and marginalized school children not only helped bring the out of school children to formal schooling but also contributed to their enhanced learning.

One girl student of Grade 5 (supported by many) said, "Previously I saw the teacher beating the student with stick. Now they don't punish us with stick. But they teach with love and affection".

A dalit student in Mahottari said otherwise, "our teacher still frightened us with stick".

2.2. Incentives: A Mantra for Continuous Learning

As the primary motto was to bring working children including dalits and girls to formal school system, ASN developed different incentive schemes to help bring out-of-school children to formal school setting with a view to improving their learning. Different incentive mechanisms were introduced by ASN primarily for increasing access of marginalized children to education and secondly, for promoting quality education. It is believed that providing

Likewise, different educational supports were also provided such as posters, banners, furniture, carpet, cushion, mat, blackboard, lecture podium etc. which added some values to promoting quality education.

2.3. Child Friendly Learning Environment: An Essence of Quality Education

Several goal achieving outcomes were visible in terms of ensuring child friendly learning environment in ASN supported

schools. Classrooms were decorated with attractive academic posters and wall painting. Similarly, carpets were provided on the floor. Cushions were provided to the ECD and Grade one children. The small children were busy in self-motivated learning activities sitting on cushions and working in group on the round-tables. Educational slogans are painted on the wall over the door. The codes of conduct for school actors have been developed, written and displayed on the walls of the school building. This continuous initiation of ASN resulted in the declaration of SZOP (School as a Zone of Peace) in ASN supported schools after unanimous decision of all local stakeholders including the members of political parties.



The children are becoming more active and frank enough to talk without any hesitation with their peers and seniors. The initiation of ASN has resulted in children-led-instruction in the classroom in the absence of class teacher. Cases of severe corporal punishment were significantly reduced after ASN's intervention in its supported schools. Likewise, effective social awareness raising campaign ultimately resulted in developing social harmony and nondiscrimination with the dalit and children from low income families. It was indeed a great change that had taken place in ASN supported schools.

Inclusive participation of dalit and economically low income children in CC and school activities developed a kind of sense of recognition, ownership and spontaneous participation, which directly or indirectly affected the student learning environment positively.

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*A janajati parent
(supported by dalit)
affirmed that his
ward was very
inspired by new
school building and
school decoration
and, hence, he always
liked to go to school.*

2.4. Student Teacher Ratio (STR) and Student Classroom Ratio (SCR): Indicator of Quality Education

The STR and SCR have a vital role to play in promoting quality education. Both STR and SCR have direct and proportionate relationship with the quality of learning. The high degree of STR and SCR has adverse effect on effective learning. Hence, every country normally develops a benchmark for STR and SCR directly regulated through legal provisions. The policy of Government of Nepal (GON) has articulated to maintain 50 for STR and 50 for SCR in all community schools. So far as the ASN supported schools are concerned, the Student Teacher Ratio (STR) and Student Classroom Ratio (SCR) have come down significantly following the ASN intervention. The STR has not come down as expected, while the SCR has come down significantly due to new classrooms constructed with the support of ASN. The average STR and SCR in ASN supported schools are 73 and 68 respectively. ASN has been giving much focus on bringing down STR and SCR in which it has largely succeeded so far. With these efforts, the quality of learning in ASN supported schools has gone up in terms of dropout

reduction, increased retention and rising grade promotion rate.

2.5. School Running Days: Means of Ensuring Quality Education

The quality of education also depends to a greater extent on the number of days the classes are opened. Basic learning takes place in classroom environment. More is the number of days the schools are opened, more is the opportunity for children to learn effectively. In Nepal, regular classes are usually interrupted due to teachers' absenteeism, political strikes and poor school infrastructure. ASN internalized its importance and has greatly focused on increasing the number of school running days. The schools were declared as a Zone of Peace with the local consensus with all related stakeholders including the political parties. Following the ASN's planned efforts, the total number of school running days has significantly gone up and even surpassed its target of minimum 192 days in all ASN supported schools.

2.6. Teachers' / Children's Regularity: An Impetus to Quality Education

Teachers' and children's absenteeism has remained to be a serious concern in Nepal

Smiles - Reflections of Happiness!!!

The out of school children who either did not go to school ever or dropped out about four to six years back after some years of schooling, again joined the school after the initiation of ASN. These school dropped out girls (most of them are Dalits) did the Bridge Course for one year and joined the school directly in Grade 3, 4 and 5 later on. They are expressing their happiness assuming their bright future after they joined the school. They thanked ASN for providing them the opportunities for and encouraging them for going to the school. Who knows, they could be the future Engineer, Doctors, Social Scientist, Teacher, Politician, Advocate, Accountant or Educationist etc.

Looking around the class, there are posters, warm carpet and cushion, small tables, well-ventilated clean and bright room. No desks, no benches, no chairs but a floor that gives them a lot of comfort and the environment comparable to an ideal home. Most of them are from Dalits and economically poor family. But they have enormous hopes and assumptions about their future. Thanks to the contribution made by the project implemented with the supports of ASN.

to negate effective learning in community schools. School teaching force in Nepal has been heavily politicized and, thus, the school teachers have the tendency of being irregular in the classrooms. Likewise, many children, mainly the disadvantaged, dalits and poor children do not go to schools regularly due to their involvement in household works and income generating activities. Child absenteeism in the community schools has also been characterized by the lack of social awareness, early child marriage, prevalence

of corporal punishment in schools and lack of parental trust that the education would yield better future for their children. These scenarios were quite common even in ASN supported schools' catchment area. It was being felt that teachers' and child absenteeism in community schools were among the major obstacles to quality education in most of the community schools in Nepal.

ASN realized the need of bringing down the teachers' and children absenteeism in

order to promote effective learning in the classrooms. School Management Committees are made more responsible to reduce the teacher's absenteeism. Codes of conducts are developed separately for teachers, parents and students. Non-violent teaching method has been promoted. Door to door social awareness campaigns and regular monitoring of child are carried out to prevent child absenteeism. With the initiation of ASN, Mother Groups (MGs) are formed and their awareness is raised to send their children to schools regularly. Child Clubs (CCs) and Youth Clubs (YCs) are formed and mobilized at local level to inspire the parents to send their children to schools regularly. With these coordinated efforts, the teachers' and children's absenteeism in ASN supported schools has come down drastically and, thus, resulted in uninterrupted regular learning environment.

2.7. Effects of ASN Supports on Education Quality:

The ASN supports had some 'value added effects' on education quality. The physical infrastructure improvements of ASN supported schools directly or indirectly had some positive effects on promoting quality education. School

learning environment was boosted up due to the physical infrastructure improvements (new classroom, school maintenance, compound wall, fencing, zink roof, plastering etc.) of several sample schools. The ASN supported schools have spacious classroom with appropriate ventilation and light, comfortable floor seating (carpet, cushion), sufficient provision of bench, desks and tables. Classroom size was manageable to accommodate student's intake except in some schools. These have resulted in enhanced learning of the students.

The provision of toilets and drinking water had positive effects on regularity of students. The classroom settings (blackboard, educational posters, banners, classroom decoration etc.), educational wall painting, availability of education materials and sports materials provided by ASN not only created attraction for the children to effective learning but also provided them an opportunity for external exposure through extra co-curricular and cultural activities. Consequently, the ASN supports have contributed to widen the inner horizon and overall personality development of the children.

2.8. Local Capacity Building

One of the important interventions of ASN is teacher training without which the goal of providing quality education to the children would remain unaccomplished. ASN is also involved in organizing meetings and interactions with



parents and teachers; providing SIP training to SMC, teachers, PTA and parents. Such capacity building initiatives were found to be quite useful on the one hand for enhancing the capacity at local level and promoting quality education in the schools on the other hand.

2.9. SMC and PTA Participation

SMC participation in school decision making has increased following the ASN intervention due to the frequent

monitoring and supervision of ASN staffs. But the degree of participation varies from person to person. Women's participation in SMC is confined to fulfilling legal requirements only. Similar scenario is found to have existed in the case of dalits' representation. It was observed that elite people have control over other people in SMC. However, in recent years, active participation of female members has become a common story. Their awareness level has also widened following their involvement in school decision making. The SMC chairpersons and members were keenly interested in exploring the funds and supports required for upgrading the school capacity.

Despite ASN's coordinated efforts, the participation of PTA in school decision making was found to be minimal. The



PTA has been formed simply for complying with legal formalities. In this respect, SMCs are much active than PTA in all ASN supported schools.

2.10. Community Participation

Implementing project activities through wider community participation has been the primary focus of ASN. Community participation in school decision making has become a frequent phenomenon. Not only upper caste community people but

also dalit, janajati, women, economically poor parents actively take part in the discussions and interactions with the ASN team.

"ASN taught us to raise local voice strongly. Therefore, we are participating actively in community affairs", one dalit parent said.

Community participation and involvement of social elites, dalits, and ethnical groups including women in school affairs has significantly increased in most of the schools in ASN working area. The

community people including parents, HT/teachers, SMC, PTA, students, CC, YC, MG, members etc., actively participated in enrollment campaign, school construction works, school annual



meeting etc. ASN is very popular in all the VDCs under its support. Most of the parents affirmed that they were always prepared to participate in public discussions and interactions organized by ASN. In recent time, community readiness to contribute to school improvements work either by providing cash supports or labor supports has significantly increased

2.11. Community Awareness and Ownership

ASN has observed that people's awareness towards their children's education has increased in recent years due to the implementation of several education programs in ASN supported schools. Not only elite group of people but also dalit, janajatis and women's engagement in school activities have multiplied after the conflict period. The legal provision for parental representation in SMC, PTA,

etc., has been the stimulating factor for increased awareness of the community people. In most of the cases, the parents/guardians participate in SMC, PTA and other school meetings where they are informed about the activities of the school. Similarly, following the formation of MG in the ASN working area, women participation has also increased significantly. In order to ensure their rights, they often visit schools to discuss about their children's education and to take part in school decision making activities. The government programme of school's management transfer to community has also increased community awareness. The new roles given to them have been the real impetus to increase community awareness and ownership in recent time.

Likewise, ASN has also emphasized on people's involvement in school decision making. People are more inspired towards building child friendly learning environment in the school. The awareness of community people also increased due to the implementation of enrollment campaign, code of conducts and periodical discussions carried out by ASN about the school education.

Due to their wider participation and increased community roles in school decision making in recent time, the parents are gradually prepared to assume the ownership of school in order to improve its performance so that their children could receive quality education at their own locality. However, ASN also observed that the evils of massive poverty and illiteracy still prevailing in some VDCs have constrained the proper transformation of social awareness into educational achievements.

2.12. Initiatives for Child Right to Education at Local Level:

Effective interventions on protecting child rights to education were done with ASN initiation in its working area. CCs are formed with the inclusive composition of dalits, janajatis, girls and boys. In some



of the CCs, girls dominated the CC composition. Similarly, dalit and janajati students equally represented the CCs in ASN supported schools..

The initiatives of ASN to form CCs in each school have proved to be quite effective when viewed with changes observed in child behavior after CC formation. ASN observed the presence of eloquent, confident and active children in all ASN supported schools. CC members are much active in expressing their feelings, experiences, and demands. The children in all schools are also quite aware of their rights. "After the CCs were formed in the schools, children are becoming more active than earlier times", a HT said. Their participation in school affairs has also increased significantly.



Learning without fear was introduced in ASN supported schools in consensus with community people that created a child friendly learning environment in the school ultimately resulting in enhanced student learning. Likewise, schools were declared as SZOP area in the ASN supported schools for which all the local stakeholders including political parties unanimously agreed to abide by the SZOP commitments.

2.13. Social Awareness Through Educational Slogans:

ASN's drive for quality education is deeply entrenched in the heart of the local people in Dhanusha and Mahottari districts. Heart catching slogans are developed by ASN which are touchy enough to inspire all communities in sending their children to school for the quest of quality education. Most of the educational slogans give meaningful messages to the people who have interest in education. Some of the educational slogans developed by ASN and disseminated through pamphlets and posters are described as follows:

- ▶ "Janam diya ta, padhat diya" (when you give a birth to a baby, give him the education too)

- ▶ "Kaam chhodau, School pathau" (from workplace to school)
- ▶ "Ashal shikshya diya" (provide a good education)
- ▶ "Bidhyalaya shanty chhetra" (school as a zone of peace)
- ▶ "Garibi nibaran" (poverty reduction)
- ▶ Mushahar samudayak lel shikshya ijot" (education is a prestige for Mushahar community)
- ▶ "Yuba swarojgar" (youth self-employment)
- ▶ "Samudaya ma adharit bal poshan" (community based child nutrition)
- ▶ "Balbalika ko lagi samahit gunastariya shikshya" (Inclusive quality education for children)
- ▶ "Yaun durbyabhar" (sexual harassment)

These educational slogans are the symbolic reflections of the ASN efforts done in creating social awareness about the importance of quality education in ASN work districts. These slogans are circulated widely across the entire districts and villages of ASN working area. These slogans have proved to be an effective measure for inspiring not only the local

communities but also other relevant stakeholders such as politicians, government institutions, CBOs, NGOs and INGOs to give emphasis on increasing education access and promoting quality education in the districts.

2.14. Community Defined Quality Education: A Recent Innovation

Meaning of quality education differs from individual to individual, institutions to institutions and country to country. Various researchers have defined quality education in different ways. However, the notion of quality education does not differ much and gives identical meaning to the learners and knowledge seekers. As stated in the foregoing paragraphs, ASN has done several school level and community level interventions on promoting quality education in its work area marked by the significant presence of the schools. In recent years, major focus has been given on the "community defined model of quality education"

Different stakeholders have different opinion about the meaning of quality education in ASN supported schools. The Resource Persons, teachers, students, parents, YC members, MG members have different opinion about quality of

education that they want for their children. The following paragraphs highlight their perception about quality of education.

Stakeholders' perception toward Quality education

Stakeholders that ASN is associated with have their own different perspectives toward quality education. All of them, however, have a common perspective toward it: satisfaction that a child gets from what the school delivers in the name of education. The paragraphs below portray their different perception toward quality education as they it.

What is taught in the classroom is learned by the children is basic quality education. But what is taught is either misunderstood by the learners or mis-communicated by the teacher is no quality education - a RP's opinion.

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and extracurricular activities are linked with student learning.

Another RP, Naresh Kumar Yadav has different opinion about quality education. According to him, good physical infrastructure, trained teachers, child friendly learning environment, indigenous curricula, non-violent teaching, sufficiency of teaching and learning materials, schools free from political disturbance, active SMC and PTA, visionary Head-teacher, wider and inclusive community participation in school decision making, conducive home environment for learning, frequent evaluation of the children through home assignments and weekly and monthly tests, good library, sufficiency of office equipments such as Computer, Printer, Science lab and equipments etc. are the ingredients of quality education.

RP's Perception:

Ram Dev Chaudhary is a Resource Person in ASN working area. For him, the quality of education is meant for ensuring an environment where children are inspired to go to school happily

Teachers' Perception:

Teachers have also differing views about quality education. Satyanarayan Jha, a teacher in Dhanusha district opines that what the curriculum has stipulated for, if provided to or understood by the children, is quality education. For this to take place teachers should be trained, effective evaluation of performing and nonperforming teachers should be carried out, presence of professional SMC and PTA is must, sufficiency of education

materials is prerequisite, good physical infrastructure and availability of library and science lab is present in the school.

Similar views are expressed by other teachers also. Parmeshor Lal Karna, a teacher of Mahottari district, has the firm conviction that a school can provide quality education only when the school is free from political interference, and appropriate positions of teachers are available, good school buildings and availability of toilets separately for boys and girls are present, continuous assessment of student learning is carried out through regular home assignments and monthly tests, sufficient salary is paid to the teachers, teaching and learning materials are sufficiently available, education is provided in English medium, SMCs are committed towards better performance other than on fulfilling their vested interest and parents are responsible for creating learning environment at home.

Some other teachers have defined quality education as an overall personality development of the children which can be achieved in a child friendly school environment characterized by good school buildings and compound wall with provision of good toilets, drinking water,

electricity, computer and internet; local curricula supplemented by national standard curriculum and English medium instructions; continuous monitoring of the performance of the teachers; skilled, trained and regular teachers; non-violent teaching; application of knowledge of training in actual classroom settings; timely availability of textbooks and education materials; availability of science labs and libraries; proper incentives for the children from low income families including dalits; wider participation of children in extracurricular activities; forward looking and professional school management team; regular technical backstopping of GON and NGOs; regular monitoring of the schools by GON institutions and community group; wider and inclusive community participation in school decision making; extensive social mobilization to inspire illiterate parents about education of their children; replication of good practices and

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*Every child is keen to learn but due to lack of enabling environment, he/she cannot learn. Hence, every teacher must spend enough time to understand the feeling and aspiration of a child and teach him/her accordingly
– A teacher's perspective.*

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sharing learning experience of one school to another; trustworthy relationship between students and teachers; culture of compliance with codes of conduct and absence of political interference.

'In my own role as a teacher, I believe in

Quality education is an end result of students' actual understanding of the intent of the curriculum and behavioral reflections of their knowledge that they learn from the classrooms – A teacher's opinion.

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the value of implementing national education standards uniformly in all types of schools whether it is community school or institutional (private) school. I believe that uniform access to the intent of curriculum along with classroom

instructions in local (mother) language will provide the students an immense opportunity to understand and internalize the lessons taught by a teacher. Most importantly, I know that none of this will happen without strong teacher preparation programs, presence of sound physical infrastructure and child friendly environment in a school. Particularly in a country like Nepal, where

most of the teachers are politicized and schools have become a commercial goods instead of public goods, ensuring quality education uniformly in all schools need strong government commitments and efforts , 'said a teacher'.

Self-assessment of the performance of the teacher is a vital factor in quality education. How does s/he teach in the classroom? Do the students understand what s/he teaches? Does s/he teach as per the prescription of the curriculum? These are such questions that the teacher should always endeavor to answer from within him/herself, said a teacher. Another teacher from ASN supported school in Dhanusha district believes that the quality education makes the children perform better in any situation for which s/he could be proud of.

Another teacher opined that "liberal promotion policy (LPP) of the Nepal government has degraded the quality of education in most of the community schools. The Continuous Assessment System (CAS) has not been effectively implemented and wrongly misunderstood by the school actors. Hence, in order for enhancing the quality education of the community school, LPP must be backed

up by the effective implementation of CAS".

Quality education is defined in actual school setting in which the teachers are aware of the fact that what they deliver they understand and what they teach the students understand and behave accordingly. Teacher's ability to understand the theme of curricula and teach accordingly to the student's need is a vital determinant of quality education. Likewise, learner's ability to learn and behave accordingly depends to a larger extent on the child friendly environment that a school has. Hence, based on the teacher's perception, quality education is to ensure professional and overall personality development of the child which is fostered in a conducive and enabling environment both in the schools and at home.

Children's Perception:

Manish Kumar Sahani, a Grade 9 student of Yog Kumar Higher Secondary School, is a brilliant student in the Balwa VDC of Mahottari district. Quality education, for him, is ensured only when all classes are operated regularly without any disturbances, all the teachers and students

remain present in the classroom, weekly and monthly tests are carried out frequently, daily homework is given and the same is checked by the teachers on a regular basis, corporal punishment is prohibited in the classroom, class sizes are small and manageable to enable the teachers to take care of individual student in the classroom, school environment is free from political pressure and social wrongdoings etc.

Likewise, a Grade 10 student and Chairman of Youth Club, Mahesh Kumar Singh has also similar opinion about

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What do you expect from a school where SMC members including Chairman are heavily politicized and use the school resources for their vested interest, teachers send their children to private schools, code of conducts are not strictly adhered to by school actors, political activities are carried out at school premises, parents engage their children on household works, home assignments are not checked by the teachers. These activities are contributing to poor quality education in community schools, said a Grade 8 student.

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quality education. He firmly believes that quality education transforms the present into bright future of the children; learning takes place in a child friendly environment; acquisition of knowledge

is not only confined to developing reading, writing and numeracy skills but also oriented towards providing practical form of education such as technical and vocational education to children so that they can apply their acquired knowledge in the practical field. In addition, the education that transforms a young mind into a developed one and

helps earn wisdom, respect and confidence resulting in overall personality development of a child is quality education.

Similarly, a Youth Club Secretary in Balwa VDC of Mahottari district strongly opines that quality education is possible only

when a school has skilled and trained subject teachers able to teach according to the premises of curriculum; properly managed classrooms accommodating handy number of students; teachers' and students' regularity; code of conducts developed and complied with by all school actors; curriculum that addresses the students' requirements and choice; professional school management team; conducive learning environment. In addition, for him quality education in community school could only be possible only when all the school actors including District Education Officials, School Teachers, SMC Chairperson and members etc. have self-respect and confidence in quality of education provided to them in community schools. Hence, until and unless such attitudes are developed and most of the school actors send their children back to community school, ensuring quality education in the community school remains as a distant dream.

Children studying in the ASN supported schools have notable observation about the quality of education. They firmly believe that the quality of schools has been enhanced following the ASN intervention. However, the quality has

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"Availability of good school building, separate toilets for boys and girls, library facilities, science lab, timely distribution of textbooks, weekly and monthly tests, trained teachers, learning environment at home could only contribute to quality education" – A Grade 10 student opines.

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been confined to developing external environment of the school only. Much intervention is needed to ensure effective learning at the classroom as well as at home.

Quality of education has been adversely affected due to the social and cultural settings of the students. The students who are more engaged in household works are the principal absentees in the school. More absentees in the schools are from low income and marginalized family such as dalits. The students who are not regular in the school are mostly low performers. Hence, education quality of the schools with increased students' absenteeism has degraded in recent years, as unanimously opined by Grade 8, 9 & 10 children.

Similarly, "teachers' ability to teach effectively in the classroom determines the quality of education", reported a large number of Secondary level students in ASN supported schools. To have extensive knowledge about curriculum is necessary, but effective delivery in the classroom is all the more vital for students' learning. A teacher's vast knowledge about curriculum if not delivered properly in the classroom is a kind of waste of knowledge, said a Grade 10 student.

Another factor in determining the quality of education is parental awareness about the education of their children. The parents who are much aware about the importance of education are always eager to know the performance of their children; they frequently discuss with the teachers, create learning environment at home, provide enough time for their children to read and write at home, and always inspire their children to perform better. Hence, students coming from such family perform better in the examination. In contrast, the children of the illiterate parents who are not either aware of the importance of education or always engage their children in household works are mostly low performers in the schools. Most of the Secondary Grade children from ASN supported schools have such opinion. Hence, student regularity, better learning environment at home and parental awareness are major factors in determining education quality.

Parents' Perception:

Different parents have different meaning for quality education. In the opinion of Ram Narayan Yadav, a resident of Yagyanbhumi VDC 3, Keshavkuti, Dhanusha, education that fulfills the

aspiration of parents for their children to get good marks in the examination is quality education.

As a parent I would answer the meaning of quality education as, "I want my primary school son to be prepared to

think. I want him to develop a work ethic that will empower him to complete school assignments at home. I want him to understand what the teacher has taught in the classroom. I want him to read and write fluently and do mathematics. I want him to have an overall knowledge about his school, community, country, cultures, traditions, religions and social values and norms so that he will be able to

communicate with people of all backgrounds wherever he encounters them. I want him to focus all the time on making his future bright through continuous learning". These statements of a parent in Dhanusha district are the symbolic expressions with regard to

parental aspirations about quality education.

For an illiterate parent of Mahottari district, the meaning of quality education is to make sure that their children become educated, popular and enterprising and their future becomes brighter. For an elite and socially aware parent in Dhanusha district, the meaning of quality education is to make sure that their children become competitive, conversant, creative, knowledgeable and forward-looking. Hence, the meaning of quality education for both types of parents is reflected through their aspirations about creating bright and secured future of their children.

The community people have different opinion about the quality of education being provided by institutional (private) and community schools. For some parents, quality of education is very good in private school. Rewati Devi Yadav, a mother from Dhanusha district, who has two school-going age sons, told in dismay, "I withdrew both of my sons (who were studying in Grade 3 and 4 respectively) from the community school and sent them to private school because they were unable to read and write even the alphabets properly. I repeatedly complained to the

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For another parent, quality education is that form of education, which makes the children to behave positively in the society, create social awareness, understand properly what is taught by the teacher and yield social respect and pride.

Headteacher about my wards' inability to read and write, but it was not properly heard and, hence, I was compelled to send them to nearby private school. Now my sons can write and read in English and, therefore, the quality of education in private school is very good".

In contrast to the feeling of Rewati Devi Yadav, another dalit mother from Mahottari district has diverse opinion about the quality of education being provided by institutional and community schools. She claims that "Private schools are the schools for the rich people. These schools have become much commercial. We cannot afford the costs of private schools. Hence, education quality of private schools has no any meaning for us as we are unable to send our children to private schools. For us, the community schools are the places where the future of our children becomes bright. Hence, we are much concerned about these schools. We want the government to make the community schools a better place to provide quality education to our children. Thanks to ASN for constructing a school building and providing different supports to our children, which has contributed to the quality of education in our community school".

Parental understanding about quality education focuses on (i) meeting the needs of their children, (ii) children's bright and secured future (iii) proper understanding of what is taught in the classroom and good behavior, and (iv) fulfilling parental aspirations of making their children good and self-reliant citizens of the country.

SMC / PTA's Perception:

Former SMC Chairman in Saraswati Rastriya Primary School in Yagyanbhumi VDC, Keshavkuti, boldly claimed that ASN developed the mechanism of ensuring quality education through the formation of Child Club, Mother Group, Youth Club and developed them as a local change agent to create social awareness about the importance of education in the local community. Further, ASN provided education materials and library facilities, encouraged regularity of teachers and students in the classroom, provided supports for the construction of new classrooms and toilets in the schools, developed consensus among the local stakeholders to declare the School as a Zone of Peace, developed the code of conduct for school actors, prompted the schools to increase the number of school opening days to a minimum of 200 days

in a year, and created social awareness in the marginalized community to send their out of school children to schools.

A female member of SMC in one of the ASN supported schools in Dhanusha district apparently accepts that a school with trained and skilled teachers, accountable and responsible school management team, good physical infrastructure, child friendly learning environment in the classroom, regular teachers and students is the symbol of quality education. Similarly, another SMC member in Mahottari district claims that quality education contributes to production of more graduates, reduction in the dropouts, increased retention, Majority of the SMC Chairpersons, SMC members and PTA members think that the quality education could only be possible if following factors are available in the school:

- ▶ Quality school building and classrooms with proper ventilation, light and space.
- ▶ Appropriate space of land for school building with proper fencing and compound wall.
- ▶ Provision of drinking water in the school.
- ▶ Provision of separate toilets for boys and girls.
- ▶ Provision of Science Lab, Computer Lab, Library and First-aid facility.
- ▶ Optimum class size not exceeding 35 students in a class.
- ▶ Scholarship to children from low income and marginalized family.
- ▶ Provision of free education with free distribution of textbooks, education materials and school uniform especially to the children from low income and marginalized family.
- ▶ Provision of midday meal to the children from low income and marginalized family.
- ▶ Trained and skilled teachers.
- ▶ Sufficient teachers' position.
- ▶ Regularity of teachers and students.
- ▶ Non-violent teaching in the classroom.
- ▶ Weekly and monthly tests and regular home assignments.
- ▶ Child friendly learning environment in the school as well as at home.

- ▶ English medium education.
- ▶ Teaching through music, role play and Information Technology.
- ▶ Integrated provision of uniform national and local curriculum.
- ▶ Provision of extracurricular activities in the school with sufficient number of sports materials and musical instruments.
- ▶ Dynamic and professional school management team.
- ▶ Capacity building of teachers, SMC and PTA through different types of meaningful trainings.
- ▶ Provision of code of conducts to be strictly complied with by all the school actors.
- ▶ Parental participation in school decision making.
- ▶ Frequent and close coordination and interaction between parents and teachers about the education of children.
- ▶ Frequent social awareness raising campaign about the importance of school education.
- ▶ Frequent monitoring and effective technical backstopping by the District Education Office.
- ▶ Enough perks or salary for teachers.

Community Defined Indicators of Quality Education:

Quality education as defined by the community is an accomplishment of the minimum learning needs of the children in a child friendly learning environment-enabling environment, where they see to it that their children get what they want to learn, the teachers deliver what they are expected to and the school management creates a welcoming school environment. Based on this perceived quality of education by the community, the following indicators are summarily presented in a matrix form:

Indicators of quality education

Key Actors	System Approach to Quality Education at School			
	Inputs	Process	Environment	Outputs
Students	▶ Appropriate class size ▶ Student Teacher Ratio:1:25 ▶ Qualified teachers. ▶ Relevant curriculum and textbooks. ▶ Professional / dedicated SMC ▶ School building with sufficient space, ventilation and light. ▶ Library ▶ Science and computer laboratory. ▶ Separate toilets for boys and girls. ▶ Timely availability of textbooks. ▶ Parental awareness and literacy	▶ Regulars Classes ▶ Regularity of teachers and students. ▶ Regular (weekly, monthly) examination and tests ▶ Daily home assignments and feedback from teachers. ▶ Non-violent teaching ▶ Efficient use of available resources. ▶ Preparation and compliance of code of conducts. ▶ Effective pedagogies	▶ Free from political interference ▶ Child friendly learning environment ▶ Building trust and self-respect in community schools. ▶ Supportive home learning environment. ▶ Socio cultural background of students	▶ Increased level of learning. ▶ Overall personality development

Key Actors	System Approach to Quality Education at School			
	Inputs	Process	Environment	Outputs
Parents		▶ Effective teaching and learning		▶ Good test score ▶ Positive behavior ▶ Increased social and cultural awareness. ▶ Social respect and pride ▶ Reading, writing and numeracy skills developed. ▶ Enhanced socio-cultural understanding and communication skills. ▶ Creative and innovative knowledge
Teachers	▶ Qualified and trained teachers. ▶ Professional SMC and PTA ▶ Adequate education materials. ▶ Good and adequate school physical infrastructure including classrooms with sufficient space, ventilation and light. ▶ Availability of library and science labs.	▶ Performance based evaluation of teachers. ▶ Regular assignments with feedback and test. ▶ Non-violent teaching. ▶ Translation of knowledge acquired from training into teaching and learning. ▶ Extracurricular	▶ Conducive learning environment at home. ▶ Free from political interference. ▶ Child friendly learning environment at school and at home. ▶ Trustworthy relationship between students and teachers. ▶ Effective implementation of continuous assessment system.	▶ Overall personality development

Key Actors	System Approach to Quality Education at School			
	Inputs	Process	Environment	Outputs
	▶ Availability of toilets separately for boys and girls. ▶ Availability of drinking water, computer and internet. ▶ Defined Student Teacher Ratio ▶ Adequate teacher salary ▶ Integrated national curriculum framework and local curricula. ▶ Regularity of teachers and students. ▶ Timely availability of textbooks. ▶ Provision of scholarship for children from low income and marginalized families. ▶ Regular supervision and monitoring by GON and civil society. ▶ Teachers' understanding about curricula.	- activities. ▶ Inclusive community participation in school decision making. ▶ Social mobilization. ▶ Replication of good practices and sharing learning experiences among the schools. ▶ Preparation and compliance of code of conducts. ▶ Medium of instructions in mother tongue. ▶ Self assessment of the teachers' performance. ▶ Child friendly learning environment at school and at home.		
SMC/ PTA	▶ Quality school building and classrooms with proper ventilation, light and space ▶ Playgrounds and compound	▶ Building social awareness ▶ Regularity of teachers and students	▶ Child friendly learning environment at schools and at home.	

Key Actors	System Approach to Quality Education at School			
	Inputs	Process	Environment	Outputs
	wall. ▶ Drinking water facilities and separate toilets for boys and girls. ▶ Science lab, computer lab, library and first-aid facility. ▶ Student classroom ratio. ▶ Provision of scholarship and midday meal for disadvantaged and marginalized group of children. ▶ Provision of free textbooks, education materials and school uniform etc. ▶ Qualified teachers. ▶ Student teacher ratio. ▶ Integrated national and local curriculum framework. ▶ Musical instruments and sports materials ▶ Professional school management team. ▶ Capacity building of teachers, SMC and PTA ▶ Adequate teachers' salary	▶ Non-violent teaching. ▶ Weekly and monthly tests and regular assignments with feedback. ▶ Extracurricular activities ▶ Preparation and compliance with code of conduct. ▶ Parental participation in school decision making ▶ Frequent interactions between teachers and parents ▶ Awareness raising at community level. ▶ Regular supervision, monitoring and evaluation		

Way Forward and Future Direction:

To ensure quality education at the community level and sustain it for the continued satisfaction of the stakeholders (community people), many good practices of ASN as community mobilization and empowerment, child focused teacher training, creation of child friendly school environment, effective mobilization of child clubs and self-help groups, joint monitoring of school activities with a focus on teacher performance, promotion of mother tongue intervention at primary level, intact linkage and networking with relevant organizations as GOs, NGOs, CBOs, DPs, mothers' groups, regular support to school management should be continued with more fervor and strategic interventions. More specifically, ASN should continue to abide by the principles of inclusion, equality, gender parity, participative planning, shared financial responsibility and reaching the

unreached. In order to materialize the concept of quality education the community way, ASN, in the days ahead, is to focus on the following strategic measures:

ASN should continue community awareness and mobilization program with increased institutional cooperation with government and non- governmental organizations to create and ensure child and community friendly school environment for increased learning outcomes of the students in the community.

Initiatives to be taken by ASN should continually focus on strengthening the support services extended to the schools that have successfully enrolled and retained the out of school children instead of putting focus on establishing new schools or support centers in the community. The marginalized children

enrolled in such schools should be provided with incentives as scholarship, mid day meal, stationery, dress materials.

As per the spirit of ASN-a child in school is a child free from child labor-school retention program with a focus on the disadvantaged and vulnerable children should be initiated and institutionalized for a sustained achievement of these children who often become the victim of the educational wastage that the school faces.

Promotional activities for children such as child clubs, ECM, assessment tracking, parent- children interactions, progress report of children sharing with the stakeholders, child to child support service should be institutionalized seeking active parental involvement in the conduction of such activities.

ASN should further its effort to strengthen its network not only in its work districts but also beyond to develop forum for continuous sharing and learning from lessons and successful practices that aimed at providing quality education to all including the children from the disadvantaged community.

Practice of good governance of schools based on improved school management and active parental as well as community participation should remain at the centre stage of ASN support to the schools in its operational districts to deliver what the community has expected from the schools. This can be done by encouraging parental participation mostly that of females, in the PTA, SMC, School Construction Committee, mothers' group etc.

Child learning based on regular Child Competency Assessment/Continuity Assessment System should be ensured through regular professional support extended to the teachers through the joint effort of ASN and its development partners. A thorough orientation to the teachers in this aspect should be provided and the practice of maintaining students' competency profile for its use in their promotion should be in place and its use by the teachers should be monitored by the SMC as well as PTA.

ASN should work in the direction of providing learning materials to the children, mostly the disadvantaged ones, in their mother tongue and help the

teachers deliver instruction in the mother tongue to facilitate the understanding of the delivery by the students which is expected to accelerate the pace of their learning in their own style.

As quality education is a concern and commitment of all the concerned, ASN should come forward to assist the schools to define it and develop its indicators contextually in order to help the school to addressing the minimum learning needs of the students, especially the disadvantaged. This can be done by helping the school to create and maintain minimum learning environment (enabling environment) through the physical and professional support that it has been providing since the beginning of the school support project.

Regular parental support is deemed necessary to create conducive environment at home for child's learning so that the parents will not keep the child engaged in household affairs at the cost of their child's engagement in educational activities. To this effect, ASN can organize regular parental training together with SMC, PTA training to facilitate smooth transition of the child from home to

school environment.

ASN, to address children's issues as domestic labor, little learning opportunity, unsupportive learning environment, parental interference and negligence, should prepare defined package of intervention to attract the involvement of VDCs, TDCs so that they can regularly allocate certain amount of resources as part of their social and financial obligation toward the community people of their work area.

Promotion of model schools operating along the spirit of child friendly, inclusive, quality education should remain another important area of strategic intervention that ASN should actualize to demonstrate to other community as well as institutional schools what constitutes the ingredients of a school dedicated to satisfy the learning needs of the children in the name of quality education.

Together with its development partners and the network it has, ASN is expected to launch and sustain school health and sanitation activities to create a healthy learning environment in both the school and community. This will also work as a

demonstration effect to the community to create a healthy community.

It is important for a vibrant organization like ASN that it offers its assistance to school in keeping its financial resources and expenditures transparent and the school regularly organizes social audit programs for winning the cooperation and confidence of the local community toward the betterment of the school's performance so as to satisfy the interests

of the students.

As a child labor free society is a society for all including the disadvantaged children, ASN should take extra initiative to help the schools organize remedial tutorial classes for the children with learning difficulty. Such support will chart out the development trend of the children in difficult learning situation and extend the needed support with proper feed - back from the teachers.

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