

**Final report of a study on exploring effective measures for
strengthening continuous student assessment and its
implementation strategies at school level**

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The 'one-shot' testing of students' learning has been at the core of an increasing criticism on conventional examination practices. This criticism is at the root of motivating the education policy makers in Nepal to introduce the continuous assessment system of students at the basic primary level. Implementation of the continuous student assessment system in effective way has remained to be a matter of critical concern for all who believe in making student assessment functional. The urgent need is there to explore the present status of CAS, and to identify effective measures for strengthening it at the school level. The research study is an attempt in this direction. The study received support from different sectors for which the study team acknowledges their contribution.

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Prof. Dr. Basu Dev Kafle
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 1990s, CAS was introduced during the Ninth Plan period (1997-2002) to complement Liberal Promotion Policy (LPP), which aimed at reducing dropouts and repetition, particularly at primary level. Later, the Program Implementation Plan (PIP, 1999-2004) continued this concept and practice of continuous assessment of students, a mechanism whereby the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of students' behaviour are taken into account in the final grading of their school performances, as one of the key elements of quality education.

The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) extended CAS up to grade 5 on the basis of lessons learnt from a pilot program in the five Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) districts beginning in the year 2000/1. The final report on Effect of CAS on Student's Achievement, Dropouts, and Attendance (CDC, 2003), however, revealed that the CAS did not show any steady trend in the improvement of students' achievement. Later, the report of the Joint Evaluation of Nepal's SSRP Program (2009- 2016) concluded that the CAS was not yet ready to take an important role in ensuring sustainability due to its poor acceptance and understanding among teachers, pupils, parents, and decision-makers.

The lessons learnt from SSRP paved way to revamp the CAS in the on-going School Sector Development Plan (SSDP, 2016-2023) so that assessment intervention strategy can be built on the achievements of the SSRP focusing both formative and summative assessments to be more skills and learner-centred.

The present research study was carried to explore effective measures to strengthen continuous assessment of students at the school level. Its purpose was to identify the provisions made for CAS in terms of capacity building programs, inputs like manuals and testing tools for teachers, portfolio for students, and support mechanism (e.g. financial and technical) to schools. Likewise, it was to identify the lessons learnt and key issues facing the effective implementation of the CAS by the schools. It was also to explore the techniques to link the use of the CAS and the Letter Grade System in examination for enhancing students' learning and performance.

The study used SSRP (2009-2016), and SSDP (2016-2023) documents and Education Act 2073 (eighth amendment) as referents. Research reports and internal monitoring reports e.g., final report on Effect of CAS on Student's Achievement, Dropouts, and Attendance (CDC, 2003), and final report of the Joint Evaluation of Nepal's SSRP Program, 2009- 2016 were reviewed. The study also reviewed Program Handbook on CAS, 2056, Teachers Training Handbook on CAS, 2056, Teacher's Guidebook on CAS, 2056, and Instructor's Guidebook on CAS, 2056 followed by similar review of the Implementation Guide on CAS, 2068, CAS Implementation Guideline, 2072, and Letter Grading System Implementation Policy.

Research Method/ Methodology

The study was completed in three different phases. Identifying sources of data, selection and size of sample districts, preparation of research tools and timeline, arranging familiarity workshop among related experts, and pilot testing the tools were completed during the inception phase. A purposive sampling of the districts (total 8 districts) and schools (total 32 schools) to represent two EGRA implemented districts and at least one district from each province was made, which represented all three ecological belts i.e., Mountain, Hills and Terai. The basic unit for sampling in this study was a school, and therefore, at least 4 schools representing two urban and two rural areas from each sample district were selected.

Likewise, field visit, interviewing /FGD with relevant and key stakeholders, categorizing and coding, and analyzing key events in reference to selective study reports and publications were completed during the assessment phase. Qualitative data were described, analyzed, and interpreted by (a) categorizing and coding, and (b) analyzing key experiences. The field experiences were constantly compared to note compliance with provisions in manuals, documents, guidelines and directives that were in place.

In the consolidation phase, final analysis, sharing of key findings with experts and practitioners, and report writing were completed.

Provisions for CAS

Field information on provision made for CAS, and perception of teachers and other stakeholders were studied under different sub themes (1) Conceptual Clarity (2) Capacity building Manuals and testing tools (3) Student portfolio and (4) Support Mechanism. The major findings of the study were as follows:

- Most of the teachers and Head teachers recognized formative assessment as mere formality. They failed to accept CAS as means for child friendly learning and evaluation. Subject teachers identified CAS as mere additional load to them. For parents CAS was ‘taking test time and again’ and for students CAS was ‘passing exam without taking test’.
- There was seemingly lack of focused (e.g., in school demonstration/ subject focused) training. Training programs did not include (address) needs of all the subject teachers. They were inadequate (e.g., too general) to learn test item development techniques relating it to concerned curriculum. Trainings were not supported by evaluation and feedbacks. Trainings supported by on-the-spot demonstration, however, were relatively effective.
- More teachers were pre-occupied with record keeping. For many teachers, CAS format filling was mere a forced routine work. Even in CAS implemented schools, student’s progress forms were filled during periodic exams for technical purpose only. Many teachers (and HTs as well) were not sure in what ways the total sum of tick marks for individual student in particular subject could be made compatible with exam results. Most often, CAS formats were not revisited to identify students’ problems, and therefore corrective measures were rarely taken.

- Use of portfolio had become more a technical work and formality for both HTs and teachers. Portfolio management in some schools was seemingly good only in the lower grades (grade one to grade three). Teachers and HTs were not clear on the ways to make evaluation of portfolio compatible with exam results. Most of the parents were not provided, or they were not aware of their children's portfolio at school. In some schools, students' portfolio were collected in plastic sacks and stored.
- In the Manuals, there was clear indication of responsibilities of every concerned authorities and personnel for effective implementation of CAS. However, most of the SS and RPs were occupied with other administrative tasks; and therefore, the supervision of CAS and monitoring mechanism was less effective. DEO, supervisors, and RPs rarely managed CAS related in-house trainings. School lacked necessary financial/technical support for project works, and other tools to develop psycho-social domains of students.
- SMC members were less aware of CAS practices, and no programs were conducted from any level to aware SMC on implementing CAS at schools. As such, their constructive feedbacks were not observed. In the absence of proper orientation on meaning and purpose of formative assessment, schools found almost no supports from parents.

Common Practices of CAS-Effective Schools

Among sampled schools, few schools were purposively chosen which were supposed to do relatively better in implementing CAS. The study found that compared to non CAS-effective schools, the practices of CAS-effective schools were seemingly different. The common practices of CAS-effective schools were:

- Making CAS systematic through school based operational plan. Most of these schools had their own school calendars, where staff meetings were scheduled once a month. CAS practices were focused in their agenda to discuss.
- HTs in these schools were enthusiastic and motivated to implement CAS in their schools, where teachers were found accountable to HTs. There was timely distribution of CAS manuals and record files. CAS tools were made simple and manageable, and available resources were best utilized to meet them.
- In spite of the provision of LPP, most of these schools promoted students (even in class 1-3) only after their students met minimum requirements to be promoted. In some cases, where learners didn't achieve the basic competencies, repetition was made the option. Most often, the parents of the students who failed to meet minimum requirements were called at school for discussion on corrective measures.

The study concluded that even CAS-effective schools found it difficult to implement CAS in upper classes (e.g., class 4 to class 7). Likewise, the evaluating and rating practices were seemingly technical and time consuming. Therefore, it was necessary that CAS provisions in upper classes needed to be simple and manageable. For example, instead of using these multiple tools (attendance, behavioural change, creative work, project work, and class participation) few tools can be reduced to manageable forms. In doing so, attendance, behavioural change, and class participation can be brought together in observation sheets.

Teachers may further work on subject-specific project work and portfolio management in a way to make it easier and accessible. Further, as department has already implemented Multi Grade Multi Level (MGML) practices, the CAS practices of MGML school (e.g., individual assessment, group assessment, self-assessment, and peer-assessment) at various time periods (e.g., before new topic is introduced, during a lesson, at the end of a topic, and at the end of term or school year) can be replicated. However, to implement MGML CAS practices as assessment choice, appropriate pedagogical training and materials are needed.

Key Issues and Challenges in Implementing CAS

Based on the findings on provisions made for CAS, and the perception and practices of teachers, HTs and other stakeholders, key issues and challenges in designing, administrating, evaluating, reporting, remediating, and sustaining CAS were identified.

- *Designing*: One of the major issues and challenges of designing CAS was to integrate CAS and liberal promotion policy in an effective way. Study suggested that learners with learning difficulties who were held back were likely to progress being promoted in new grade. In some other cases, however, in achieving basic competencies, repetition was the solution. To promote low performing students, and ensure that they received learning support was, thus, challenging. Likewise, designing contextual CAS manuals, and curriculum, and designing packages on in-school focused training was an issue. Sometimes, the national provisions for CAS were too unfriendly to distinct features of school in particular context. On the other hand, the central bodies needed to ensure uniformity among schools.
- *Administrating*: Portfolio management and CAS format filling in upper classes (class 4 to 7) were challenging. Study showed that the difficulty was observed because of the lack of proper coordination among various subject teachers teaching in the same class. There was need of proper administrative mechanism to address this gap. Active initiation and moderation from schools, and the establishment of separate administrative unit to coordinate CAS activities; to record performance records of individual students provided by the subject teachers; and to make CAS progress report of individual students was necessary but challenging. Schools needed to manage additional necessary resources for it.
- *Evaluating*: Managing time for diagnostic testing of students' performances was challenging. Study showed that assessment instruments e.g., observation schedules, checklists, rating scales and rubrics needed to be simplified. On the one hand, those checklists needed to cover overall aspects of students' performance, and on the other, it had to be easy and manageable. It was often observed issue in terms of evaluating CAS.
- *Reporting*: Lack of descriptive report on students' progress was an issue in reporting. It was observed that most of the report cards of individual students (even in CAS effective schools), lacked enough descriptors. Under CAS heading in separate column, only the grade A, B, or C were observed. It lacked description of progress (remediation) plan and suggestions for poor performing students. However, it was challenging because it was time consuming for teachers. Related to it, another key

issue and challenges of CAS was to make remediation and enrichment backed by constructive remedial instructions integral to students learning assessment.

- *Sustaining*: Collaborating the overall needs and contexts of particular school and CAS policies was vital in sustaining CAS. The study stressed the need to raise the feeling of ownership among teachers to make assessment tools and rating scales. Another way was to minimise growing negativity towards CAS among its stakeholders, which was also challenging because the almost two decades of poor implementation of CAS at schools has deeply rooted stakeholder's negativity towards it.

Linking the use of the CAS and the Letter Grade system

Study found that in CAS implemented schools there was generally accepted tradition to make different column for CAS in progress report cards and assign Grade A, B, or C. It was more guided for comparison than remediation. However, the basic of CAS is that the learner's performance in CAS oriented progress report cards are not supposed to score for the purpose of comparative rankings. Likewise, criteria to assign grades were not suggested in the report cards. A high range difference between these grades was the inherent problem within it, which needed to be specific. Research participants and experts suggested to add at least two grade points (e.g., A, B, C, D, and E), and come with proper descriptors (e.g., excellent, very good, good, sufficient, not sufficient). Criteria for the grades, competencies to be assessed (e.g., knowledge and understanding, practical skills, attitudes and values, and generic competencies) and performance indicators were to be listed in report cards.

Recommendations

Based on the lessons learnt from this study a set of three major recommendations in terms of capacity building and school-based administration of CAS are suggested.

1. **Capacity building**: All prospective teachers have to have intensive and rigorous training on CAS. The concepts, modalities, and techniques of CAS should be included as integral component of teacher preparation classes of the universities. Likewise, concerned bodies like NCED need to include specific contents of CAS in regular, in-service or 'on the spot' trainings. Such trainings should be delivered by experts in the area.
2. **School based administering of CAS**: It is recommended that all the schools should be required to make provision for a separate continuous assessment unit headed by a senior non-teaching staff, who is accountable to the HT. This unit should be responsible for systematic recording of all CAS related information of individual student, and collect assessment scores from the teachers so as to make entry into the students' report cards. This unit can further be supported by school CA committees, consisting department heads and section in-charges. Though it sounds economically less viable in the context of Nepal, the provision has already worked as effective measure for CAS implementation and its sustainability in other developing countries. Wider debate and discussions should be carried out at policy level in this regard.

3. **Replicating MGML CAS practices:** As DoE has already implemented Multi Grade Multi Level (MGML) practices, some proven good CAS practices of MGML schools (see the section ‘common practices of CAS effective schools’ for details) can be replicated in other schools as well. Provisions of group assessment, self-assessment, and peer-assessment techniques can possibly be replicated in other schools, which may readily minimize the burden of subject teachers in higher classes (e.g., class 4-class 7).

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

BPEP	Basic and Primary Education Programme
CAS	Continuous Assessment System/ Continuous Assessment of Students
CDC	Curriculum Development Center
DEO	District Education Office
DoE	Department of Education
EGRP	Early Grade Reading Programme
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EFA	Education for All
FGD(s)	Focus Group Discussion(s)
LGS	Letter Grade System
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCED	National Centre for Educational Development
PIP	Program Implementation Plan
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
SSRP	School Sector Reform Programme
RC	Resource Center
RP(s)	Resource Person(s)
SS(s)	School Supervisor(s)
TPD	Teacher Professional Development

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STUDY TEAM.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	iii
ABBREVIATIONS	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	x
1. BACKGROUND	1
1.1 Context and Objectives of CAS in Nepal	1
1.2 Initiatives to Implement CAS in School Education.....	3
1.3 Purpose and Scope of the Study.....	7
2. METHODOLOGY	8
2.1 Sources of Data.....	8
2.2 Selection and Size of the Sample Districts	9
2.3 The Study Tools and Respondents.....	9
2.4 Familiarity/ Orientation Workshop.....	10
2.5 Pilot Testing the Study Tools.....	11
2.6 Data Analysis/ Interpretation	11
2.7. Sharing of the Findings and Suggestions.....	11
3. PROVISION FOR CAS.....	11
3.1 Conceptual Clarity	12
3.2 Capacity Building	13
3.3 Manuals and Testing Tools.....	15
3.4 Student Portfolio	17
3.5 Support Mechanism	19
4. COMMON PRACTICES OF CAS-EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS	21
5. KEY ISSUES OF CAS	23
5.1 Challenges Involved in Designing CAS	24
5.2 Challenges Involved in Administrating CAS	25
5.3 Challenges Involved in Evaluating CAS	25
5.4 Challenges Involved in Reporting CAS.....	26
5.5 Challenges Involved in Remediating CAS	26

5.6 Challenges Involved in Sustaining CAS.....	27
6. STRATEGIC MEASURES TO LINK CAS AND LGS	27
7. CONCLUSION.....	28
8. RECOMMENDATIONS	28
REFERENCES	34
नेपालीमा सारांश	36

1. BACKGROUND

Assessment is a process of making judgement about student's performance on a particular task. It is "a machine for reasoning about what students know, can do, or have accomplished based on a handful of things they say, do or make in particular settings" (Mislevy et al, 2003). In many cases, assessment is to establish the extent to which learning objectives and competencies have been achieved. Opposed to the concept of once-for-all assessment, Continuous Assessment of Students (CAS), however, acknowledges educational assessment in broader term, which includes many procedures used to obtain information about students' achievement and learning process. In other words, CAS refers to on-going, diagnostic, classroom-based process, where the full range of information is gathered and synthesized by teachers to assess students' performance. The use of variety of assessment instruments, and quality of supportive feedback that follows the assessment, potentially influences students' learning. In the international scenarios, formative assessment of this kind (assessment for learning) has already been accepted as inherent part of quality education. In this line, the education policy makers of Nepal are in continuous effort to find its effective implementation, which is even reflected in comprehensive educational reform projects like SSRP and SSDP among others. In this background, here follows the context and objectives of CAS in Nepal. It also brings into light different policy level initiatives to implement CAS, and brings into light the purpose of this study.

1.1 Context and Objectives of CAS in Nepal

Ministry of Education (MoE), Nepal, is in the process to implement recently developed School Sector Development Plan (SSDP). The plan has acknowledged Continuous Assessment of Students (CAS) as major strategic intervention at school sectors for quality education. This seven-year plan (July 2016 to July 2023) is to continue its efforts to ensure equitable access to quality education for all. Among ten different strategic priority of SSDP (decentralized governance and federalism, quality and effective pedagogy for improved learning outcomes, curriculum framework and learning materials, assessment and examinations, teacher management and professional development, language and education, equality and inclusion, enabling environment, infrastructure development and school safety, and capacity development), the plan has stressed that the assessment and examination system is yet to strengthen its focus on application and synthesis skills. In doing so, it accepted CAS, which can be used for the continuous diagnosis of learning gaps, aimed for corrective measures, as supportive means to meet this goal.

SSDP, in general, has followed SSRP, which ran from 2009 to mid-July 2016. This latest and final program in the 15 year EFA National Plan of Action, 2001-2015, had focused on three pillars of access, inclusion, and quality, which was structured across three components: (1) Basic education (grade 1-8), ECED/PPE, literacy and lifelong learning, (2) secondary education (grade 9-12) and technical and vocation learning pilot programs, and (3) institutional capacity strengthening (including teacher management) for the planning, delivery, and monitoring of educational services and products. As envisaged in SSRP, some fundamental achievements were observed within these components. However, though SSRP stressed CAS as impactful strategic measure to ensure quality education through quality

assessment practice, final report of the Joint Evaluation of Nepal's School Sector Reform Plan Program, 2009- 2016, came with the concluding remarks that the CAS was not yet ready to take an important role in ensuring sustainability. It was mainly due to its poor acceptance and understanding among teachers, pupils, parents, and decision-makers.

SSRP and SSDP, as stated earlier, were not alone to stress the value of effective implementation of CAS for quality education. Though seemingly inadequate, some efforts to assess the productivity of CAS had been made before SSRP project was formally launched. For example, in order to bring significant progress in evaluation system in primary level, supported by liberal promotion policy, master plan of BPEP II had recommended implementing continuous evaluation of the students. Acknowledging it, Program Implementation plan (PIP) for 1999-2004 forwarded continuous assessment of students as key element of quality education.

Initiatives on formative assessment practices were supposed to go fruitful to ensure quality school education. It was supposed to achieve certain objectives, which included (a) to evaluate learners continuously using various tools and measures (b) to increase the rate of learners regularity (c) to decrease the rate of drop-outs and repetition (d) to minimize the stress of examination in learners (e) to encourage the brilliant learners and assist the poor learners (e) to create happy atmosphere for the learners to be regular in school (f) to lunch liberal promotion policy through CAS and (g) to maximize the rate of successful achievement by the learners. It was also supposed to motivate learners to extend their knowledge and skills, establish sound values, and to promote healthy habits of study

As such, recognizing CAS as a way of assessing pupils using a set of learning outcome indicators, the approach for CAS was introduced as a pilot program in five compulsory primary education (CPE) districts in the year 2000/01. The piloting of CAS was first introduced with grade 1 in 2000/01 and in subsequent years with grade 2 and grade 3. In course of using the CAS, strategies like materials development, training of teachers and monitoring of the pilot programme were carried out. All concerned teachers were provided with training on how to use the curriculum for teaching and assessment, how to keep students progress report in their portfolio, how to give individual help, how to report it. Class teachers were supposed to assess the students along with their teaching.

There as well, similar to the finding of final report of the joint evaluation of SSRP program, final report on Effect of CAS on Student's Achievement, Dropouts, and Attendance, 2003 revealed that the CAS did not show any fixed trend in the improvement of students' achievement. In many cases, the study revealed that the CAS students performed low compared to non- CAS students. Similarly, the achievement trends of the CAS students decreased slightly over the years from grade 1 to grade 2 and from grade 2 to grade 3.

Though CAS has already walked a little distance ahead, it is yet to be fully comprehended by parents and teachers to be preferred over summative exams. The concerned authorities are still looking further ways for its effective implication. For example, as stated earlier, following SSRP, one of the notable strategic interventions of the on-going SSDP is to build on the achievement of the SSRP with an emphasis on making both formative and summative

assessment more skills and learner-centred. In this connection, it is necessary to document the various measures and innovations targeted to make the CAS implementation effective. In addition, there is a need for transformation of the CAS policies at various levels by ensuring the fulfilment of roles by various stakeholders. At present, the DoE, following SSDP, has planned to ensure the effective implementation strategies of the CAS in schools. As such, there is a timely need of comprehensive and yet contextual study on provisions made for CAS in school education of Nepal, making meanings on its key issues, and seeking possibilities for its effective implementation, which this study has possibly addressed.

Finding effective ways to incorporate Letter Grading System (LGS) in CAS is another burning issue in present assessment practices in school education of Nepal. Recently, the GoN has introduced Letter Grade System in the Examination at Secondary level (e.g. class 10 final exam) with the decision of National Curriculum Development and Evaluation Council on December 9, 2015. The major objectives of the Implementation Guidelines were (i) to validate the competencies gained by the students through learning to the extent possible, (ii) to convert the scores of the students with grading letter to the letter grade at 9 levels and (iii) to enhance the quality of education by preventing the educational loss. In lower classes (class 1-7), however, as provisioned in CAS manuals, students are graded in 3 levels (e.g., A, B, and C). This on-going provision of grading practices in CAS has often been criticized as being less effective in making/ covering actual assessment of student's performance. As such, there was need for scholarly discussion and studies on it. Likewise, there was no clear ways to bringing together the range gap in 3 level grading practices of CAS (e.g., A, B, and C) in CAS implemented (Basic) grades, and 9 levels letter grade (A+, A, B+, B, C+, C, D+, D, E) practices of secondary classes (e.g. class 10 final exam).

In this context, exploring effective measures for strengthening continuous student assessment and its implementation strategies at school level, and finding effective ways to link CAS practices with the letter grading could hold higher value for improving the quality of learning at school.

1.2 Initiatives to Implement CAS in School Education

Compared to traditional ones, the field of education at present has evolved toward incorporation of new, alternative assessment practices. A common consensus is built among education practitioners that formative assessment, if properly implemented in schools, may work as powerful means to improve student's learning. In this realization, the education policy makers in Nepal have also been looking ways forward to introduce continuous assessment of students' learning as integral in enhancing education quality. As discussed in introductory section of this study report, though SSRP and ongoing SSDP have adequately focused on CAS practices and its implementation in school education, concerned authorities in Nepal, in a way or other, have been seeking effective implementation strategies from almost two decades earlier.

The major sources of CAS related policies in Nepal are implementation manuals on primary education curriculum (2062/2065), National Curriculum Framework (2063), Three Year Periodic Plan (2064-67), and School Sector Reform Plan (2067-2072). The Three Year

Periodic Plan, 2064-67 stressed the implementation of step wise liberal promotion policy up to class seven, grading students based on their achievement. Likewise, SSRP (2067-72) stressed the need for provision of continuous assessment or remedial help to the students. In this reference, here follows a brief overview of few other documents focused to plan, policies, provisions, and guidelines on CAS at policy level, which remained helpful in identifying gap between policy and practices focused to un/effective implementation of CAS in Nepali schools.

Programme Handbook on CAS, 2056

Despite various efforts made toward raising the quality of primary education, the quality aspects were not satisfactory. All school age children were not enrolled, where the failure rate, the repeaters rate, and the dropout rate remained alarming. Educational field on high stakes examination, and practices on periodic written test were criticized as responsible factors behind it. In this realization, the Ministry of Education and Sports introduced the Continuous Assessment of Students and liberal promotion policy from the ninth periodic plan. The Program handbook was therefore developed by CDC in 2056. This program book mainly focused the concept and the various strategies and steps to introduce CAS and liberal promotion policy. It came up with purposes of introducing CAS, the strategies to introduce CAS system, the details of the programme, training of the teachers, and construction and distribution of related materials. In addition, this handbook provided details on management of the portfolio of the students' evaluation (activities recording and portfolio management), the process of maintaining students' evaluation and activities recording, and follow-up and monitoring. It also included roles of different agencies like Curriculum Development Centre, Regional Education Directorate, District Education Officer, Resource Centre/ Resource Person and School Supervisor, school, Head teachers, teachers, and guardians. The programme book also gave adequate space for the liberal promotion of the grade 1 to 3 students. As provisioned there, the basic purpose of the liberal promotion was to promote the students without taking formal tests. However, there were some requirements like the appropriate age of promotion to upper grade; 70% attendance in the class; and outstanding results in the first quaterly test among others.

Teachers' Training Handbook on CAS, 2056

Following Programme Handbook on CAS, the Teachers' Training Handbook was developed in 2056 by the CDC, Ministry of Education, and Government of Nepal, which was published in 2057 BS and was revised the same year. In this handbook, along with the introduction of CAS, the government set a policy of providing training to 3 teachers on CAS in each school. The purpose of this five days training was to orient the teachers about CAS, the importance of CAS, management of student's portfolio, construction of student's portfolio, and construction of evaluation devices. The handbook was therefore designed to achieve practical knowledge, where trainees during the training period would visit schools and carry out practical works taking reference of the learning outcomes and observation of grade 1 classroom activities. The training also included writing specific comment on the learning outcomes, feedback on writing notes, and categorizing students by their level such as weak, average and good

Instructors' Guidebook on CAS, 2056

The objective of the Instructors' Guidebook by CDC, Ministry of Education, Nepal, was to provide various knowledge and skills to the teachers/ instructors to enable them to be competent on understanding and applying the CAS. Based on the 5- days long training package the instructor's guidebook was developed to cover the content of five days. It contained anticipated answers on the questions focused to the need of formative assessment practices. Answers to such questions would possibly orient teachers to promote the use of formative assessment so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Similarly, it contained set of questions related to the text on evaluation, remedial teaching, summative and formative evaluation, and recording of students' information related to evaluation. It also suggested the list of evaluation tools like home work, class work, and question answer (written and oral), discussion, drama, observation in different place (work and activities), record/portfolio and the related aspects that can be measured by the tools and the methods of using them. Likewise, it provided a list of answers to the questions based on the curiosity/complains of the guardians, and teachers' problems.

The Instructor's Guidebook also suggested students' portfolio management. It sought to answer the questions- What is meant by students' portfolio? What is liberal promotion? What a school should prepare for using CAS? What are the points suggested for students portfolio? What types of learning outcome are covered by the student's progress report? There, the trainees were required to study the description form and students portfolio and make a plan for updating the portfolio. It also included activities like grouping of students -weak, satisfactory and good on the basis of learning outcomes, and making remedial plan for those students individually. Helping students to manage class themselves was another highlighted activity.

Other activities included in the training package were related with construction of Evaluation devices. The activities were specifically related to testing learning outcome of reading, listening, speaking, and numerical skills and social and individual qualities of grade 1 students contained in progress description form. It also included finding ways to help students, who are identified as weak in course of teaching. The activity particularly suggested the ways to grouping students, utilizing the good students in helping their peers. It also contained ways of informing parents about supporting their children, providing more time to help weak students, and carrying out new activities. It, in addition, discussed symptoms of emotional condition, different incidents that may happen on the students during school. The activity also cautioned on maintaining confidentiality of the students records.

CAS Implementation Handbook, 2067

The CAS implementation handbook is consisted of four chapters and annexes. Beginning from the definition of evaluation, meaning, context and essentiality of the CAS and its tools, the handbook presents various practical steps on using them effectively.

The first section is divided into five parts which includes background information, and procedures of the CAS. The first chapter entitled 'Concept of CAS' deals with background information and the concept of the CAS, essentiality of the CAS, methods of the CAS like observation, the use of check list and rating scale for observation, utility of the CAS techniques for student evaluation, record maintaining styles and glossaries of the terms used in course of CAS implementation such as question answer and discussion, written test, portfolio study, self evaluation, peer evaluation, contacts with parents and their responses. The terminologies includes feedback, remedial teaching, back ground knowledge of students, learning achievement, documenting progress report of the students, learning attitude, peer learning, peer evaluation, student centred teaching and learning, and learning styles. The Chapter 2 entitled 'Existing Policy' related to the Implementation of the CAS presents an in-depth review of CAS policies. Under this chapter there are four sections that deal with periodic plan, School Sector Reform Programme (2067-2072), National Curriculum Framework 2063BS and the Primary Education Curriculum 2062/2065BS and also on the implementation strategies of the CAS. The Chapter 3 presents review on the roles of various agencies with regard to CAS Implementation, which is followed by CAS implementation process.

CAS Orientation Materials, 2069

Following the development of the CAS Implementation Guide in 2068 B.S, the CDC also developed CAS Orientation Material in 2069 BS. The Continuous Assessment of Students (CAS) was introduced with recognition that the continuous assessment facilitates learning, supports the students learning by doing, learning by repetition and use and practice the things learned. It was also believed that the introduction of the CAS assist the teacher to improve teaching and learning activities, using appropriate materials and set appropriate teaching learning activities. The whole process of teaching learning, thus, improves the standard of teaching as well as learning and qualitative improvements towards learning outcomes. Keeping in mind these realities, the CAS Orientation Material in 2069 was developed to support the teachers. This material developed as an orientation materials comprises various contents related to concepts of evaluation, examination, tests and assessment, formative evaluation, periodic evaluation process and quantitative evaluation, continuous assessment cycles, introduction on/to roles and responsibilities of individuals and organization related to CAS, and problems related to CAS and ways to address them. In fact the CAS Orientation material 2069 is a resource material.

The CAS Orientation and Implementation Guidebook, 2072

With purpose of helping appropriate evaluation of different aspects for improving present learning facilitation condition at school level, this Handbook on Continuous Assessment of Students (CAS) has been developed. It is expected that this manual will be helpful in providing directions in most of the confusing areas of the CAS. Since CAS is a very flexible system of evaluation the teachers would be able to use this more responsibly by using own reasoning and thought. Though the teachers have a key role to play in CAS, this handbook describes in detail the roles of various individual and organization in implementing CAS. The CAS Orientation and Implementation Guidebook 2072 BS is comprised of five chapters. On

the whole the first chapter presents the details on CAS. The guidebook explains that CAS is not only for promotion and a process of evaluation, or just assessing the performance and identifying pass or fail. The whole essence of the CAS, however, is to ensure the continuous use of various evaluation tools and to recognize it as an inevitable component of learning and learning facilitation process, to identify the learning difficulties of the students and help them address their problems and carry out the action research to address various instructional problems

As mentioned in the guidebook, the purposes of the CAS are to ensure effective learning, and bring expected changes among the students by means of learning facilitation. More specifically, CAS ensures facilitation for learning, assesses the status of learning, learning problems, and behavioural changes. It is to set activity for facilitation of learning by identifying the learning difficulties in planned way, facilitate need based learning based on the remedial procedure, and maintain record of continuous learning and behaviour. The six steps cycle of CAS begins from setting learning outcomes, learning facilitation plan, learning facilitation activities, CAS diagnosis of the good, average and weak performing students, and finally need based learning facilitation including additional learning, facilitation, and remedial learning facilitation.

Next, it deals with various methods of CAS such as observation including the tools such as checklist and rating scale for observation; question answer; written test, portfolio study; learning based on self evaluation; evaluation and learning from peers, parental contact and responses. This chapter clearly describes on procedural tools such as oral presentation and question answer, dance and movement, practical works, sports skills, role play, debate, singing and playing, interview, and different demonstrations of skills, and other product or prepared tools such as reporting, project work, essay, written work modelling, and written question answer.

Conclusion

Review of documents as such suggested that considerable efforts have been made at central/policy level for effective implementation of CAS. However, these initiatives may work productive only when they are well accepted and used by concerned bodies. Some studies e.g., final report on Effect of CAS on Student's Achievement, Dropouts, and Attendance, 2003, and final report of the Joint Evaluation of Nepal's SSRP, 2016 have already questioned the effective implementation of CAS practices in schools of Nepal. If so, there must have been some underlying defects in implementing CAS at school and classroom level. In these regards, exploring actual practices of CAS at schools, exploring stakeholders understandings and acceptance, and making meanings on key challenges so as to come with further effective measures was necessary, which this research report has possibly addressed.

1.3 Purpose and Scope of the Study

The overall objective of the study was to provide a comprehensive overall independent view on CAS, and to explore the effective measure to strengthen its implementation at the school level. The specific objectives that the study intended to accomplish were as follows:

To identify the provision made for Continuous Assessment System (CAS) in terms of capacity building programs, inputs like manuals and testing tools for teachers, portfolio for students, and support mechanism (e.g. financial and technical) to schools.

To examine the status of CAS in terms of the practices of teachers, and perception of the stakeholders (e.g. students, school teachers, SMC, professional organization of teachers and PTA) towards the use of CAS

To identify the lessons learnt and key issues facing the effective implementation of the CAS by the schools

To explore the techniques to link the use of the CAS and the Letter Grade system in examination for enhancing students learning and performance

To draw implications from the study and suggest action steps for effective implementation strategies in strengthening the use of the CAS.

2. METHODOLOGY

The team followed a three-stage approach to carry this study. The inception phase included (i) identifying sources of data (ii) selection and size of sample districts (iii) preparation of research tools and timeline (iv) arranging familiarity/ orientation workshop, and (v) pilot testing the tools. An assessment phase that followed the inception phase included (i) field visit, interviewing/ FGD with relevant and key stakeholders (ii) categorizing and coding, and (iii) analyzing key events in reference to selective study reports and publications. A consolidating phase, thereafter, included (i) final analysis, (ii) sharing key findings with experts and practitioners, and (iii) report writing.

2.1 Sources of Data

Both the primary and secondary sources of data were used in this study. The major primary sources were the interview responses from sampled schools, students, teachers, head teachers, SMC members, PTA members, representatives of teacher union, parents, Resource Person (RP) and DEO officials from the sampled districts. Further, interview responses from officials of the central level educational authorities (e.g., DoE officials) were also taken as the source of primary data. FGD was conducted among SMC and PTA members, members of Teachers' Union, and students separately. Classroom observation focused to CAS practices in each sampled schools was another source of primary data.

Likewise, the major sources of secondary data included SSDP document, SSRP document, Education Act 2073 (eighth amendment), research reports and internal monitoring reports, review of the implementation guide on CAS 2068, CAS implementation guideline 2072BS, existing policies on the CAS, and CAS tools 2069. Other sources of secondary data included the documents on process of the CAS implementation, steps taken to prepare the CAS manual and tools, capacity building of the school teachers on using the CAS, monitoring and supervision of CAS, letter grading system implementation policy and other CAS related articles and publications.

2.2 Selection and Size of the Sample Districts

A purposive sampling of the districts and schools to represent two EGRA implemented districts and at least one district from each province was made, which represented all three ecological belts i.e., Mountain, Hills and Terai. The basic unit for sampling in this study was a school, and therefore at least 4 schools representing two from urban and two from rural area of each sampled district were selected. A representative number of schools from each ecological belt and province were considered. Within the ecological strata, the Kathmandu Valley was taken as a single geographical stratum because of its dense population. Sampling was, thus, based on few key considerations to include 16 basic strata in the sample, which included (i) Ecological zones i.e. Mountain, Hill, Terai, and Kathmandu Valley, (ii) seven Provinces, (iii) 75 districts, (iv) community schools representing basic level both grades 1-5 and grade 6- 8, and (v) both rural and urban school.

The following table presents a glimpse of the study sample:

Number of Districts by Province

S.N.	Province	Total No of Districts	Mountain	Hills	Terai	Kathmandu Valley
1	Province No. 1	14		Dhankuta		
2	Province No. 2	8			Saptari*	
3	Province No. 3	13	Dolakha			Kathmandu valley**
4	Province No. 4	11		Kaski*		
5	Province No. 5	12			Dang	
6	Province No. 6	10		Surkhet		
7	Province No. 7	9			Kailali	

*The EGRA project districts

** Multi ethnic and multilingual communities and EGRA project district (Bhaktapur)

2.3 The Study Tools and Respondents

Focus Group Discussion (FGD), key informant interview, school survey, and classroom observation were the data gathering tools. Selection of respondents for collection of views on the provision, status, and key issues of the CAS was made among teachers, head teachers, students, teachers' unions, SMC, Parent Teachers Association (PTA), DEO officials, and parents.

The study team considered the following matrix as a part of the study.

Tool Matrix

S.N	Respondents	Types of Tools				
		FGD	Interview	Observation	School Survey	Remarks
1	Central Level Authorities		10			(Representation from CDC, NCED, OCE, DOE and other experts)
2	DEO		8			
3	School Supervisors		8			One SS from each district
4	Schools				32	
5	Headteachers		32			
6	Resource Persons		24			Three RPs from each districts
7	School teachers		64	64		Two teachers from each schools) Interview and class observation both
8	Students	64				Two FGD in each schools
9	SMC and PTA Members	32				One FGD in each school
11	Representatives of Teachers' Unions	8				One FGD in each district

2.4 Familiarity/ Orientation Workshop

While still in the process of preparing study tools, a short familiarization workshop was conducted in the presence of CAS experts, officials from DoE, and CDC, research team

leader, senior researchers, and field researchers. Senior researchers and field researchers were oriented with the policy provision and technical aspects of CAS and letter grading system. The workshop was helpful to re-visit study instruments, and to devise process for the study, focused to policy measures to be taken to improve the CAS implementations strategies.

2.5 Pilot Testing the Study Tools

The data collecting tools were tested before actual field visit. The purpose of the pilot project was to figure out ambiguities and shortcomings (if any) in the study tools, and particularly the interview questions. The pilot study was conducted at two schools located in the Kathmandu Valley, where RP, Head teacher, and teachers were interviewed. Likewise, FGD was made among students and SMC members. DEO and school supervisor from Kathmandu district were also interviewed. As a result of pilot study, some questions were modified from the study tools. Specially, the directories on FGD for students were modified based on their age group. Interview questions which respondent found difficult to understand were simplified.

2.6 Data Analysis/ Interpretation

Qualitative data were analyzed, described and interpreted through conceptualization and explanation. More specifically, the data were analyzed under the theme of (i) Provision of CAS (ii) Status of CAS (iii) Key Issues of Implementation of CAS, and (iv) Linkage Between CAS and LGS.

The field data were analyzed through (a) categorizing and coding, and (b) analyzing key experiences. After their arrival from the field, two of the field researchers were assigned to categorize all the interview responses from different stakeholders based on interview questions. Theme and sub-theme of the study were built. Thereafter, interview responses, and key experiences of the respondents gathered from FGD and class observation were analyzed. In doing so, the field experiences were constantly compared with provisions in manual documents, which were initially reviewed for the study purpose.

2.7. Sharing of the Findings and Suggestions

Major findings and key issues were shared with experts, and CAS practitioners representing DoE, CDC, and OCE. Intellectual discourse was made on techniques to link the use of the CAS and the Letter Grade system in examination for enhancing students learning and performance. Likewise, pros and cons of different CAS implementation strategies were discussed. Based on the preliminary findings, some possible recommendations were figured. Finally, report was finalized based on the inputs and comments received in the session.

3. PROVISION FOR CAS

Various policy level documents like Programme Handbook on CAS, 2056, CAS Implementation Handbook, 2067, and the CAS Orientation and Implementation Guidebook, 2072 have highlighted some provisions for CAS. For the purpose of this research report, so as to explore the on-going perception and practices of different stakeholders on provision for CAS, and to identify effective measures for strengthening it, the collected information are

interpreted/ analyzed under various sub-themes i.e., conceptual clarity on CAS, capacity building, manuals and testing tools, student portfolio, and support mechanism. The major purpose of this section is to be familiar with policy provisions and actual practice scenario at schools. Based on it, the major challenges and possibilities are drawn in the section that follows it.

3.1 Conceptual Clarity

The first necessary component for the effective implementation of CAS at schools was supposed to be its conceptual clarity. If the practitioners were not clear on the basics of CAS, its effective implementation could be questioned from very beginning. In this realization, our initial few interview questions to all the respondents were designed to explore the conceptual clarity of different stakeholders on CAS. It was found that most of the respondents were somehow aware on the reasons to implement formative assessment practice at school. Most of the respondents came with seemingly similar reasons i.e.

- To promote quality education
- To encourage regular presence of students at school
- To reform conventional evaluation practices
- To understand and change the behaviour of students
- To assess students daily for their overall development
- To figure possible remedial for poor performing students,
- To support liberal promotion policy, and to minimize school dropouts

All these responses were similar to those as enlisted in CAS implementation manuals and handbooks. One of the head teachers, however, understood it as formality only, which was just to obey government policy. One teacher respondent from western Terai perceived it as externally imposed extra burden to teachers. Likewise, another head teacher respondent understood it in terms of making subject teachers more responsible. Interestingly, no respondents understood it in terms of making supportive environment for child friendly learning and evaluation. Here, it was observed that, though, most of the respondents were conceptually clear behind the reasons to implement CAS at schools, there were still some misapprehensions among few respondents, which included;

Recognition of formative assessment as mere formality

Failure to accept CAS as means for child friendly learning and evaluation, and

Identifying CAS as mere additional load to subject teachers

Next, we tried to figure out how familiar the respondents were on methods/components of CAS. Manuals and directories, which were prepared at different time periods, have highlighted some methods/components of CAS. So as to make CAS implementation effective, its stakeholders, particularly the teachers and head teachers are required to be familiar on it. We found that most of the respondents understood attendance, homework, project work, behavioural change, and creative works as components/ methods for CAS.

These methods/ components of CAS were stressed in CAS manuals prepared by CDC. Few others, though not listed in the study manuals, stressed cleanliness, ECA, handwriting, and group work to be its essential components.

Respondents, however, missed the major methods including question-answer and discussion, written test, portfolio studies, self-evaluation, and parental visit.

Interestingly, one of the DEO responded the method of CAS as liberal promotion. It showed that there were some misapprehensions among stakeholders in understanding CAS and liberal promotion in their specific purposes. There was seemingly a lack of conceptual clarity even in the high level officials. Though the purpose of CA is essentially formative, it also carries summative value. It is to assess the extent the learner has gone through a certain benchmark for the promotion. As provisioned in the CAS manuals, the information generated through continuous assessment of students over three terms may work relevant to decide remedial measures while promoting students at the end-of-term tests. Stakeholders seemingly failed to figure this value of CAS in liberal promotion of students. Based on the focus group discussion among students, and SMC members representing parents, we observed some other misapprehensions. For example,

Parents understood CAS as ‘taking test time and again, whereas

Students understood CAS as ‘passing exam without taking test’.

Though teachers came with some innovative ideas on their own, they were less familiar with the methods as suggested in the directories. One of the teacher respondent even responded that none of these components, except paper pencil test was actually practiced in his/her classroom. It showed policy-practice gap.

During our school visit, we observed classes, and observed how the teachers were going on with CAS. Unfortunately, most of the teachers who were familiar with basics of CAS were not making CAS the part of their daily teaching and learning. For example, most of the teachers taught in traditional lecture methods. It even brought into light the seemingly gap between knowledge and practice in case of CAS implementation.

3.2 Capacity Building

Effective continuous assessment of students requires professionally trained, experienced, and motivated teachers. Our study of policy manuals and related documents suggested that a lot of preparations have been made at central level for the capacity building of head teachers, and teachers focused to effective implementation of CAS. For example, Teachers’ Training Handbook on CAS, 2056, Instructor’s Guidebook on CAS, 2056, CAS Orientation Materials, 2069 among others have adequately stressed the need for capacity building of CAS practitioners; and therefore, have come with training packages of various forms. Considering it, the purpose of this sub-heading is to explore on-going capacity building practices at school, and figure out its affectivity in strengthening CAS implementation practices.

Along with the introduction of CAS, as provisioned in Teachers' Training Handbook on CAS, 2056, the government set a policy of providing training to 3 teachers on CAS in each school. The purpose of this five days training was to orient the teachers about CAS, the importance of CAS, management of student's portfolio, construction of student's portfolio, and construction of evaluation devices. However, was the training package really practiced? Most of the RPs claimed that training programs were organized in Resource Centre in their presence. They said that training packages were launched in a way to include CAS in TPD. Generally, RPs called teachers' representatives for the training, who were assigned to share gained skills to other teachers in their return to the school. Most of the trained teachers found their skills too general that, in their return, they would find it difficult to develop test item in proper format. In this reference, we came with few concerns in terms of capacity building focused to CAS:

There was seemingly lack of 'in-school' focused training.

Training programs did not include (address) subject specific needs

In this relation, we observed and studied students' progress information sheet as prepared by CDC in 2056. There were clearly defined subject-specific learning achievement indicators for class 1, 2, and 3. It was seemingly easy to manage as well. Therefore, teachers' general comments that CAS manuals did not include (address) subject specific needs were not logical in case of class 1, 2, and 3. However, we observed that training packages were inadequate (e.g., too general) to learn test item development techniques relating it to concerned curriculum. The case was severe in higher classes, where there was no grade teaching, particularly from class 4 to class 7.

In the views of DEO and RPs, senior subject teachers were most difficult ones to motivate them for training. One teacher respondent who had more than a decade of teaching experiences accepted it. 'I have been habituated in our own conventional ways of taking exams, why should I bother on all these at the time of retirement', he explained. As they were habituated with old easy-going teaching methods, most of them were not willing to adopt themselves in alternative assessment practices, and improve themselves.

Interestingly, two of our teacher respondents from Kailali claimed that the trainers themselves were not clear on many aspects of CAS. In our question concerned to its productivity, most of them didn't find the training effective. A teacher respondent from Dang opined that it was just a reflection of lack of clarity at central policy level. She further claimed that training programs wouldn't ensure regular visit and feedback, and therefore, training was just for the sake of training.

DEO and RPs in Saptari stressed that no CAS related training programs were held for last two years. Still a high percentage of teachers were untrained. Many of the teachers were reported to enter without any pre-service training on CAS. Newly appointed teachers were even not oriented on it.

Most of our Head teacher and teacher respondents participated in 1 or 2 days workshop on CAS held in Resource Centre, which the respondents found not as effective. To the positive

side, some teachers also participated in 3 days training, initiated by 'Educate the Children', where most of the respondents were positive on its affectivity. It brought into light the need of on-the-spot demonstration as notable strength of CAS training. Such observations brought into light some notable concerns on capacity building provisions focused to CAS practices at schools;

CAS training packages did not attract senior teachers with more years of experiences.

Most often, trainers themselves were not clear on different facets of CAS.

There was seemingly lack of continuity of trainings on CAS. It was not supported by evaluation and feedbacks.

Most of the newly appointed teachers entered without any pre-service training on CAS, and most often they were not oriented as well.

Trainings supported by on-the-spot demonstration were relatively effective.

Teachers were not oriented on CAS (except few general ideas) in teacher preparation classes at the universities.

Considering these perceptions and practices of stakeholders on CAS, we studied teacher training provisions in CAS manuals. There were no provisions for in-house training. NCED has developed policy guidelines, program handbooks, and related manuals in order to transform TPD successfully in instructional activities. In spite of such initiatives, teachers repeatedly reported that TPD packages didn't adequately link CAS practices in its training packages, and that it didn't meet the expectations of teachers. For example, teachers expected that the trainer demonstrate directly applicable CAS activities in actual classroom. However, TPD has failed to do so. Likewise, we observed prescribed curriculum in teacher preparation classes in two of the universities of Nepal, and concluded that CAS was not in the priority of their curriculum. There were only few theoretical and general ideas on it. Graduates from such classes were not familiar with practical techniques and procedures on practical processing of CAS at school.

3.3 Manuals and Testing Tools

In assessing various components of learning, CAS consist variety of manuals and tools/instruments, which teachers use to make decision about their student's progress, including behaviours, personality traits and dexterity. CAS Program Handbook, 2056, CAS Implementation Handbook, 2067, the CAS Orientation and Implementation Guidebook, 2072 were few manuals/directories formed in the policy level, which were supposed to guide teachers on the ways and use of appropriate testing tools. In this line, this sub heading explores the use of CAS related manuals, testing tools and their actual practices at schools.

In a question (how CAS related manuals are used?), one of the head teacher, and a teacher in Saptari said that they were not provided with any CAS manuals, and therefore, they were not aware of testing tools suggested over there. Though more teachers claimed to have used it, most of the RPs claimed that, even though format for recording students progress were circulated to the schools, there was lack of manuals with clear instructions. In our study of

manuals (e.g, CAS Teacher Manual, 2056), we found the availability of clear instructions for grade 1 to grade 3 teachings. The problem with low CAS-effective schools was that the available manuals were most often ignored by the teachers. Most of the head teachers supported this view. HTs claimed that only few teachers have actually followed the instructions in CAS manuals to work on format for recording student's progress. Most of the subject teachers, except few CAS trained teachers neither had manuals, nor had studied it.

For teachers, CAS format filling was mere a forced routine work. In this line, one of the SMC chair claimed that CAS format filling became more a technical task for teachers and head teachers. The Chair further expressed his discontent that no teachers in fact would re-visit the information so as to identify student's problems and gaps in learning. Most often they were reluctant to modify their teaching based on the information. It was also observed in 'CAS implemented' schools that students progress forms were filled only at the time of periodic examination. In our observation, interestingly, we found that most of the teachers generalized the same comment for many students.

In yet another question related to testing tools used in CAS, most of the respondents were seemingly familiar to it. Though the respondents were familiar with testing tools as indicated in CAS Implementation Handbook, 2067, which included class work/ class participation, project work, creative work, behavioural change, and attendance, they came with additional testing tools practiced at their schools. Most of them emphasized question-answer method, observation, portfolio evaluation, cleanliness, and good conduct as often practiced CAS testing tools at schools. Though many teachers and head teachers came with these ideas, we observed that only few teachers actually practiced what they knew.

Relating it, we added another question- is CAS testing tools as indicated in the manuals sufficient to assess learning achievement? Responding the question, most of the respondents came with positive response that the testing tools were readily sufficient. However, one DEO stressed that it has to be practiced completely for its positive outcome. Few others suggested making provision of additional tools. For example, few RPs from different districts suggested making testing tools relating it to learning achievement as indicated in the curriculum (CDC has already prepared it from grade 1 to grade 3, and circulated it). A teacher, and a RP from Kailali found the word 'project work' confusing. They suggested including clearly articulated project work in the exercise of every lesson. They further suggested making the provision of students' workbook. A teacher in Dang suggested including cleanliness in place of project work in grade 1 to grade 3.

Based on the information focused to the use of manuals and testing tools for CAS, following key ideas were drawn-

Some RP's were reluctant to timely distribute necessary manuals on CAS to their concerned schools.

Head teachers, whose schools were not making considerable efforts for CAS, were relatively unwilling to make sure if the teachers were really familiar with the instructions as suggested in forms and manuals.

Few RPs, HTs, and teachers said that there was lack of manuals with clear instructions. Evaluation criteria and ways of gathering information were not clearly defined.

In our study of manuals prepared by CDC, we found that there were subject focused clear instructions from grade 1 to grade 3. Possibly, teachers made general comment without studying it. In case of higher classes (from class 4 to class 7) there was not the availability of such manuals.

Some teachers suggested making CAS friendly workbooks for every subject

More teachers were pre-occupied with record keeping.

For many teachers, CAS format filling was mere a forced routine work. They were less motivated.

Even in CAS implemented schools, student's progress forms were filled during periodic exams for technical purpose only.

Many teachers (and HTs as well) were not sure in what ways the total sum of tick marks for individual student in particular subject could be made compatible with exam results.

Almost same comments were simply generalized to many students while making comments on students' progress.

Most often, CAS formats were not revisited to identify students' problems, and therefore corrective measures were rarely taken.

One RP from Kailali with seemingly enough knowledge on CAS opined that effective circulation of easy to use CAS formats is the most. It was to be included in the exercise of every unit, relating it to learning achievements. When we shared this information with one of the official from CDC, he questioned- how much to spoon-fed the teachers? He further explained that teachers have to come with their own innovative ideas. However, only this was not sufficient. Head teachers and teachers needed enough explanation for its use. It had to cross the boundary of formality and technicality, and be used to enhance the student's performance.

3.4 Student Portfolio

The teaching learning process requires continuous follow up, and the educational progress of the learners need frequent assessment. Generally, in making continuous assessment of students, students' progress report is recorded in portfolio file. A portfolio file is a purposeful collection of student's work samples that reflect individual learner's progress. As provisioned in the CAS manuals, the portfolio file is supposed to contain learner's assessment projects and related documents. Our review of literature suggested that considerable efforts were made in central level to introduce students' portfolio management as integral to CAS implementation. As such, this sub heading explores the actual use of portfolio files at schools, the ways of portfolio management, and its after-use for the purpose of remediation.

In our question focused to the use of portfolio file, out of total respondents, 24 teachers, 17 head teachers, 9 RPs, and a school supervisor claimed that the practice was well implemented at schools. They claimed that the models of students' activities were well recorded there. They claimed to use progress report forms, where suggestions were given thoroughly studying the learning outcomes, the social and individual qualities mentioned in the forms. They also claimed that students were evaluated formally based on the grade wise learning outcomes given in the curriculum, where teachers conducted additional activities in the class and evaluated it. Most of their responses, however, were seemingly theoretical because only few schools (mostly in lower grades) were really serious in this provision.

9 teachers, 9 HTs, 8 RPs, 4 school supervisors, and 2 DEOs out of total respondents, on the other, claimed that the use of portfolio was not practised as essential components of CAS. Some DEOs further said that few teachers had practiced it just for the sake of formality.

We observed that in most of the schools, where CAS implementation was seemingly effective, portfolio was managed from grade 1 to grade 3. HTs said that most of the subject teachers from class 4 to class 7 have found it difficult and time consuming. Concerned to it, one of the teacher respondents from Dhankuta said that grade teachers could manage it during class hours when their students were engaged in classroom activities. However, subject teachers from higher class couldn't manage time for it.

The ways of managing portfolio in CAS implemented schools were seemingly different. Only few grade teachers made use of score 3, 2, and 1 in the form of tick marks, where scores were also noted for social and individual qualities, as indicated on the progress report form. As suggested in the manual, they were found to note score of all students in their related progress report form for each quarter. Interestingly, even in the CAS implemented schools, where teachers worked enough to manage portfolio, it was not made the part of annual exam report distribution. Even in the urban districts like Kathmandu, periodic CAS grades were included, but the progress report cards were completely silent on portfolio evaluation and related descriptions. Grade teachers from CAS-effective schools had handed students' portfolio to the teacher from upper grade at the time of students' promotion.

Though there was provision of promoting students from grade 1, 2, and 3 based on CAS tools, still paper pencil test was observed in some schools. 'We manage students' portfolio, and keep CAS records, but take students' written test annually because parents want to see their children pass the written exam' said a teacher from Dhankuta. Giving progress report of the students to their parents, and asking them for necessary support was hardly practiced. One of the SMC member from Dolkha, and a PTA member from Surkhet claimed that almost no parents were provided with portfolio information about their children.

Based on the information on the actual use of portfolio files at schools, the ways of portfolio management, and its after-use, following key points are drawn:

Though most of the RPs and HTs claimed to have practiced effective portfolio management at their schools, it was observed only in few schools.

Use of portfolio had become more a technical work and formality for both HTs and teachers.

Portfolio management in some schools was seemingly good only in the lower grades (grade one to grade three)

Even in the schools with seemingly good portfolio management, it was not made essential component for student's annual promotion. Teachers and HTs were not clear on the ways to make evaluation of portfolio compatible with exam results.

Most of the parents were not provided, or they were not aware of their children's portfolio at school.

There was no consistency in portfolio management among teachers within school, and nearby schools.

In few CAS-effective schools (only in lower grades), students were encouraged to develop personal portfolio showing their performance in terms of competencies to be learnt in given level. There, as provisioned in the CAS manuals, students' portfolios were handed to the teacher of upper grade at the time of students' promotion. However, in most of the schools, students' portfolio were collected in plastic sacks and stored.

3.5 Support Mechanism

CAS implementation manual, 2067 has accepted the idea that only the effort of teachers and head teachers may not be enough for effective implementation of CAS. It needs various forms of supports, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities of different institution, which includes Curriculum Development Centre, Regional Education Directorate, District Education Office, Resource Centre/ Resource Person and School Supervisor, and even the guardians.

Availability of adequate human resources, financial resources, and teaching resources are vital for implementation of CAS. In this regard, CDC is responsible for development and distribution of CAS friendly curriculum, teacher's manual and testing tools. Studying related documents showed that some efforts were made in this area. CDC prepared and circulated subject specific learning achievement index, and grading criteria from grade 1 to grade 3. Nevertheless, most of the stakeholders found it confusing in upper classes, mostly the ways of keeping the records of students' learning achievement, and reporting it. Efforts for CAS friendly curriculum were not enough. For example, the study found that prescribed course books in the upper classes (class 4-7) rarely suggest project works, and portfolio activities in their exercises.

Likewise, NCED is responsible to make manuals and models for CAS related teachers training and orientation. Study showed that considerable efforts were made to prepare training manuals. However, those manuals and models had reached the schools only for some extent. There was no provision of CAS related in-house training. Its practicality was, thus, questioned. The role of DEO in some district was not that much effective in distributing CAS related educational resources at schools. For example, the teachers and HTs from Saptari repeatedly denied of finding those manuals and resources.

Areas of weakness and teachers' difficulties are supposed to be identified through monitoring. SSs and RPs are responsible for this. As discussed earlier (see capacity building),

some forms of trainings and orientations for HTs and teachers were conducted in RC. However, such trainings didn't reach to all teachers. Few teachers were trained and oriented at RC, and were asked to share the gained skills to other teachers in their return to school. Some teachers even questioned the ability of instructors to instruct and orient them on CAS. One grade teacher from Dhankuta, on whose class CAS implementation was seemingly effective, said that though she needed some constructive feedback on her work, she had not found the concerned supervisor, and RP monitoring her class room activities related to CAS. Most often they were not in direct touch with subject teachers.

Most of the DEO, Supervisors, and RPs blamed the reluctance of HTs to manage instructional programs for effective implementation of CAS. As provisioned in CAS manuals, HTs are supposed to direct support and guide the teachers to assist them to make best use of CAS. Though some HTs from CAS-effective schools exhibited their willingness, most of them were seemingly reluctant to provide teachers with required teaching resources, guidelines, and feedbacks. One of the HTs, whose school was seemingly doing well in implementing CAS repeatedly told that there were no proper mechanisms to reward the schools with good performance, and punish the schools that failed to meet the policy provisions.

Support from SMC for effective implementation of CAS was minimal. FGDs with SMC members indicated that most of them were not aware of it, except some general ideas like liberal promotion, and mark coverage of students' attendance and project works among others. Same was the case with parents. 'As most of the parents, whose children are studying in public schools, are themselves uneducated, most of them don't understand CAS, and therefore, can't support for its implementation', said a RP from Dang. 'No programs are organized from any level to aware them on CAS at schools', he added.

Based on this information, following ideas are drawn relating support mechanism for effective implementation of CAS:

In manuals and directories as prepared by CDC, there is clear indication of responsibilities of every concerned authorities and personnel for effective implementation of CAS.

For some HTs and teachers, problems for its implementation gradually originated and developed from central level. For example, CDC failed to design and distribute CAS friendly curriculum, and course books.

Most of the SS and RPs were occupied with other administrative tasks, and therefore the supervision of CAS and monitoring mechanism was less effective.

DEO, SS, and RPs seemingly failed to train all the HTs and teachers on effective implementation of CAS. They couldn't manage CAS related in-house trainings.

Though there was provision of funding newly admitted students (Rs. 100) for portfolio management, most of the schools had not received that much amount. School lacked necessary financial/technical support for project works, and other tools to develop psycho-social domains of students.

SMC members were less aware of CAS practices, and no programs were conducted from any level to aware SMC on implementing CAS at schools. As such, their constructive feedbacks were not observed.

In the absence of proper orientation on meaning and purpose of formative assessment, schools found almost no supports from parents.

There was general tendency, on the parts of teachers and HTs to blame each others. Central level officials, on the other, blamed teachers and HTs behind poor implementation of CA.

Arriving to this stage, it is observed that though considerable efforts were made at central level to implement CAS at schools, the reservation was with its implementation and monitoring. As this reservation continued for longer period of time (almost two decades), there had been a widespread negativity about CAS in Nepali educational sectors.

4. COMMON PRACTICES OF CAS-EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

To come with general idea that CAS implementation is not as effective in basic school education of Nepal is partially true. There were also some schools, which were doing their best to make effective implementation of CAS. Being familiar with basic practices of CAS-effective schools was of higher significance because the lesson learnt over there would be supportive evidences for its implementation at other schools. In this connection, our study had purposefully selected seemingly CAS-effective schools and non CAS-effective schools. Field researchers had consulted DEO's, SS, and RPs of concerned district before selecting the schools. As expected, the study came with some noticeable visible differences in the practices of these schools. Therefore, this section has brought into light few common practices of such schools.

- Study found that most of the CAS-effective schools were running systematically through *school based operational plan*. Most of these schools had their own school calendars, where staff meetings were scheduled once a month. CAS practices were focused in their agenda to discuss. Such school based operation plans were rarely observed in non CAS-effective schools. CAS was not made the topic of discussion during staff meetings.
- Most often, in CAS-effective schools, a teacher (possibly the deputy head teacher) was assigned to *coordinate among teachers*; to collect record files; and make supportive arrangements. In a school from Kailali, for example, the deputy headteacher was first trained in CAS implementation practices. Thereafter, he was made responsible to collect CAS records from subject teachers. He was also made responsible to coordinate among teachers, and arrange CAS related orientation programs for subject teachers. Non CAS-effective schools, however, had not assigned any staff to make overall observation on CAS activities in the school. In doing so, (1) they lacked proper coordination and (2) teaching faculties in upper grades (class 4-7) couldn't manage time.

- The *roles of HTs were impactful* in CAS effective schools. A HT from relatively CAS-effective school from Dhankuta, for example, was found serious in implementing CAS in his school. The school had taken supports from NGOs and INGOs in arranging necessary requirements for implementing CAS. In line to this school, other HTs in CAS-effective schools were enthusiastic and motivated to implement CAS in their schools. Study found that they made CAS the focused topic of discussion in their in-house school meetings. In return, teachers from CAS-effective schools were found accountable to HTs. There was timely distribution of CAS manuals and record files. Poor coordination among teachers and HT, and reluctance of HT towards CAS practices were the major factors responsible behind poor implementation of CAS.
- In spite of the provision of LPP, most of the CAS-effective schools promoted students (even in class 1-3) only after their *students met minimum requirements to be promoted*. Most often, the parents of the students who failed to meet minimum requirements were called at school for discussion. It was observed that non-CAS effective schools, however, made unwise use of LPP. As their students were promoted without meeting minimum requirements, and as no corrective measures were taken for their improvement, they observed poor performance of most of their students. It, in a way or other, raised their growing negativity towards CAS.
- Few CAS-effective schools had made provision for in-house teachers training with practical demonstrations on the ways to implement CAS. They were *technically supported by NGOs/ INGOs* working in the field of education. Less CAS-effective schools were dependent on trainings arranged by RPs. Such trainings lacked continuity and monitoring as well. Though NCED has developed policy guidelines, program handbooks and related manuals in order to transfer TPD successfully in instructional activities, teachers repeatedly told that TPD packages didn't prioritize practical demonstration of directly applicable CAS processes.
- Even CAS-effective schools found it *difficult to implement CAS in upper classes* (e.g., class 4 to class 7). Unlike lower grades, teachers from upper classes found it too time consuming. It was difficult to coordinate with different subject teachers teaching in the same class. Therefore, few higher level officials came with the views that CAS tools needed to be manageable. For example, instead of using these multiple tools (attendance, behavioural change, creative work, project work, and class participation) few tools could be reduced to manageable forms. For example, attendance, behavioural change, and class participation can be brought together in observation sheets. Teachers may further work on subject-specific project work and portfolio management in a way to make it easier and accessible.
- Further, as department has already implemented Multi Grade Multi Level (MGML) practices, some seemingly effective *CAS practices of MGML school can be replicated*. During the courses of taking expert views on CAS, our research team members were often suggested to observe CAS practices in MGML implemented schools. Though we couldn't manage to do so in the beginning (as it was beyond the

scope of our study), we made short observation of CAS practices in MGML implemented schools at Kavre. A headteacher told that NCED was conducting MGML training in collaboration with DoE. First, we observed that in multigrade teaching situation, teachers were to use several methods (individual assessment, group assessment, self-assessment, and peer-assessment) for assessing learners' performance. Provisions of group assessment, self-assessment, and peer-assessment can possibly be replicated in other schools, which may readily minimize the loaded burden of subject teachers in higher classes (e.g., class 4- class 7). Likewise, MGML assessment techniques for teachers (assess prior knowledge of student, reflect on teaching strategies, revisit the lesson, implement the lesson, identify areas where students need help, and provide additional learning opportunities) were of great value for teachers from other schools to replicate.

- Most importantly, the role of teachers was vital in CAS-effective schools for its effective implementation. As provisioned in the CAS manuals, teachers were to record different scores obtained by each student. Teachers were found to combine the scores from various tools of assessment such as project work, portfolio management, behavioural change etc, and used the scores to diagnose students' learning difficulties. Most of the teachers from CAS-effective schools said that they would ***diagnose students' learning difficulties in group*** (e.g., teachers meeting). In doing so, teachers would assess their own teaching, and make themselves creative and innovative.

5. KEY ISSUES OF CAS

In spite of the benefits CAS offers to school, as discussed in earlier sections, its practices has not readily met the expectations. In this regard, so as to explore effective measures and strategies to strengthen it, the study has identified some key issues, from where we can readily search for effective implementation strategies of CAS at school level. For the purpose of this research report, the issues are interpreted in terms of major challenges involving CAS implementation process. There are:

Designing

Administrating

Evaluating

Reporting

Remediating/ improvement and

Sustaining

In doing so, this section has made considerable effort to organize and highlight the issues explored in earlier sections i.e., Provision for CAS (conceptual clarity, capacity building, manuals and testing tools, student portfolio, and support mechanism), and Status of CAS (perception and practice of teachers in CAS-effective and non CAS-effective schools). Based on the key issues and challenges discussed in this section, recommendations for effective

implementation of CAS and supportive action plan are forwarded in the section that follows it.

5.1 Challenges Involved in Designing CAS

Study showed that the key issues underlying effective implementation of CAS in Nepal was its perceived defects in designing CAS, which involves making assessment policies, CAS manuals and formats, testing tools, training manuals and CAS friendly curriculum. Such defects are particularly observed both at central level, and at school level. Challenges involved in designing CAS are shortly articulated below:

Integrating CAS and liberal promotion policy in an effective way was perceived challenges in designing assessment policies. Most often stakeholders from Non CAS-effective schools accepted CAS as synonymous to liberal promotion. Following LPP, students were promoted without meeting minimum requirements for the promotion. It affected learning achievement of students. Most of the grade teachers reported that they found it very difficult to make them learn basic ideas in higher classes, which they had to master in lower classes. Finding effective ways to integrate CAS and liberal promotion policy, thus, was an issue.

Designing contextual CAS manuals and curriculum as means for child friendly learning and evaluation was another issue involved in manuals and directories designed at central level. For example, most of the practitioner's blamed that there were lack of instructional manuals with clear instructions. However, in our observation we found that there were enough instructional manuals with clear instructions, particularly in lower classes. However, we observed that manuals worked in particular class, or in particular geographical area, or in particular community, didn't work as effective in seemingly different context. Study stressed that the major challenges in this relation involved in designing CAS friendly workbooks for every subjects. Notably, the workbooks needed to be contextual.

Another issue of CAS involved in designing manuals on focused training. Training packages were inadequate (e.g., too general) to learn test item development techniques relating it to concerned curriculum. In this relation, teachers viewed that trainings supported by on-the-spot demonstration would be relatively effective. Study, in addition, showed that CAS training packages did not attract senior teachers with more years of experiences. To design in-house training packages in a way to motivate senior teachers with traditional mindset was yet another issue.

Portfolio management, and CAS format filling in upper classes (class 4 to 7), involving different subject teachers was mere an externally imposed burden, and forced routine works for teachers. Portfolio management, and CAS format filling at schools was seemingly good only in the lower grades (grade one to grade three). As such, to design CAS policies in a way to make it easy for subject teachers entering many classes in a single day was CAS related issue.

Making provision for school-based planning of CAS was also an issue in designing CAS. To motivate Head teachers to design proper formative assessment plan considering contextual dynamics of concerned school was necessary. In the absence of school level planning and

guidance on formative assessment, most teachers took the completion of the CAS forms as a substitute for setting and marking examinations.

5.2 Challenges Involved in Administrating CAS

Study also showed that the key issues underlying effective implementation of CAS was it's yet another perceived defects in administrating CAS, which involves proper coordination and supporting mechanism. Concerned to it, insufficient supply of teaching and learning resources, lack of continuous and adequate training, largely limited to the circulation of paper recording form, poor communication of teachers with concerned bodies, and lack of parental involvement among others were frequently observed.

Releasing concept of CAS from its narrow boundary of technicality was an issue in administering CAS. CAS practices in non CAS-effective schools were observed as more a formality than actual need. Central authorities made related policies, but stakeholders perceived it as too generic in their contextually diverged educational scenarios. DEOs were limited on collecting filled reports and information. As most of the supervisors claimed to be occupied with other administrative tasks, they hardly managed time for field monitoring and supervision. HTs and teachers limited themselves in filling the forms periodically.

Another issue in administering CAS was lack of timely distribution of necessary manuals with clear instructions on CAS. CDC has prepared such manuals but its distribution mechanism was found poor. The schools, where CAS formats were timely distributed, there as well, most of the RPs couldn't guide, and clearly define evaluation criteria to subject teachers. Their training programs did not cover the subject specific needs of teachers at school.

Active initiation and moderation from schools was also an issue in administering CAS. Head teachers, whose schools were not making considerable efforts for CAS, were relatively unwilling to make sure if the teachers were really familiar with the instructions as suggested in forms and manuals. Most of them failed proper monitoring of CAS practices at their school. Further, there was lack of feedback from SMC to HTs and from HTs to teachers

Learner absenteeism was another issue observed in effective administering of CAS. Most of the public school couldn't insure their students' regular presence. Teachers complained on the difficulty for formative assessment in case of frequent learner's absence. There were minimal parental involvement and participation in ensuring regularity of their children at school.

5.3 Challenges Involved in Evaluating CAS

Study brought into light few challenges involved in evaluating CAS. It involved, lack of regular record keeping, failure to make diagnostic testing, and inconsistency among teachers in record keeping and testing. Issues and challenges involved in evaluating CAs are shortly articulated below:

Insuring regularity of record keeping on student's performances was an issue. If teachers were asked to make daily recording of student's performances, it would be time consuming. On the other, if record keeping was not regular, it would not ensure the basics of formative

assessment. To come with the idea how frequently student's performances were to be recorded was, thus, challenging.

Managing time for diagnostic testing of students' performances was another issue. The main focus of the formative evaluation is to facilitate students' performance through the provision of constructive feedback and remediation. Such remediations are supposed to follow diagnostic testing of students. However, even in the CAS implemented schools, CAS form feelings were mere a technical tasks for teachers and HTs. In upper classes, teachers were more concerned to finish course book on time. In doing so, managing time for diagnostic testing of students' performance was challenging.

Seeking consistencies among teachers in record keeping and testing was an issue in evaluating CAS. The practices of record keeping and testing varied from one teacher to another. Though there were curriculum based guidelines for marking the test items and formative evaluation in lower grades (grade 1 to 3), such guidelines for higher classes were not observed. It was challenging task for CDC to make subject/unit/lesson based project-work models and distribute it to schools and concerned teachers. On the other, to come with answer of the question 'how much to spoon-feed the teachers?' was an issue.

5.4 Challenges Involved in Reporting CAS

Mere making assessment of students' performances and recording it is not enough. It has to follow impactful reporting. In this relation, study observed challenges in reporting marks from formative assessment. Mostly, challenge in reporting CAS involved failure of schools to distribute descriptive reports of student's assessment, parents' poor educational background and their ignorance to understand CAS progress reports.

Distributing descriptive report on students' progress was the first observed issue in reporting CAS. Assessing learners' achievement as a feedback and reporting learners' achievement for improvement is vital in CAS. However, study found that there was lack of adequate practice of descriptive reports. In many cases, there were A, B, or C level under the heading 'CAS' in report cards. It lacked indicators and remedial measures.

Revisiting the progress report was also an issue in reporting. Most of the schools, particularly the teachers didn't bother to analyze the outcomes of the assessment, and report them properly. Even in relatively CAS-effective schools, reports were not re-visited in terms of level wise learning competency of the learners. Same information was largely generalized to many students.

Parents being almost no familiar to CAS were observed as an issue in reporting CAS as well. This challenge associated with effective reporting of CAS report was considerably poor knowledge of parents on basics of CAS. Most of the parents were reported to expect numerical number and test position of their children. As such, on the one hand, parents with traditional mindset didn't accept grade points easily. On the other, in the absence of proper orientation, and in the absence of proper indicators in report cards, they couldn't understand it as well.

5.5 Challenges Involved in Remediating CAS

There were some considerable issues and challenges associated with remediating CAS. Mostly, arranging time for constructive remediation, and preparing students' for self assessment were challenging.

To come with proper remedial plan for average performing students was an issue. Making remediation and enrichment backed by constructive remedial instructions is integral to students learning assessment. However, it demands time and interest from the side of teachers. Study found that in non CAS-effective schools poor performing students were continuously ignored without any remedial plan. They were promoted in the name of LPP. In doing so, they were continuously left behind. In this line, teachers reported that to engage in remediation practices and to finish concerned course book on time was challenging in upper classes.

Encouraging students to observe one's own record and make self-assessment for progress was another challenging issue. Students' were not yet backed by general ideas of self-assessment. It demands some exercise in this area to make students ready for self-assessment. Thus, in the present condition, identifying ways for self-assessment, and use it for students' further progress was challenging.

5.6 Challenges Involved in Sustaining CAS

CAS is not one time project. It needs continuity. In terms of sustaining CAS, making contextual CAS provision, and minimizing growing negativity towards CAS were challenging.

1. Collaborating the overall needs and contexts of particular school and CAS policies was an issue in sustaining CAS. It was observed that national provisions for CAS were seemingly too general to meet the contextual needs of particular school. As such, collaborating the overall needs and contexts of particular school and CAS policies was an issue. It had also something to do with raising the feeling of ownership among teachers to make assessment tools and rating scales familiar to them. Addressing this issue may go helpful in minimising growing negativity towards CAS among its stakeholders.

2. Making provision for reward and punishment was another issue in sustaining CAS. Most of the stakeholders were with common views that there was almost no provision to reward schools and teachers doing well in implementing CAS. There was no provision to punish schools and teachers ignoring the provisions. In doing so, CAS was often ignored from priority agenda in most of the non CAS-effective schools. As such, making provision for reward and punishment so as to sustain CAS was an issue.

6. STRATEGIC MEASURES TO LINK CAS AND LGS

Letter grading is internationally recognized system to indicate student's performance in test. Most testing organizations/ educational institutions make use of either five or nine letter grades. Recently, the GoN has introduced Letter Grade System (9 letter grades) in the Examination at Secondary level (e.g. class 10 final exam) with the decision of National Curriculum Development and Evaluation Council on December 9, 2015.

Finding effective ways so as to integrate CAS (particularly from class 1-7) and Letter Grading System (LGS) is another burning issue in present assessment practices in school

education of Nepal. In CAS implemented schools there was generally accepted tradition to make different column for CAS in progress report cards and assign Grade A, B, or C (competent, fairly competent, and not yet competent). It was provisioned in CAS manuals as well. However, study suggested that even in CAS-effective schools, criteria to assign grades were not suggested in the report cards. Likewise, high range difference between these grades was the inherent problem within it, which needed to be specific. Research participants and experts suggested to add at least two grade points (e.g., A, B, C, D, and E), and come with proper descriptors. Criteria for the grades were to be listed in report cards.

The percentage score range of each letter grade and description can be given as follows:

A= 80% and above	= Excellent
B= 60% to 79%	= Very Good
C= 50% to 59%	= Good
D= 40% to 49%	= Sufficient
E= Below 40%	= Not Sufficient

However, it is important that teachers in each school (focused to their department) work together and come with shared understanding on the ways to make it compatible with subject specific achievement indicators, and the ways of its calculation (For example, the ongoing practices of making 1, 2, or 3 ticks may be added up to 5 ticks, which is likely to minimize the high range differences). Teachers are also to work together to have shared understanding of what the grade descriptors mean, and come with subject specific strategies to apply them in continuous assessment. For its effective reporting, criteria for the grades, competencies to be assessed (e.g., knowledge and understanding, practical skills, attitudes and values, and generic competencies) and performance indicators are to be listed in report cards. It insures that the grades are awarded consistently across subjects.

7. CONCLUSION

In spite of the efforts made at policy level with guidelines and directives, the practice of CAS is not without problems. Implementation and monitoring of CAS has remained to be the most neglected part. Ineffective implementation of CAS for a long period of time has given space for widespread negativity towards it. However, the study shows that there are some few serious schools which are implementing CAS successfully. These practices are to be implemented by all the schools with closer monitoring and training by the RPs and supervisors. Successful implementation of CAS is to be tied up with the success of students in terms of quality education and learning outcomes. Effective administration, evaluation, and reporting of CAS at school level is the answer to the existing weaknesses of the CAS system.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the lessons learnt from this study three major recommendations in terms of capacity building and school-based administration of CAS are suggested.

1. **Capacity building:** All perspective teachers have to pass through intensive and rigorous training on CAS. It is recommended to make provision of full time course

involving the concepts, modalities, and techniques of CAS in teacher preparation classes of the universities. Likewise, CDC and NCED need to ensure subject specific intensive and regular in-service and ‘on the spot’ trainings on CAS. Such trainings should be handled by experts in the area.

2. ***School based administering of CAS:*** It is recommended to make provision of a separate continuous assessment unit in all the schools. It needs to be headed by a senior non-teaching staff, who is accountable to the HT. This unit should be responsible for systematic recording of all CAS related information of individual student; and collect assessment scores from the teachers so as to make entry into the students report sheets. This unit can further be supported by school CA committees, consisting department heads and section in-charges. Though it sounds economically less viable in the context of Nepal, the provision has already worked as effective measure of CAS implementation and its sustainability in other developing countries. It needs broader debet and discussions in policy level.
3. ***Replicating few MGML CAS practices:*** As department has already implemented Multi Grade Multi Level (MGML) practices, some of the seemingly good CAS practices of MGML schools (see the section ‘common practices of CAS effective schools’ for details) can be replicated to other schools as well. Provisions of group assessment, self-assessment, and peer-assessment can possibly be replicated in other schools, which may readily minimize the loaded burden of subject teachers in higher classes (e.g., class 4- class 7).

Other recommendations are-

The CDC may come with CAS friendly subject-specific teacher’s books for every subject.

RPs needs to ensure timely distribution of necessary manuals. SS and RPs need to make proper supervision of CAS activities, ensuring direct in-touch communication and feedbacks to teachers.

Portfolio management and CAS format filling in upper classes (particularly class 4-7) needs to be easy. Establishing separate school-based unit may work here.

Schools may come with progress report card of students that reflects remedial actions taken by teachers to improve their learning. For consistency, CDC may design and distribute the model of such (descriptive) report cards.

Concerned bodies have to come with the provision of reward and punishment. HTs and teachers who fail to obey rules are to be taken actions. School may make internal provision to reward best performing teachers on CAS.

In making letter grade of students more specific, CDC needs to minimize grade ranges in CAS (e.g., A, B, and C only). Instead, it may work for 5 letter grades (e.g., A, B, C, D, and E) with proper descriptors and criteria for particular grade.

Stepping on the major findings and recommendations of present research, there is need of a comprehensive research relating it with education, assessment of students and roles of local bodies under federalism.

9. ACTION PLAN

The study concludes that the strategy of CAS can be gainfully employed at the present basic education level of Nepal if its implementation mechanism is well spelt out and monitoring of its effective implementation is ensured. As stressed in the recommendation of this study report, school based effective administering of CAS is the most strategic choice for its impactful orientation and utility. In this connection, a sample school action plan for effective implementation of CAS is designed as given below. Based on this model, schools may come with their own context-friendly action plan. DoE may work in collaboration with DEO, SS, and RPs to ensure favourable environment for schools to make their own CAS implementation action plan, and work for it. DEO and school supervisors are to be made responsible for its effective and timely supervision.

Sample school action plan for effective implementation of CAS

School name:

School year:

Goal:

Objective:

Strategies	Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline(s)	Evaluation
1.Create a more positive school climate for CAS	-Arrange school meeting focused to CAS -Make teachers familiar to the objectives of CAS and its benefit on students and teachers themselves	- RP/ Head teacher/ department heads	-Few days before the new academic year begins	-Initiation taken by the teachers and department heads
2.Form a separate CAS unit	- Assign a staff (possibly a non-teaching senior staff), who is responsible for systematic recording of all CAS related information of individual student, and make proper	-HT, deputy Head teacher, senior non-teaching staff	-To the beginning of new academic year	-Good coordination among subject teachers - timely recording of CAS related information

	coordination among subject teachers			
3.Ensure subject specific in-house training on CAS	-Arrange subject-specific in house teachers training on CAS in proper coordination of RP, CAS unit, department heads and subject teachers	-RP, CAS unit personnel, department heads and subject teacher - NGOs/INGOs working in this area	-To the beginning of new academic year	- Degree of comfort felt by subject teachers in working with CAS
4.Ensure teachers familiarity to assessment instruments for CAS	- Design subject specific observation schedule/ record sheet -Checklists, rating scale and rubrics -Project works -Portfolio management and profiling <i>(few models of student progress information sheets are already prepared by CDC for grade 1, 2, and 3)</i>	-RP, HT, CAS unit personnel, depart heads and grade and subject teachers	- During first few weeks as the course begins	- Degree of comfort felt by subject teachers in designing/ recording subject specific record sheet, checklists, rating scales, rubrics, project works, portfolio management and profiling
5.Explore ways for effective reporting of CAS	-Design CAS friendly (descriptive) students' progress reort card suitable for the local community context -Arrange CAS	-HT, CAS unit personnel, department heads, grade and subject teachers, SMC and PTA members	Before 1 st quarterly exam	-Reflection of CAS activities in student's progress report cards -Degree of parents' active concern in knowing their

	orientation programs for the parents			childrens' progress from progress report cards.
6. Exploring ways for students remediation/ continuous progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Make subject specific remediation plan for poor performing students and ways for continuous progress for other students -Discuss individual students' performance/ problems in teachers' meeting and seek effective remedials/ progress plan in group -Arrange discussions with parents 	HT, CAS unit personnel, department heads, grade and subject teachers	After every quarterly exam and final exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -students continuous progress in school activities -progress of poor performing students
7.Ensure sustainability of CAS implementation at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Re-visit yearly CAS practices, and seek ways for further betterment in the days ahead -Make internal provisions to reward best performing subject/ grade teachers and punishment to those who intentionally ignore the rules 	-HT, CAS unit personnel, department heads, grade and subject teachers	-Monthly staff meetings and annual meetings	Regularity of CAS activities in the school

Action plan for central authorities

As suggested above, this school based action plan for effective implementation of CAS may, however, go effective only in case it is well supported and monitored by central authoritative bodies. Therefore, these central bodies including MoE, DoE, CDC, and DEO are also suggested to come with well coordinated action plan for CAS, which this study stresses as imperative for its effective implementation. Few action plans for these bodies include:

<i>Central Bodies</i>	<i>Suggested action/s</i>
<i>MoE</i>	As policy making body, MoE needs to define CAS as integral part of basic school education. In stressing CAS as integral to teaching and learning at school, it may come with effective policy provisions and directives on CAS.
<i>DoE</i>	As this study suggests, DoE needs to work for simplification and clarity of CAS tools. It has to come with timely testing and re-testing of the tools. Monitoring and follow-up of the use of suggested tools at school level is the most.
<i>CDC</i>	CDC needs to work for in-built mechanism, where it has to design basic school curriculum in a way to make CAS as integral to teaching and learning at school. It may come with CAS friendly subject-specific teacher's books for every subject. Likewise, CDC may design and distribute the model of descriptive report cards.
<i>DEO</i>	DEO has to work as linking mechanism. It may work for identifying seemingly gap between CAS related provisions made by DoE, and their actual practices at school. It may collect yearly feedback from the schools, and forward it to DoE.

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अनुसन्धान प्रतिवेदनको नेपालीमा सारांश

मुख्यगरी प्राथमिक विद्यालयहरूमा कक्षा छाड्ने र कक्षा दोहोर्‍याउने दर न्यून गर्नका लागि लक्षित उदार कक्षोन्नति नीतिको पूरकका रूपमा निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन प्रणाली ९० को दशकको अन्त्यतिर अभि विशेष गरी नवौं योजना (१९९७-२००२) मा सुरुवात गरिएको थियो । पछि १९९९-२००४ को अवधिको कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयन योजनाले विद्यार्थीहरूको उपलब्धिहरूको अन्तिम ग्रेड निर्धारण गर्नका लागि संज्ञानात्मक, भावनात्मक र मनोक्रियात्मक क्षेत्रहरूलाई ख्याल गर्ने एउटा संयन्त्रका रूपमा विद्यार्थीहरूको निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कनलाई गुणस्तरीय शिक्षाको मुख्य तत्वका रूपमा अगाडि बढायो ।

त्यसै अनुसार, दशौं योजना (२००२-२००७) ले अनिवार्य प्राथमिक शिक्षा लागू भएका पाँच ओटा जिल्लाहरूमा गरिएको परीक्षण कार्यक्रमबाट सिकिएका पाठका आधारमा २०००/१ बाट निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन प्रणाली कक्षा ५ सम्म लागू गर्ने कार्यक्रम ल्यायो । तथापि, विद्यार्थीको उपलब्धि, कक्षा छोड्ने दर र उपस्थितिमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको प्रभावसम्बन्धी अन्तिम प्रतिवेदन (पाठ्यक्रम विकास केन्द्र, २००३) ले निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीले विद्यार्थीहरूको उपलब्धिको सुधारमा कुनै निश्चित प्रवृत्ति नदेखाएको कुरा बाहिर ल्यायो । त्यसभन्दा पछि पनि नेपालको विद्यालय क्षेत्र सुधार कार्यक्रम (२००९-२०१६) को अन्तिम संयुक्त मूल्याङ्कन प्रतिवेदनले पनि दिगोपनको सुनिश्चितताका लागि निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीको महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका अझै नभएको निष्कर्ष दियो । निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीको कमजोर स्वीकार्यता र शिक्षक, विद्यार्थी, अभिभावक र निर्णयकर्ताहरूमा रहेको कमजोर बुझाइ नै यसो हुनुको मुख्य कारण थियो ।

विद्यालय क्षेत्र सुधार कार्यक्रमबाट सिकेका पाठका आधारमा हाल कार्यान्वयनमा रहेको विद्यालय क्षेत्र विकास योजना (एसएसडीपी, २०१६-२०२३) का उल्लेख्य रणनीतिक योजनाहरू मध्ये एउटा योजना निर्माणात्मक र निर्णयात्मक मूल्याङ्कन दुवैलाई सीप र सिकारु केन्द्रित बनाउने कुरामा जोड दिँदै विद्यालय क्षेत्र सुधार कार्यक्रमको उपलब्धिमा थप गर्नु रहेको थियो ।

यही पृष्ठभूमिमा, विद्यालयहरूमा विद्यार्थीहरूको निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कनलाई सुदृढ बनाउने प्रभावकारी उपायहरूको खोजी गर्नका लागि यो अनुसन्धानात्मक अध्ययन गरिएको थियो । यसको उद्देश्य निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीका सम्बन्धमा व्यवस्था गरिएका क्षमता विकासका कार्यक्रमहरू, शिक्षकका लागि निर्देशिका र परीक्षण साधनहरू जस्ता सहयोगहरू, विद्यार्थीहरूका लागि कार्यसञ्चयिका र विद्यालयहरूलाई सहयोग संयन्त्र (वित्तीय तथा प्राविधिक) को पहिचान गर्नु रहेको थियो । त्यसैगरी यसको उद्देश्य सिकेका पाठहरू र निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयनका सम्बन्धमा विद्यालयहरूले सामना गरिरहेका मुख्य मुद्दाहरूको पहिचान गर्नु रहेको थियो । यसको अर्को उद्देश्य विद्यार्थीहरूको सिकाइ र उपलब्धि अभिवृद्धिका लागि निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन प्रणाली र अक्षराङ्कन पद्धतिको उपयोगलाई जोड्ने तरिकाहरूको खोजी गर्नु रहेको थियो ।

यो अध्ययनमा विद्यालय क्षेत्र सुधार कार्यक्रम (२००९-२०१६) र विद्यालय क्षेत्र विकास योजना (२०१६-२०३०) का दस्तावेजहरू र शिक्षा ऐन (आठौं संशोधन, २०७३) लाई सन्दर्भ सामग्रीहरूको रूपमा उपयोग गरिएको थियो । विद्यार्थीको उपलब्धि, कक्षा छाड्ने दर र उपस्थितिमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको प्रभावसम्बन्धी अन्तिम प्रतिवेदन (पाठ्यक्रम विकास केन्द्र, २००३), नेपालको विद्यालय क्षेत्र सुधार कार्यक्रम (२००९-२०१६) को अन्तिम संयुक्त मूल्याङ्कन प्रतिवेदन जस्ता अनुसन्धान प्रतिवेदनहरू र आन्तरिक अनुगमन प्रतिवेदनहरूको अध्ययन गरिएको थियो । यो अध्ययनमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन कार्यक्रम पुस्तिका, २०५६, निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन शिक्षक तालिम पुस्तिका, २०५६, निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन शिक्षक निर्देशिका, २०५६ र निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रशिक्षक निर्देशिका, २०५६ को अध्ययन गरिएको थियो । त्यसैगरी निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन कार्यान्वयन निर्देशिका, २०६८, निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन कार्यान्वयन निर्देशिका २०७२ र अक्षरांकन पद्धति कार्यान्वयन नीति को पनि अध्ययन गरिएको थियो ।

अनुसन्धान विधि

यो अनुसन्धान तीन फरक चरणहरूमा सम्पन्न गरिएको थियो । प्रारम्भिक चरणमा तथ्याङ्कका स्रोतहरूको पहिचान, नमुना जिल्लाहरूको छनोट र आकार निर्धारण, अनुसन्धानका साधनहरू निर्माण र समय सीमा निर्धारण, सम्बन्धित विज्ञहरूका लागि परिचयात्मक कार्यशाला र साधनहरूको परीक्षण जस्ता कार्यहरू गरिएका थिए । जिल्लाहरू (जम्मा ८ ओटा जिल्लाहरू) र विद्यालयहरू (जम्मा ३२ ओटा विद्यालयहरू) को नमुना छनोट उद्देश्यमूलक तरिकाबाट गरिएको थियो जस अनुसार प्रारम्भिक कक्षा पढाइ कार्यक्रम लागू भएका दुई ओटा जिल्लाहरू र प्रत्येक प्रदेशबाट कम्तीमा एउटा जिल्ला पर्ने गरी सबै भौगोलिक क्षेत्रहरू अर्थात् हिमाल, पहाड र तराई समेटिएका थिए । यो अध्ययनको नमुनाको आधारभूत एकाइ विद्यालय रहेको थियो र सोही कारणले प्रत्येक नमुना जिल्लाबाट दुई ओटा शहरी क्षेत्रका र दुई ओटा ग्रामीण क्षेत्रका पर्ने गरी चार चार ओटा विद्यालयहरू छनोट गरिएको थियो ।

त्यसैगरी, मूल्याङ्कनको चरणमा स्थलगत भ्रमण, सम्बन्धित र मुख्य सरोकारवालाहरूसँग अन्तरवार्ता/लक्षित समूह छलफल, वर्गीकरण र कोडिङ गर्ने र केही अध्ययन प्रतिवेदनहरू र प्रकाशनहरूसँग सान्दर्भिक मुख्य क्रियाकलापहरूको विश्लेषण गर्ने कार्यहरू गरिएको थियो । अवधारणा निर्माण र व्याख्या मार्फत गुणात्मक तथ्याङ्कहरूको व्याख्या र विश्लेषण गरिएको थियो । (क) वर्गीकरण र कोडिङ, र (ख) मुख्य अनुभवहरूको विश्लेषणका माध्यमबाट स्थलगत भ्रमणबाट प्राप्त तथ्याङ्कहरूको विश्लेषण गरिएको थियो । स्थलगत भ्रमणबाट प्राप्त अनुभवहरूलाई अनुसन्धान प्रयोजनका लागि सुरुमा अध्ययन गरिएका निर्देशिका दस्तावेजहरूका प्रावधानहरूसँग निरन्तर तुलना गरिएको थियो ।

अन्त्यमा, संक्षेपीकरणको चरणमा अन्तिम विश्लेषण र विज्ञहरू तथा कार्यान्वयनकर्ताहरूसँग अध्ययनका निष्कर्षहरू आदानप्रदान गर्ने र प्रतिवेदन लेखनका कार्यहरू गरिएका थिए ।

निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका प्रावधानहरू

निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका प्रावधानहरूसम्बन्धी क्षेत्रका सूचना र शिक्षक र अन्य सरोकारवालाहरूको दृष्टिकोण विभिन्न उपविषयहरू : (१) अवधारणागत स्पष्टता (२) क्षमता विकासका निर्देशिकाहरू र परीक्षणका साधनहरू (३) विद्यार्थी कार्यसञ्चयिका र (४) सहायता संयन्त्र अन्तर्गत अध्ययन गरिएको थियो । अध्ययनका मुख्य निष्कर्षहरू निम्नानुसार रहेका थिए :

- अधिकांश शिक्षक र प्रधानाध्यापकहरूले निर्माणात्मक मूल्याङ्कनलाई केवल औपचारिकताका रूपमा मात्र लिए । उनीहरूले निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनलाई विद्यार्थीमैत्री सिकाइ र मूल्याङ्कनका माध्यमका रूपमा स्वीकारेन् । विषयगत शिक्षकहरूले निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनलाई थप बोझका रूपमा मात्र लिए । अभिभावकहरूले निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन भनेको 'पटक पटक परीक्षा लिने' र विद्यार्थीहरूले निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन भनेको 'परीक्षा नदिइकन परीक्षा उत्तीर्ण गर्ने' भन्ने बुझेका थिए ।
- निश्चित विषयमा केन्द्रित तालिम (विद्यालयमा प्रदर्शन/विषय केन्द्रित) को अभाव देखियो । तालिम कार्यक्रमहरूले सबै विषय शिक्षकका आवश्यकताहरू समावेश (सम्बोधन) गरेका थिएनन् । त्यस्ता तालिमहरू सम्बन्धित पाठ्यक्रमसँग सम्बन्धित गराउँदै प्रश्न निर्माण गर्ने तरिकाहरू सिक्नका लागि अपर्याप्त (अर्थात् अति नै साधारण) थिए । तालिमहरूलाई मूल्याङ्कन र पृष्ठपोषणमार्फत सहयोग उपलब्ध थिएन । तत्क्षणको प्रदर्शनमार्फत तालिमका लागि गरिएको सहयोग भने तुलनात्मक रूपमा प्रभावकारी थिए ।

- धेरै शिक्षकहरूले अभिलेख राख्ने कुरामा बढी चासो देखाएका थिए । धेरैजसो शिक्षकहरूलाई निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको फारम भर्ने कार्य जर्बजस्ती लगाइएको थियो । निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन कार्यान्वयन गरिएका विद्यालयहरूमा पनि विद्यार्थीहरूका प्रगति फारमहरू प्राविधिक उद्देश्यका लागि मात्र आवधिक परीक्षाका समयमा मात्र भरिएका थिए । धेरै शिक्षकहरू (र प्रधानाध्यापकहरू पनि) कुनै विद्यार्थीले एउटा विषयमा प्राप्त गरेको ठीक चिन्हहरूको कूल जोडलाई परीक्षाको नतिजासँग कस्ता तरिकाहरूबाट मिल्दो बनाउने भन्ने सम्बन्धमा स्पष्ट थिएनन् । धेरैजसो अवस्थामा विद्यार्थीहरूका समस्या पत्ता लगाउनका लागि निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका फारमहरू फेरि हेर्ने कार्य गरिएन र त्यसै कारणले सुधारात्मक तरिकाहरू मुश्किलले अपनाइए ।
- कार्य सञ्चयिकाको प्रयोग प्रधानाध्यापकहरू र शिक्षकहरू दुवैलाई एउटा प्राविधिक कार्य र औपचारिकता मात्र बनेको थियो । केही विद्यालयहरूमा कार्यसञ्चयिकाको व्यवस्थापन तल्ला कक्षाहरू (कक्षा १ देखि कक्षा ३ सम्म) मा मात्र राम्रो देखियो । शिक्षक र प्रधानाध्यापकहरू परीक्षाको नतिजासँग मिल्दो हुने गरी कार्यसञ्चयिकाको मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने तरिकाहरूका बारेमा स्पष्ट थिएनन् । अधिकांश अभिभावकहरूलाई उनीहरूका बालबालिकाहरूको विद्यालयमा राखिएको कार्यसञ्चयिका उपलब्ध गराइएको थिएन वा उनीहरू त्यस सम्बन्धमा अनभिज्ञ थिए । केही विद्यालयहरूमा विद्यार्थीहरूको कार्यसञ्चयिका प्लास्टिक भोलामा संकलन गरी राखिएका थिए ।
- निर्देशिकाहरूमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयनका लागि हरेक सम्बन्धित निकायहरू र व्यक्तिहरूका जिम्मेवारीहरू स्पष्ट रूपमा दिइएको थियो । तथापि, विद्यालय निरीक्षक र स्रोत व्यक्तिहरू अन्य प्रशासनिक कार्यमा व्यस्त थिए र सोही कारणले निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीको सुपरिवेक्षण र अनुगमन संयन्त्र प्रभावकारी हुन सकेको थिएन । जिल्ला शिक्षा कार्यालय, निरीक्षक र स्रोत व्यक्तिहरूले निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीसँग सम्बन्धित आन्तरिक तालिमहरूको सञ्चालन गरेका थिएनन् । परियोजना कार्य र विद्यार्थीहरूको मनोसामाजिक विकासका लागि विद्यालयहरूलाई आवश्यक वित्तीय/प्राविधिक सहायताको अभाव थियो ।
- विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिका सदस्यहरूलाई निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका अभ्यासहरूका बारेमा जानकारी कम थियो र विद्यालयमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको कार्यान्वयनका सम्बन्धमा विद्यालय व्यवस्थापन समितिलाई जानकारी दिन कुनै पनि तहबाट कुनै कार्यक्रमहरू सञ्चालन गरिएका थिएनन् । त्यसैले उनीहरूबाट रचनात्मक सुझावहरू पाउन सकिएन । निर्माणात्मक मूल्याङ्कनको अर्थ र उद्देश्यका बारेमा उपयुक्त अभिमुखीकरणको अभावमा विद्यालयहरूले अभिभावकहरूबाट कुनै पनि सहयोग प्राप्त गरेका थिएनन् ।

निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणाली प्रभावकारी रहेका विद्यालयका अभ्यासहरू

नमुना छनोट गरिएका विद्यालयहरूमध्ये निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीको कार्यान्वयनमा तुलनात्मक रूपमा राम्रो गर्ने मानिएका केही विद्यालयहरू उद्देश्यमूलक ढङ्गबाट छनोट गरियो । निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन नभएका विद्यालयहरूको तुलनामा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन भएका विद्यालयका अभ्यासहरू फरक देखिएका थिए । निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन भएका विद्यालयहरूका साभ्ना अभ्यासहरू निम्न थिए :

- विद्यालयमा आधारित कार्यसञ्चालन योजनाका आधारमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनलाई व्यवस्थित बनाएको थियो । अधिकांश विद्यालयका आफ्नै शैक्षिक क्यालेन्डरहरू थिए जसमा महिनाको एकपटक स्टाफ बैठक गर्ने तालिका थियो । छलफलका कार्यसूची निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका अभ्यासहरूमा केन्द्रित थिए ।

- यस्ता विद्यालयका प्रधानाध्यापकहरू विद्यालयमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन कार्यान्वयन गर्न उत्सुक र उत्प्रेरित थिए र त्यहाँ शिक्षकहरू प्रधानाध्यापकप्रति उत्तरदायी रहेको पाइयो । निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका निर्देशिकाहरू र अभिलेख फाइलहरू समयमै वितरण गरिएको थियो । निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका साधनहरूलाई सरल र व्यवस्थापन गर्न सकिने किसिमको बनाइएको थियो र त्यसका लागि उपलब्ध स्रोतहरूको उच्चतम उपयोग गरिएको थियो ।
- उदार कक्षोन्नति नीतिको प्रावधानका बावजुद यस्ता अधिकांश विद्यालयहरूले विद्यार्थीहरूले कक्षा चढ्नका लागि आवश्यक न्यूनतम आवश्यकताहरू पूरा गरेपछि मात्र (कक्षा १ देखि ३ सम्ममा पनि) कक्षा चढाएका थिए । सिकारूहरूले आधारभूत सक्षमताहरू हासिल गर्न नसकेका कतिपय अवस्थामा कक्षा दोहोर्‍याउने विकल्प रहेको थियो । प्रायजसो न्यूनतम आवश्यकताहरू हासिल गर्न नसक्ने विद्यार्थीहरूका अभिभावकहरूलाई सुधारात्मक उपायहरूका बारेमा छलफल गर्न बोलाइएको थियो ।

निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन भएका विद्यालयहरूलाई पनि माथिल्ला कक्षाहरू (अर्थात्, कक्षा ४ देखि कक्षा ७ सम्म) मा यसको कार्यान्वयनमा कठिनाइ रहेको कुरा यो अध्ययनले निष्कर्ष निकाल्यो । त्यसैगरी, मूल्याङ्कन र श्रेणी निर्धारण गर्ने अभ्यासहरू मूलतः प्राविधिक र बढी समय लाग्ने खालका थिए । तसर्थ, माथिल्ला कक्षाहरूमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीका प्रावधानहरू सरल र व्यवस्थित गर्न सकिने हुनु आवश्यक थियो । यी धेरै साधनहरू (हाजिरी, व्यवहारमा आएको परिवर्तन, सिर्जनात्मक कार्य, परियोजना कार्य र कक्षा सहभागिता) को प्रयोग गर्नुको साटो केही साधनहरूलाई व्यवस्थित गर्न सकिने गरी फारममा घटाउन सकिन्छ । यसका लागि, हाजिरी, व्यवहारमा आएको परिवर्तन र कक्षा सहभागितालाई अवलोकन फारममा समेट्न सकिन्छ । शिक्षकहरूले विषय विशेषका परियोजना कार्य र कार्यसञ्चयिकाको व्यवस्थापन उनीहरूलाई सहज र पहुँचयोग्य हुने गरी थप कार्य गर्न सक्छन् । यसका अलावा, शिक्षा विभागले बहुकक्षा बहुस्तर अभ्यासको कार्यान्वयन गरिसकेकाले विभिन्न समय (जस्तै- नयाँ विषयवस्तु सुरु गर्नु अगाडि, सुरु भइसकेपछि, बीचमा, विषयवस्तु सकिएपछि, अन्त्यमा र त्रैमासिक परिक्षा वा शैक्षिक सत्रको अन्त्यमा) बहुकक्षा बहुस्तर विद्यालयका निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका अभ्यासहरू (जस्तै- व्यक्तिगत मूल्याङ्कन, सामूहिक मूल्याङ्कन, स्व-मूल्याङ्कन र सहपाठी मूल्याङ्कन) अनुकरण गर्न सकिन्छ । तथापि, मूल्याङ्कनको विकल्पका रूपमा बहुकक्षा बहुस्तरका निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको कार्यान्वयनका लागि उपयुक्त शैक्षणिक तालिम र सामग्रीहरूको आवश्यकता पर्दछ ।

निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीको कार्यान्वयनका मुख्य मुद्दा तथा चुनौतीहरू

निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीका प्रावधानहरूसम्बन्धी र शिक्षक, प्रधानाध्यापक र अन्य सरोकारवालाहरूका दृष्टिकोण र अभ्यासहरूको अध्ययनपछिको निष्कर्षका आधारमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीको ढाँचा तयार गर्ने, कार्यान्वयन गर्ने, मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने, प्रतिवेदन तयार गर्ने, सुधार गर्ने र दिगो बनाउने सम्बन्धमा रहेका मुख्य मुद्दाहरू र चुनौतीहरू पहिचान गरिएका थिए ।

- **ढाँचा तयार गर्ने** : निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका मुद्दा र चुनौतीहरूमध्येको एउटा मुख्य मुद्दा र चुनौती भनेको प्रभावकारी तरिकाबाट निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन र उदार कक्षोन्नति नीतिको एकीकरण गर्नु थियो । यो अध्ययनले के सुझाएको थियो भने कक्षा नचढाइएका सिकाइ कठिनाइ भएका सिकारूहरूलाई कक्षा चढाइएको भए प्रगति गर्न सक्ने अवस्थामा रहेको थिए । तथापि, अन्य केही अवस्थाहरूमा आधारभूत सक्षमताहरूका लागि कक्षा दोहोर्‍याउनु नै समाधान थियो । तसर्थ, कम उपलब्धि भएका विद्यार्थीहरूलाई कक्षा चढाउनु र उनीहरूले सिकाइ सहायता पाउने सुनिश्चित गर्नु चुनौतीपूर्ण थियो । त्यस्तैगरी, सन्दर्भ अनुसार निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका निर्देशिका र पाठ्यक्रम विकास गर्नु र विद्यालयमा केन्द्रित तालिमको प्याकेजहरू निर्माण गर्नु अर्को मुद्दा थियो । कहिलेकाहीं, निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका राष्ट्रिय प्रावधानहरू निश्चित अवस्थामा रहेका विद्यालयको विशिष्ट विशेषताहरूको निकै प्रतिकूल रहेका थिए । अर्कोतर्फ केन्द्रीय निकायहरूले सबै विद्यालयमा एकरूपता सुनिश्चित गर्नु थियो ।
- **कार्यान्वयन गर्ने** : माथिल्ला कक्षाहरूमा (कक्षा ४ देखि कक्षा ७ सम्म) कार्यसञ्चयिका व्यवस्थापन र निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीको फारम भने कार्य चुनौतीपूर्ण थियो । एउटै कक्षामा पढाउने

विषयगत शिक्षकहरूबीचको उपयुक्त समन्वयको अभावले कठिनाइ उत्पन्न भएको कुरा अध्ययनले देखायो । यस्तो अन्तरलाई घटाउनका लागि उपयुक्त प्रशासनिक संयन्त्रको जरुरी रहको छ । विषय शिक्षकहरूले उपलब्ध गराएका विद्यार्थीहरूको उपलब्धिको अभिलेखहरूको अभिलेख राख्न र हरेक विद्यार्थीहरूको निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको प्रगति प्रतिवेदन तयार पार्नका लागि विद्यालयहरूबाट सक्रिय सुरुवात र स्तर नियन्त्रण र निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका क्रियाकलापहरूको समन्वय गर्नका लागि छुट्टै प्रशासनिक एकाइको स्थापना आवश्यक तर चुनौतीपूर्ण रहेको छ । विद्यालयहरूले यसका लागि आवश्यक थप स्रोतहरू जुटाउनु आवश्यक छ ।

- **मूल्याङ्कन गर्ने** : विद्यार्थीका उपलब्धिहरूको निदानात्मक परीक्षणका लागि समय व्यवस्थापन गर्ने कार्य चुनौतीपूर्ण थियो । अवलोकन तालिकाहरू, रुजु सूचीहरू, रेटिङ स्केल र रुब्रिक जस्ता मूल्याङ्कनका साधनहरूको सरलीकरण गर्नुपर्ने आवश्यकता रहेको कुरा अध्ययनले देखायो । एकातर्फ, ती रुजु सूचीहरूले विद्यार्थी उपलब्धिका सबै पक्षहरू समेट्नुपर्ने छ भने अर्कोतर्फ यो सरल र व्यवस्थापन गर्नका लागि सजिलो पनि हुनुपर्छ । निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको मूल्याङ्कनका सन्दर्भमा यो प्रायजसो देखिने मुद्दा हो ।
- **प्रतिवेदन तयार गर्ने** : विद्यार्थीहरूको प्रगतिका सम्बन्धमा विवरणात्मक प्रतिवेदनको अभाव प्रतिवेदन तयार गर्ने सम्बन्धमा रहेको एउटा मुद्दा हो । विद्यार्थीहरूका व्यक्तिगत रिपोर्ट कार्ड (निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीको प्रभावकारी कार्यान्वयन भएका विद्यालयहरूमा पनि) मा पर्याप्त विवरण दिने शब्दहरूको अभाव रहेको देखियो । निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन शीर्षक रहेको छुट्टैछुट्टै कोलममा क, ख वा ग श्रेणीमात्र देखिए । यसमा प्रगतिको व्याख्या, (सुधार) योजना र कम उपलब्धि हासिल गर्ने विद्यार्थीका लागि सुझावहरूको अभाव रहेको देखियो । तथापि, शिक्षकहरूलाई बढी समय लाग्ने भएकाले यो चुनौतीपूर्ण रहेको छ । यससँग सम्बन्धित निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको अर्को मुद्दा र चुनौती भनेको विद्यार्थीहरूको सिकाइ मूल्याङ्कनको अभिन्न अंगको रूपमा रचनात्मक तथा सुधारात्मक शिक्षणबाट सहायता पुऱ्याइने गरी उपचारात्मक शिक्षण र सबलीकरण गर्नु हो ।
- **दिगो बनाउने** : विद्यालय विशेषका समग्र आवश्यकता र परिवेश र निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका नीतिहरूबीच तालमेल मिलाउने कार्य निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनलाई दिगो बनाउनका लागि महत्वपूर्ण छ । मूल्याङ्कनका साधनहरू र रेटिङ स्केल निर्माणका लागि शिक्षकहरूबीच अपनत्वको भावना बढाउनुपर्ने आवश्यकतामा अध्ययनले जोड दिएको थियो । निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका सम्बन्धमा सरोकारवालाहरूबीचको बढ्दो नकारात्मकता कम गर्ने यसको दिगोपना बढाउने अर्को तरिका हो । यो पनि चुनौतीपूर्ण रहेको छ किनभने विद्यालयहरूमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको भण्डै दुई दशकको कमजोर कार्यान्वयनको जड यसप्रति सरोकारवालाहरूमा रहेको नकारात्मकता हो ।

निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणाली र अक्षराङ्कन पद्धतिको प्रयोगलाई जोड्ने

अध्ययनबाट के पत्ता लाग्यो भने निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणाली कार्यान्वयन भएका विद्यालयमा सामान्यतया प्रगति रिपोर्ट कार्डमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका लागि छुट्टै कोलम बनाउने र क, ख, वा ग श्रेणी प्रदान गर्ने गरिएको छ । यो सुधारका लागि भन्दा पनि तुलनाका लागि गर्ने कुरातर्फ निर्देशित छ । यद्यपि, निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको आधारभूत कुरा भनेको निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको प्रगति रिपोर्ट कार्डको उद्देश्य तुलनात्मक श्रेणीकरणका लागि श्रेणी दिनु होइन । त्यसैगरी, श्रेणी प्रदान गर्ने आधारहरू रिपोर्ट कार्डमा दिइएका छैनन् । यस्ता श्रेणीहरूबीच उच्च स्तरको फरक हुनु नै यसमा रहेको एउटा समस्या हो, त्यस्तो फरक विशिष्ट हुनुपर्दछ । अनुसन्धानका सहभागीहरू र विज्ञहरूले अरु दुई ओटा श्रेणीहरू (क, ख, ग, घ, ङ) थप्नुपर्ने र त्यस्ता श्रेणीको व्याख्या गर्ने उपयुक्त शब्दहरू (उदाहरणका लागि, उत्कृष्ट, धेरै राम्रो, राम्रो, पर्याप्त, अपर्याप्त) हुनुपर्ने कुरा सुझाए । श्रेणीका लागि आधारहरू, मूल्याङ्कन गरिने सक्षमताहरू (उदाहरणका लागि ज्ञान र बोध, प्रयोगात्मक सीपहरू, अभिवृत्ति र मूल्य र सामान्य सक्षमताहरू) र उपलब्धि सूचकहरू रिपोर्ट कार्डमा सूचीकृत गरिनुपर्छ ।

सुझावहरू

यो अध्ययनबाट सिकेका पाठका आधारमा क्षमता विकास र निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको विद्यालयमा आधारित कार्यान्वयनका सम्बन्धमा तीन ओटा मुख्य सुझावहरू प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ :

१. क्षमता विकास : सबै भावी शिक्षकहरूले निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणालीसम्बन्धी सघन र सुत्रबद्ध तालिम लिनुपर्दछ । विश्वविद्यालयका शिक्षक तयारी कक्षाहरूमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका अवधारणा, प्रक्रिया र तरिकाहरू समावेश भएको पूर्ण कोर्स राखिनु पर्दछ । त्यसैगरी, सम्बन्धित निकायहरूले निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनसम्बन्धी विषय विशिष्ट सघन र नियमित सेवाकालीन र कार्यस्थलमा आधारित तालिमहरूको सुनिश्चितता गर्नु पर्दछ ।
२. विद्यालयमा निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको सञ्चालन : सबै विद्यालयमा निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कनका लागि एउटा छुट्टै शाखाको व्यवस्था गरिनु पर्दछ । सो शाखाको नेतृत्व शिक्षकले नभई विद्यालयका वरिष्ठ कर्मचारीले गर्नुपर्दछ र प्रधानाध्यापकप्रति उत्तरदायी हुनु पर्दछ । यो शाखा विद्यार्थीको निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनसँग सम्बन्धित व्यक्तिगत विवरणको व्यवस्थित अभिलेखीकरणका लागि र शिक्षकहरूबाट मूल्याङ्कनका विवरण प्राप्त गरी विद्यार्थीहरूको रिपोर्टसिटमा प्रविष्टिका लागि जिम्मेवार हुनुपर्दछ । यो शाखालाई विभिन्न विषयका विभागीय प्रमुख र कक्षा इन्चार्जहरू सम्मिलित निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन समितिले थप सहयोग गर्न सक्छन् । यो कुरा नेपालको परिवेशमा आर्थिक रूपले त्यति सम्भव नदेखिए तापनि निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनको कार्यान्वयन र त्यसको दिगोपनका लागि अन्य विकासशील देशहरूमा यो प्रभावकारी विधि सावित भएको छ ।
३. बहुकक्षा बहुस्तर कार्यक्रमका निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका अभ्यासहरूको अनुकरण : शिक्षा विभागले बहुकक्षा बहुस्तर पद्धति सुरु गरिसकेकाले बहुकक्षा बहुस्तर पद्धति अपनाएका विद्यालयले अवलम्बन गरेका निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कनका कतिपय असल अभ्यासहरू अन्य विद्यालयहरूमा पनि लागू गर्न सकिन्छ (विस्तृत विवरणका लागि 'निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन प्रणाली प्रभावकारी रहेका विद्यालयका अभ्यासहरू' खण्ड हेर्नुहोला) । समूह मूल्याङ्कन, स्व-मूल्याङ्कन र सहपाठी मूल्याङ्कनको प्रावधानलाई अन्य विद्यालयहरूमा पनि लागू गर्न सकिन्छ, जसले माथिल्ला कक्षाहरू (कक्षा ४-७) मा विषय शिक्षकको भार सहज रूपमा कम गर्नेछ ।

संक्षिप्त रूपहरू

बिपिडपी	आधारभूत तथा प्राथमिक शिक्षा कार्यक्रम
सिएएस	निरन्तर मूल्याङ्कन प्रणाली/निरन्तर विद्यार्थी मूल्याङ्कन
सिडिसी	पाठ्यक्रम विकास केन्द्र
डिडओ	जिल्ला शिक्षा कार्यालय

डिओइ	शिक्षा विभाग
इजीआरपी	प्रारम्भिक कक्षा पढाइ कार्यक्रम
इसीइडी	प्रारम्भिक बाल विकास शिक्षा
इएफए	सबैका लागि शिक्षा
एफजीडी (ज्)	लक्षित समूह छलफल (हरू)
एलजीएस	अक्षराङ्कन प्रणाली
एमओइ	शिक्षा मन्त्रालय
एनसिइडी	शैक्षिक जनशक्ति विकास केन्द्र
पिआइपी	कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयन योजना
पिटिए	शिक्षक अभिभावक संघ
एसएसडिपी	विद्यालय क्षेत्र विकास योजना
एसएसआरपी	विद्यालय क्षेत्र सुधार कार्यक्रम
आरसी	स्रोत केन्द्र
आरपी (ज्)	स्रोत व्यक्ति(हरू)
एसएस	विद्यालय निरीक्षक
टिपिडी	शिक्षकको पेशागत विकास