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SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN NEPAL: AN ANALYSIS OF LEGAL CONTEXT, SECTORAL IMPLEMENTATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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Glossary

Citizen Report Card: It is a survey based on questionnaire with different questions about a public service agency. It is a mechanism for citizens to provide feedback to government offices based on their direct experiences, observations and feelings about a particular service delivery agency through a participatory method

Community Score Card: It is a community-based gathering of duty bearers and right-holders. They discuss issues, identify challenges and propose solutions through indicator-based scoring process culminating into a jointly agreed action plan. It is also known as a community-based monitoring tool that enables citizens to voice their concerns about a public service agency.

Civil Society Organizations: CSOs are non-state, not-for-profit and voluntary entities that are separate from the State and the market. CSOs represent a wide range of interest groups including community-based organizations as well as non-governmental organizations. UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework define CSOs which doesn't include businesses or for-profit associations/organizations.

Focus Group Discussion: FGD is a method for collecting qualitative data that gathers community members together to discuss a specific topic. Questions are open-ended, with the aim of stimulating an informal discussion and exploring research participants' views in more detail ways than is possible through a survey.

Key Informant Interviews: KII is a qualitative data collection method that involves a conversation with a person(s) who are knowledgeable about the issue under study or investigation.

Public Hearing: A formal meeting/gathering/interface convened by a government agency where citizens participate in the process and raise concerns/provide feedback/input on the service delivery. Authorities are obliged to answer to questions/concerns/grievances raised by the citizens/CSOs/stakeholders and find solutions to them jointly.

Public Audit: A formal gathering of beneficiaries of a development project when it gets completed. Public audit typically focuses on development project where budget vs allocation/expenditures are discussed, verified and approved by the beneficiaries.

Public Expenditure Tracking Survey: It is a questionnaire-based survey/study about the flow of public funds/budgets to determine whether the financial resources reach their intended destination, or if there are leakages along the way. It helps track the flow of budgets from 'origin to destination'.

Social accountability: It is defined as an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i.e., in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society

organizations (CSOs) that participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability from duty bearers.

Social Audit: A formal annual assessment of an institution/organization with focus on its organizational contribution made on social development during a particular fiscal year. Organizational targets, plans, achievements, challenges and lesson learnt including financial and administrative aspects will be covered/discussed during the social audit process.

Subnational Level or Governments: Subnational level refers to political governing entities below the national level such as 7 Provinces, 77 district coordination committees (DDCs) and 753 local governments in the context of Nepal as a federal country. The local level refers to 77 DDCs, 293 Municipalities and 460 Rural Municipalities that have their own governing bodies and authority.

Unitary System: Unitary state or unitary government is a political system where ultimate governing power is concentrated in a single national authority. Before federal system, Nepal was a unitary country with a unitary government.

Abbreviation

CRC:	: Citizen Report Card
CSC	: Community Score Card
CSOs	: Civil Society Organizations
EOL	: Education Out Loud
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
GESI	: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GIEN	: Girls and Inclusive Education Network
GGB	: Good Governance Barometer
GMM	: Grievances Management Mechanism
GPE	: Global Partnership for Education
GPSA	: Global Partnership for Social Accountability
HRBA	: Human Rights Based Approach
INGOs	: International Non-Governmental Organizations
KII	: Key Informant Interviews
LISA	: Local Government Institutional Capacity Self-Assessment
MoEST	: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoFAGA	: Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration
MoHP	: Ministry of Health and Population
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organizations
NMEG	: National Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines
NPC	: National Planning Commission
PA	: Public Audit
PB	: Participatory Budgeting
PETS	: Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
PH	: Public Hearing
RTI	: Right to Information
SA	: Social Accountability
SA	: Social Audit
SAFDHS	: Social Accountability Federal Directives for Health Sector
SDC	: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SMC	: School Management Committee
USAID	: United States Agency for International Development

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1. Social Accountability: A Brief Conceptual Introduction

Social accountability (SA) is being understood and defined as an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i.e., in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations (CSOs) that participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability. So, the concept of social accountability refers to a broad range of actions and mechanisms that citizens, communities, independent media and civil society organizations can use to hold public officials and public servants accountable¹. It is an approach that creates opportunities among various stakeholders for interaction and dialogues on topics they feel relevant and find solutions to the issues they face in delivery of public services. SA mechanisms have been designed to improve the institutional performance by bolstering both citizen participation and responsiveness of public agencies toward the citizenry². In practice, the concept includes a wide range of institutional innovations that both enhance and integrate citizen voices into institutional decision-making process by building citizen power through mutual participation and collaboration on public interest issues and agenda³.

Social accountability tools and mechanisms defined by different literatures and publications explicitly underline the fact that citizen engagement and participation is a key to SA practice. SA mechanisms create opportunities for informed, constructive dialogue and negotiation between citizens and the government agencies. It identifies mutually agreed-upon solutions, thus contributing to better public service delivery or performance of a public institution⁴. SA tools serve multiple functions in democratic society. One of the functions is to provide civic engagement platforms or interface between the citizens and the service providers. Beyond periodic elections in democracy, formal interface mechanisms and opportunities between citizens and elected officials hardly exist. SA tools have been designed and being implemented to fill this gap so that elected representatives and duty bearers can be held responsible and accountable in fulfilling their duties and functions.

The second function of social accountability is to create platforms for information sharing. Citizens participating in the SA process have access to information on services, programs, budgets and other details of a public agency. By getting the information, citizens become empowered and informed that enables them to perform better oversight actions. The third important function of the SA approach has been to serve as civic engagement platforms/mechanisms through which citizens and CSOs can provide their suggestions and feedback to public agencies and service providers on gaps and shortfalls within the public

¹ Social Accountability: An introduction to concept and emerging practice. Social Development Papers: The World Bank, 2004.

² Social accountability: What does the evidence really say? Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2014

³ Social accountability: What does the evidence really say? Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2014.

⁴ Demanding good governance: Lessons from social accountability initiatives in Africa. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2010.

service delivery. Sharing of feedback with the service providers and authorities allows public agencies to improve the quality of public services quickly and win the trust of the citizens as a part of collaborative governance approach. Fourth important function of SA approach is to serve as monitoring and oversight tools⁵. By applying the SA tools, citizens and civil society have the opportunity to monitor public agencies and keep oversight of their actions, service delivery and hold them accountable and responsive towards the citizens and society at large.

New and emerging social accountability practices have significantly enhanced citizens' ability to move toward engagement with bureaucrats and politicians in a more informed, organized, constructive, and systematic manner, thus building more productive relations and increasing effectiveness of public service delivery. A case from India where Community Score Card (CSC) was implemented in a childcare center by a local NGO called Pravah in Pargadih village of Jharkhand. This CSC process helped the senior officials identify problems collectively and make decisions to improve the services such as starting of pre-school education services to children between 3 to 6 years of age in that childcare center. The social accountability approach has been accepted by the government agencies and development partners globally because of its opportunity to channel citizen voices to improve the quality of public services in a participatory way. Social accountability initiative consists of a multiple array of efforts/actions by individual citizens and communities through citizen 'voice' as a principal tool for participation⁶. Thus, putting it in nutshell, various literatures and publications have commonly emphasized social accountability as a concept and a mechanism with active citizen participation, facilitating citizen voices, citizen power and institutional responsiveness in a participatory manner.

Over the past two decades, SA tools globally and in the context of Nepal have evolved impressively and empowered ordinary citizens and people to exercise their inherent rights to hold the governments accountable for the use of public funds and how they exercise authority.⁷ Evolution started with the practice of Public Hearing (PH) as the first SA tool in early 2000 which was led by civil society organizations. Then gradually, other tools such as Public Audit (PA) and Social Audit (SA) started being implemented by CSOs alongside the PH. CSOs continued advocating their practice even at the level of government by framing their guidelines. As a result, the government endorsed PH, PA and SA Guidelines formally in 2011 providing platforms to the citizens to raise their concerns on public services. Social accountability mechanisms are meant for the poor with the focus usually on issues like health, sanitation, education and similar services that have significant implications for the lives of the disadvantaged. Accountability initiatives have a great potential to serve the interests of

⁵ National Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines, National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, Nepal: 2018.

⁶ New directions in theorizing social accountability. *IDS Bulletin*; 2008.

⁷ Demanding good governance: Lessons from social accountability initiatives in Africa, The World Bank, 2010.

vulnerable and marginalized groups, whether they are women, children or the disabled⁸. Practice of social accountability tools has been substantial in terms of reaching greater number of citizens and in creating a common platform for service users and providers to work together for better service delivery⁹. To sum up, social accountability interventions enhance capacity of citizens, CSOs and other non-state actors to hold the state accountable and that also enhance the capacity of the state/government to become more transparent, accountable and responsive to the needs and demands of citizens in democratic polity¹⁰.

2. Policy and Legal Context of Social Accountability in Nepal

Social accountability as a concept and as a phrase started gaining popularity in Nepal since 2010 when the World Bank launched a project 'Program for Accountability in Nepal'. But the history of implementing social accountability tools in Nepal goes back to early 2000. During those days, non-governmental organizations with financial support from international organizations started implementing a limited number of tools such as PH and PA. Over the years, the scope and practice of SA tools have expanded to more than a dozen tools and mechanisms which are being commonly implemented at present.

In the last two decades, practice of social accountability has formally entered the government's domain from the periphery of civil society organizations. Nepal government has owned and institutionalized a certain number of SA tools. These include PH, PA, SA, Right to Information (RTI) and citizen charter. In this respect, Nepal government's efforts towards institutionalization have been praiseworthy. Different laws and guidelines have been enacted and put into practice to further institutionalize these tools in different areas ranging from public service delivery to local development to health and education. The government promulgated the Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act in 2008 which institutionalized Public Hearing and Citizen Charter for the first time in Nepal. With the effect of this legislation, all levels of government agencies in the previous unitary system and in the federal system now also are obliged to organize public hearings. Concept and practice of PH was further taken to the local level by the Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) with promulgation of Public Hearing Guidelines in 2011. These guidelines explicitly elaborated the procedures on how PH needs to be mandatorily conducted by the local bodies in the unitary system. The same SA guidelines are being adapted/localized by the local level in federal structure also.

⁸ Manual on social accountability concepts and tools, Center for Budget and Governance Accountability, Delhi, 2012.

⁹ Practice of social accountability for development outcomes: Experiences of PRAN Action Learning Grants in Nepal, Center for International Studies and Cooperation/Program for Accountability in Nepal, Kathmandu, 2013

¹⁰ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2011/05/03/nepal-accountability-program-pran>

MoFAGA promulgated Public Audit and Social Audit Guidelines making them mandatory for all local bodies in 2011. It was mandatory for all the then local bodies (now local governments) to organize SA and each development project implemented by local bodies had to conduct PA and submit its report for the final payment. Similarly, concept and practice of SA was also expanded to education and health sector with promulgation of separate guidelines by the sectoral ministries in 2008 and 2009 respectively. With these provisions, entire community schools in Nepal have to conduct SA annually in participation of key stakeholders. In the public health sector also, all the community health posts have to organize SA annually, share information with the people and assess overall service delivery and its contribution to social development.

In 2008, Nepal enacted RTI law with an objective to create citizen's access to information and promote open and transparent governance. This legal provision mandated not only government agencies but also the political parties and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to disclose 20 types of information on a proactive basis. The RTI has been an important piece of legislation as a SA tool in terms of exercising the fundamental right of citizens in accessing information on public interest issues at all levels of governance. The RTI law is being used by citizens and CSOs to promote transparency in public expenditures and hold public agencies accountable and responsible for their actions by filing RTI requests all across the country.

In the previous unitary system, major SA tools; PH, PA, SA, RTI and citizen charters were institutionalized by the government and were in practice at central and local levels. Review of literature and KII discussions highlighted that PH/PA and SA tools during the pre-federal system were more effective, participatory and compliant with the due process as outlined by the guidelines. With promulgation of a new constitution in 2015, Nepal passed through the state restructuring process. Nepal formally transitioned to a new federal republic governing system. With multi-governance structure in place, the constitutional guarantee of '22 exclusive powers' for local governments became a landmark in the history of Nepal's decentralization in terms of devolving substantial powers to the subnational level. Even in this new federal structure, previous laws and guidelines have been adapted and framed by the sectoral federal ministries to continue the implementation of SA tools. Nepal government enacted a new law 'Local Governments Operation Act' in 2017 which has explicit provision for PH, PA and SA as a mandatory requirement to all 753 local governments in Nepal. To ease the implementation process, MoFAGA has even formulated 'sample SA guidelines' and circulated among the local governments for adoption, which they can localize and make necessary changes as per the context.

Social accountability practice in Nepal shows that there are a certain number of tools which are institutionalized by the government through laws and guidelines. These tools are being implemented with technical support from the NGOs and CSOs in Nepal. In addition to

these institutionalized tools, there are other SA tools and initiatives which are promoted and being implemented by NGOs, CSOs and INGOs in Nepal. Most popular and commonly used SA tools include; Citizen Report Card (CRC), Community Score Card (CSC), Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) and Good Governance Barometer (GGB). These SA tools are not yet institutionalized by the government through laws and guidelines but have been in implementation over a decade. NGOs, CSOs and INGOs are implementing these tools in collaboration with the government from federal to local level.

3. Social Accountability Practices at Global and Regional Level

Globally, the practice of social accountability gained momentum in early 2000 when United Nations agencies agreed on essential attributes in Common Understanding on Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to Development Cooperation in 2003. One of the attributes in the Common Understanding focuses that development cooperation in any part of the world should contribute to the development of the capacities of 'duty-bearers' to meet their obligations and/or of 'rights-holders' to claim their rights¹¹. As HRBA is one of the six Guiding Principles of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, social accountability platforms and tools evolved and expanded globally to hold 'duty-bearers' accountable in meeting their obligations so that 'right-holders' can claim their rights and entitlements without any hassles and in transparency way.

The Constitution of Nepal (Article 17) guarantees the right to freedom to citizens which is key to enabling democratic context and environment for exercising right to association and freedom of expression by practicing social accountability tools. Similarly, Article 27 of the Constitution ensures the right to demand and receive information on any matter of his/her public interest issues. Thus, social accountability as a concept and practice is closely linked with the rights-based approach to development. The obligation of government officials to be accountable to citizens derives from notions of citizens' and information rights, often enshrined in constitutions, and the broader set of human rights¹². Therefore, the concept of social accountability underlines the right of citizens to expect and ensure that the government acts in the best interests of the people.

Since 2000, different INGOs, bilateral and multilateral agencies started funding governance programs in Africa and Asia focusing on social accountability tools and initiatives to improve the service delivery and governance issues. The World Bank started investing and funding huge resources in 'least developed countries' of Africa and Asia on governance reform projects believing that social accountability is the key way to address governance issues. That's because it ensures information from the citizen's perspective is put directly in the

¹¹ <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/human-rights-based-approach>

¹² Social Accountability: An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice. The World Bank, 2004.

hands of government officials who have the capacity to make change happen. It also empowers people to demand and monitor these changes creating citizen-centric governance.¹³

Social Accountability movement globally and regionally got further impetus and vibrancy with the support of the World Bank in 2012. World Bank established Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA) in 2012. The objective of GPSA was to bring together CSOs from around the globe working in the social accountability field for sharing of their country-specific experiences and learning. GPSA continued to support constructive engagement between governments and civil society through social accountability tools as a means of overcoming governance challenges. The GPSA does this by providing strategic and sustained support to civil society organizations and governments for initiatives aimed at strengthening transparency and accountability through country-tailored approaches¹⁴.

Globally, social accountability initiatives and interventions have concentrated in different countries of Africa and Asia. Social accountability tools such as CSC, GGB,

“Inclusion is a key to SA initiative in Bangladesh. Inclusive design and implementation have provided co-creating platforms for resolving problems facing the marginalized community in Bangladesh. We do engage the community people including youths in the SA process to hold the duty bearers accountable.”

- Mr Kazi Ferdous Pavel,

Research Director, IID, Bangladesh

Participatory Budgeting (PB), PETS, SA, Budget Analysis and RTI, among others, have been popular and commonly used tools in different African and Asian countries. These tools have been used in education and health sectors of Malawi¹⁵, Tanzania¹⁶, Uganda, South Sudan¹⁷, Senegal¹⁸, Ghana¹⁹, among others.

At regional level, Education Out Loud (EOL) is a Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) dedicated fund for advocacy and social accountability in education sector²⁰. GPE, as a multi-stakeholder partnership and financing mechanism, has embedded accountability-

¹³<https://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/GPSA-awards-world-bank-social-accountability-new-normal-achieving-development>

¹⁴<https://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/GPSA-awards-world-bank-social-accountability-new-normal-achieving-development>

¹⁵ <https://www.care.org/our-work/health/strengthening-healthcare/community-score-card-csc/>

¹⁶ Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys: Lessons from Tanzania, U4 Brief, Anti-Corruption Resource Center, 2007.

¹⁷ Implementing the local governance barometer in South Sudan: Pact, 2013.

¹⁸ <https://www.fhi360.org/resource/guide-good-governance-barometer>

¹⁹ <https://scorecardhub.org/best-practices/ghana-community-scorecard-design-and-start-up-process/>

²⁰ Global Architecture for Social Accountability in Education: The Role of the Global Partnership for Education and Education Out Loud.

relevant features, including transparency in planning and financing, evidence-based decision-making, and formalized spaces for stakeholder engagement for education governance. From a social accountability perspective, GPE has been significant because it has helped institutionalize arenas in which citizen voice and civil society engagement can shape education policy and implementation. Towards this end, it has been reinforcing accountability relationships between rights-holders and duty-bearers. Across South Asia, initiatives under EOL support have contributed to reflect and reinforce long-standing accountability traditions including social audits, community scorecards, public hearings and public expenditure tracking survey. In doing so, it has focused on strengthening these SA tools' institutional anchoring by connecting them more systematically to national policy processes.

South Asia experience demonstrates how these SA tools (SA, CSC, PH and PETs) are being reinforced and scaled through structured civil society engagement supported by EOL. EOL supported initiative in Nepal can be taken as a particularly relevant example of coalition strengthening for improved accountability by reinforcing and linking community-level engagement with school management committees, complaint response mechanisms, and school improvement planning—to national policy advocacy and dialogue as a part of social accountability strengthening.

As an example from Pakistan, EOL-supported initiatives have focused on strengthening civil society capacity to engage in multi-level accountability of education policies, plans and financing. This includes analysis of budgets and implementation gaps as SA approaches that resonate with Pakistan's regional government's established use of expenditure tracking and policy monitoring as SA tools. In Bangladesh, use of SA tools has prioritized inclusivity in the process—community led initiatives like policy hackathon giving voice to the marginalized communities including youths as a part of framing problems and co-creating solutions through data analysis and evidence generation for advocacy. Social accountability practices in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines and Indonesia) with support from EOL have often taken the form of participatory planning, coalition-based advocacy and consensus-oriented dialogue by building on these traditions while strengthening evidence use, equity and accountability follow up.

Looking at the big picture and larger ecosystem of social accountability in the region, SA tools such as Participatory Planning, Budget Analysis, Policy Hackathon, Policy Camp, CRC, PETS, CSC, SA, RTI, PB, among others, are more popular and commonly practiced in Asian countries with sectoral focus on health, education, infrastructure, social security,

development, among others. CRC, PETS, CSC, SA and RTI have been frequently used in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri-Lanka. Participatory planning is more popular and common tool in East Asian countries Cambodia, Philippines, Indonesia and Magnolia²¹. With support from EOL, District Education Scorecard, Budget Analysis and RTI have been used in education sector in Pakistan²². Review of social accountability literature from across the region and global perspective shows that different countries in Africa and Asia have practiced social accountability tools customizing them in their own country-specific context and needs. As an example, Nepal customized CSC practice in the health and education sector which was different from its implementation in the infrastructure sector (road construction at Gram Panchayat level) in India. Similarly, CSC has been customized in Nepal and was implemented also in gender-based violence issues at community level. Similarly, Bangladesh customized CSC and implemented it in the nutrition and reproductive health sector focusing on stunting children and women from marginalized community. The learning from the global and regional experience shows that social accountability tools need to be designed and customized as per the local context and priorities without compromising on the methodology and their essence.

“We are implementing district education scorecard, budget analysis and RTI as SA tools in education sector of Pakistan. They are yielding positive impact. Trust building between the government agencies, community people and civil society is crucial in implementing SA tools”

- Mr Qaiser Munir,

Technical Director, I-SAPS, Pakistan

4. Scope of the Study and Objectives

Given this policy context and two decades of implementation of social accountability tools in Nepal, this study has been commissioned for a comprehensive analysis of the ecosystem of social accountability by critically examining its legal and policy foundations, practical applications and overall effectiveness. The study seeks to answer the following objectives.

- To map and analyze the historical evolution, legal frameworks, and policy guidelines that enable or hinder SA practices at the global, regional and Nepali context.
- To identify and evaluate the most prevalent SA mechanisms and tools, with a specific focus on their implementation and outcomes in key sectors, including education.

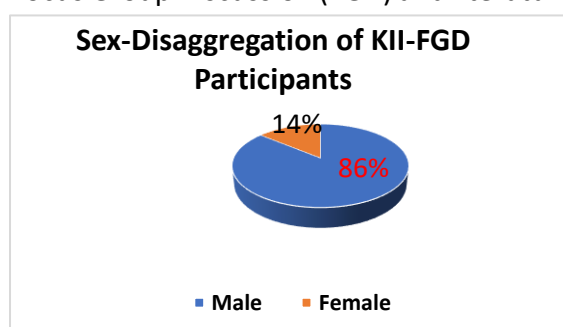
²¹ Mapping of Participatory Planning in East Asia, PRIA Global Partnership, New Delhi, 2010.

²² Information derived from KII with CSOs in Pakistan, 2025.

- To assess the role of civil society and the efficacy of these mechanisms in fostering meaningful citizen engagement and improving transparency and accountability in public service delivery in the education sector.
- To document key challenges, bottlenecks, and success stories in order to distill practical lessons and evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, civil society organizations, and development practitioners.

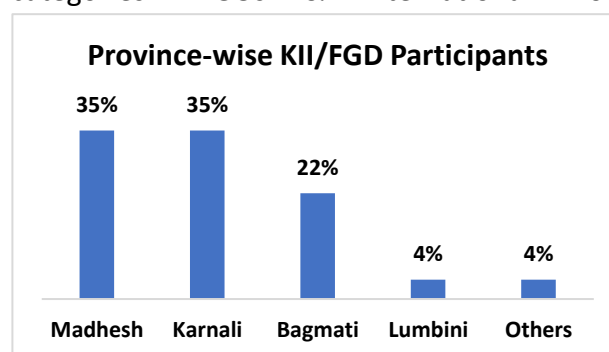
5. Methodology

The study employed a qualitative approach. During the study, Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and literature review were used as major information collection

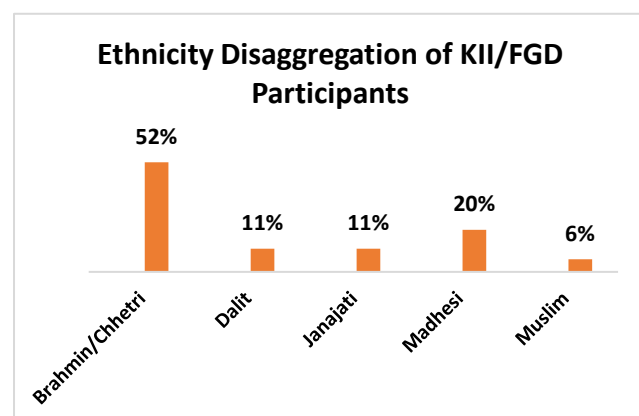


tools. Guiding questions/questionnaires were designed to facilitate KIIs and FDG. Four separate questionnaires depending on the type of stakeholders selected for the KII and FGD were designed and used during the field work. Stakeholders for KII were clustered into four categories- NGOs & International Non-

Governmental Organizations (INGOs), government agencies, Right to Information-related CSOs and international participants. Similarly, a separate set of guiding questions was designed for facilitating FGDs. During the study process, information from the field was gathered through multiple sources such as KII, FGD with stakeholders, and review of empirical documents/literature on social accountability from global to national levels.



Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather information from the stakeholders.



Once data/information was collected, the data analysis process consisted of transcribing, thematizing and clustering them into a structured framework. A total of 25 KIIs in Karnali Province and Madhesh Province including Kathmandu and surrounding districts were conducted physically and virtually as per the convenience of the participants. FGD and

KII participants totaled 46. Out of them, 40 were male and 6 female. Similarly, three FGDs were also carried out in Karnali and Madesh Provinces. The selection of stakeholders for KII and FDG participants was purposive based on their long past engagement and practical experiences in social accountability implementation in Nepal from federal to local level.

6. Existing Laws/Guidelines on Social Accountability

The Nepal government has enacted a number of legislations and guidelines to promote the practice of SA tools. In Nepal's context, social accountability started getting momentum with initiatives from CSOs in early 2000. Over the last two decades, the practice of social accountability tools has expanded to local development, education and health sectors. Separate laws and guidelines have been put in place to institutionalize and streamline the implementation of SA tools. Existing laws and guidelines on SA tools and mechanisms have been briefly discussed below.

6.1 Good Governance (Management & Operation) Act-2008

Nepal was the first country in South Asia to enact Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act in 2008²³. Section 30 (Sub-section 1) of the Act mentions that all national, regional and local level government organizations and agencies need to conduct PH every four months. Every public agency is required to conduct PH, as a social accountability tool, in participation of civil society representatives, citizens and concerned stakeholders. This provision of PH has been important for two reasons-first, it promotes people's access to information on overall program, projects and services of a public agency; second, it is a horizontal accountability platform for civic engagement while stakeholders (government, civil society, private sector, media, citizens) can engage in discussion/dialogues on public interest issues, agenda, programs and hold the government agencies accountable.

6.2 Financial Procedure and Fiscal Responsibility Act-2022

Nepal government promulgated Financial Procedure and Fiscal Responsibility Act in 2022²⁴ which lays out provisions for managing financial resources among three layers of governments in a new federal setup. The law explicitly provisions Public Audit (PA) for every development project to be/being undertaken by federal and provincial governments. Public audit as a social accountability tool brings stakeholders together to discuss financial aspects of a development project. The law has made it mandatory that every infrastructure project should submit a final PA report to claim the final payment from the procuring entities. The provision of PA also extends to big infrastructure projects to be undertaken by the

²³ Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, 2008.

²⁴ Financial Procedure and Fiscal Responsibility Act, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, 2022.

contractors. However, experience from the implementation level shows that projects executed by contractors hardly conduct PA.

6.3 Right to information Act-2008

Nepal government enacted Right to Information Law²⁵ in 2008 granting freedom and power to Nepali citizens to demand and obtain information from public agencies on issues of wider public interest. RTI law as a social accountability tool created an obligation on the public agencies to disclose information on a proactive and reactive basis. The law mandates public entities to disclose 20 types of information proactively to citizens on a quarterly basis. Other than these 20 types of information, citizens need to file requests to the public agency for information in a prescribed format. Upon receipt of request from citizens, any public entity should provide the information immediately or within 15 days through the Information Officer. If there is delay or incomplete information provided to citizens by the Information Officer, the requester can file a complaint to the chief of the public agency within 7 days. If the requester is dissatisfied even with the information provided by the chief of a public agency, he/she can file an appeal to the National Information Commission for further action.

“Local governments are mandated to implement Public Hearing, Public Audit, Social Audit, RTI as per the law. We are trying our best to make them effective. CSOs can support to us in implementing them effectively.”

- Ms Mamta Mahato, Vice-Chair, Paterwa-Sugauli RM, Parsa

6.4 Local Government Operations Act-2017

Nepal's transition from unitary system to federalism has opened up new avenues of power devolution to sub-national governments. To facilitate this process of power devolution and its implementation at local level, Nepal government enacted Local Government Operations Act²⁶ in 2017. The legislation is also instrumental in continuing the use of social accountability tools at local level even in federal context. Sub-Section (5) of the Section 78 of the Act has made it mandatory for all 753 local governments to conduct public hearing, public audit and social audit. To implement this statutory provision, local governments have legislative authority to formulate separate guidelines and implement these three SA tools at the subnational level.

²⁵ Right to Information Law, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, 2008.

²⁶ Local Government Operations Act, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, 2017.

6.5 Compulsory and Free Education Act-2018

In line with Section 41 of the Compulsory and Free Education Act²⁷-2018, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) framed new School Social Audit Guidelines-2021, making it mandatory for each community school to conduct social audit (SA) annually. A seven-member committee comprising the chair of the Parent Teacher Association as a coordinator of the Social Audit Committee is fully responsible to organize SA. SA is an annual review and assessment of overall school performance engagement of stakeholders in the process for generating ownership and making school activities accountable and transparent with efficient use of resources to ensure quality of education. SA has been envisioned to engage stakeholders and to promote accountability and transparency in the management of community schools and improve the quality of education.

6.6 Social Accountability Federal Guidelines for Health Sector-2020

The Cabinet meeting of the Council of Ministers on June 21, 2020 approved Social Accountability Federal Directives for Health Sector²⁸ (SAFDHS) which was proposed by the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP). This latest guideline replaced earlier Health Sector Social Audit Operational Guidelines-2009 making it more contextual and relevant in the federal context. One of the objectives of social audit has been to ensure citizens' access and participation in basic and emergency health services. Implementation of social audit aims at empowering and informing citizens about the health service delivery and programs. It is expected that social audit will activate and institutionalize citizen feedback mechanism and help assess quality of health services through citizen participation making health service delivery accountable, inclusive and citizen friendly.

The SAFDHS has also recognized some of the other social accountability tools and explicitly mentioned that PTES, CRC and CSC can also be implemented in health sector to improve accountability and integrity of institutions delivering health services.

6.7 National Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines-2018

National Planning Commission (NPC) has formulated National Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines²⁹ (NMEG) in 2018. The guidelines set the standards and tools for monitoring the implementation of infrastructure projects in Nepal. NMEG has identified some SA initiatives such as CSC, PH, PA and SA as monitoring and evaluation tools for data collection and verification of the information from the grassroots³⁰. The recognition of these SA tools by the

²⁷ Compulsory and Free Education Act, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, 2018.

²⁸ Social Accountability Federal Guidelines for Health Sector, Government of Nepal, 2020.

²⁹ National Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines, National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, 2018.

³⁰ National Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines, National Planning Commission, Kathmandu, Nepal: 2019.

NPC for monitoring and evaluation purposes further attests to the importance of SA mechanisms as oversight and monitoring tools in the context of Nepal from federal to local level.

6.8 Public Hearing, Public Audit and Social Audit Guidelines

MoFAGA formulated separate Public Hearing Guidelines-2011, Public Audit Guidelines-2011

“SA tools serve as good civic engagement platforms between citizens and government agencies. But we are yet to fully optimize the opportunity SA tools provide.

- Mr Janak Sharma, Under Secretary, MOFAGA

and Social Audit Guidelines-2011. The purpose of these guidelines was to ensure procedural uniformity in the implementation of these SA tools at the local level. Even in the federal system, MoFAGA has formulated ‘sample guidelines’ and provided to the local governments for adoption to ensure procedural uniformity and effective implementation at the local level. These tools are not only limited to local development, but also are being

implemented in education and health sectors. The MoEST formulated Social Audit Directives for Schools in 2008 to implement social audit in community schools of Nepal. MoEST in 2021 replaced its earlier guidelines with a new one ‘School Social Audit Guidelines³¹’ to fit into new federal context. Similarly, MoHP introduced social audit in 2009 as a social accountability tool to increase the responsiveness of services to local needs, especially to the needs of the poor, women and excluded populations. MoHP replaced Health Sector Social Audit Operational Guidelines with a new one in 2020 and rolled it out to 1900 health facilities in 77 districts³².

6.9 Grievances Management Mechanism

Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act-2008 for the first time made it mandatory for all government agencies to put in place a Grievances Management Mechanism (GMM). Section 31 (Sub-Section 1) of the Act makes it mandatory that all government agencies should maintain a complaint box at the visible place and every three days that complaint box has to be opened every three days in a week in presence of other concerned officials. The grievances need to be addressed and handled properly, and response should be provided to the complainant in a timely manner.

³¹ School Social Audit Guidelines, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Kathmandu, 2021.

³² Strategic Review of Social Audit in the Health Sector, Ministry of Health and Population, Kathmandu, Nepal: 2019.

Under the law, every government agency should designate a nodal officer who is responsible to handle and process all the grievances and complaints received from citizens on public services.

6.10 Local Government Institutional Capacity Self-Assessment Guideline

Nepal government introduced the Local Government Institutional Capacity Self-Assessment (LISA) system in 2020 which is a web-based tool to track the performance of local governments. LISA intends to improve local governance and service delivery through indicator-based assessment system through ICT development and e-governance. LISA contains 100 indicators from ten different broad thematic areas. One of them is Service Delivery. Under the service delivery category, it has mentioned effectiveness of Public Hearing, Grievance Management Mechanism and Satisfaction Survey including Exit Poll as SA tools as indicators for annual scoring.

7. Social Accountability Tools and their Sectoral Implementation

Nepal government has owned and institutionalized some SA tools through separate laws and guidelines. In addition to these, there are some other SA tools and mechanisms which are being implemented by NGOs and INGOs in Nepal. These SA tools, which are institutionalized and non-institutionalized, have been practiced in health, education, local development, infrastructure building, agriculture, social security and justice sectors. The following are some of the most popular and commonly practiced SA tools (institutionalized and non-institutionalized) in the context of Nepal.

7.1 Institutionalized SA Tools/Mechanisms

7.1.1 Public Hearing

Public Hearing is one of the most popular and commonly used social accountability tools in Nepal. NGOs, CSOs, local governments and federal government agencies have frequently used this tool as a means of providing information to citizens about their programs, plans, budgets and other details. Some local governments in the existing federal set-up have framed Public Hearing Guidelines and organize it once a year with technical support from CSOs. This tool has been more effective and commonly practiced at the local level compared to federal level. Given Nepal's transition to the federal system in 2015, majority of the local governments are yet to formulate Public Hearing Guidelines in line with the Local Governments Operation Act in the new federal structure.

7.1.2 Public Audit

It is another most popular and commonly practiced SA tool in Nepal. Public audit is more popular at the local level because the existing law mandates that every development infrastructure project, whether implemented by Users' Committee or contractors, need to conduct a public audit by sharing income and expenditures among the beneficiaries. However, big infrastructure projects are not conducting public audits. Only development projects implemented by the local governments are doing it, albeit ritually. Its implementation is being ritualized and limited to the extent of preparing a proceeding report which is mandatory for claiming final payment from the government agencies.

“Local governments have not yet adapted/customized Social Audit guidelines. This has limited SA’s practice to mere rituality in community schools.”

*- Mr Hasta Pun, Mayor,
Gurbakot Municipality, Surkhet*

7.1. 3 Social Audit

Social audit is another most popular and commonly used SA tool in the education and health sector. Existing laws and guidelines formulated by the MoEST and MoHP have made it mandatory in community schools and health posts. Schools and community health posts are implementing it more effectively compared to the local governments as they also have a mandate to conduct their institutional social audit. Though the Local Government Operations Act-2017 makes social audit mandatory to 753 local governments, many local governments hardly conduct it in absence of the customized SA procedural guidelines. This tool is also being used by few NGOs and INGOs in Nepal as a part of the annual institutional assessment of their programs, plans and impact on social development.

7.1. 4 Citizen Charter

Citizen Charter is also considered as a social accountability tool and is being practiced by the government agencies in Nepal. It was made mandatory in Nepal with the promulgation of the Good Governance (Management and Operation) Act in 2008. Each government agency is required to place Citizen Charter in a location where citizens can easily see and read. Citizen Charter should mention what kind of services it provides, where and how people can receive the services, how long it takes to deliver these services and how much people have to pay for each of the services. However, there has not been any studies so far on the effectiveness of the Citizen Charter since its implementation in 2008.

7.1. 5 Right to Information

RTI as a social accountability tool is also popular in Nepal’s development sector. NGOs and CSOs in Nepal are making use of RTI to demand information from government agencies.

Implementation of RTI has been found more effective at the federal level. NGOs and CSOs are more active in filing RTI requests at federal level agencies as a part of reactive disclosure of information. Similarly, federal and provincial level government agencies are found more compliant than the local governments when it comes to proactive disclosure processes. There is widespread perception among people that RTI is related to journalists and the media sector only.

7.1.6 Grievances Management Mechanism

Grievance Management Mechanism (GMM) is one of the popular social accountability mechanisms in Nepal. All federal, provincial and local level government agencies are required

“Grievance redressal mechanism such as designating nodal officer and complaint boxes are in place at secondary schools within our rural municipality but they are yet to be fully effective”

*- Mr Rambalak Pasman, Education Officer,
Laxmipur-Patari RM, Siraha*

to put in place a mechanism to handle grievances from citizens. Every government agency can be seen maintaining a complaint box and has designated a nodal officer to handle the grievances from citizens. Many government agencies and community schools have also formulated guidelines on GMM. However, the effectiveness of these complaint boxes

and nodal officers handling peoples’ grievances has been found still not yet satisfactory to the level expected.

7.2 Non-Institutionalized SA Tools/Mechanisms

7.2.1 Community Score Card

CSC as a social accountability tool is one of the popular initiatives among CSOs and INGOs in Nepal. Its implementation gained momentum in Nepal since 2010 with the World Bank’s initiative. Since then, CSOs, NGOs and INGOs in collaboration with the local governments are implementing CSC mostly in the education and health sector. CSC is a multi-steps tool requiring technical and methodological knowledge. Nepali CSOs and NGOs have implemented this tool in community schools and health posts to improve the quality of public services. To an extent, CSC has helped improve public services through citizen participation. However, this tool is not yet institutionalized by the government but CSOs have implemented it with financial support from various projects funded by the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), among others.

7.2.2 Public Expenditure Tracking Survey

PETS is one of the most popular social accountability tools in Nepal. CSOs and NGOs have implemented this tool to track the budget expenditures and expose leakages or misuse in the process. As this tool is designed to track down expenditures from 'origin to destination' in the budget flow process, Nepali CSOs and NGOs have implemented PETS in tracking down distribution of scholarship funds in community schools, target groups' budget allocation and expenditures at local government level and distribution of social security allowances to the elderly and people with disabilities. Implementation of PETS in these areas have helped improve transparency and accountability in the management of public resources. CSOs and NGOs in Nepal are implementing/have implemented this tool with significant financial support from the World Bank, USAID and SDC.

7.2.3 Citizen Report Card

CRC is another SA tool which is least popular compared to other SA tools in Nepal. This is a quantitative tool used to measure citizens' satisfaction level, regularity, punctuality, cleanliness, behavioral aspects including other various dimensions of the services. MoFAGA issued Service Recipients' Satisfaction Survey Guidelines-2068 which is only a component of CRC. Only a limited number of CSOs NGOs with support from SDC and UN have implemented this tool to measure the satisfaction level of service users of a selected number of service providing agencies through the use of a survey method. The findings are used as feedback to government agencies for improvement. Pro Public, an NGO based in Kathmandu, with financial support from SDC and UN have implemented this tool to measure service recipients' satisfaction of the services at local level in federal and unitary systems.

7.2.4 Good Governance Barometer

GGB is the most recent and new to Nepali practitioners in terms of its concept and implementation. This tool was introduced for the first time in Nepal in 2016 as a part of the project funded by USAID. GGB was implemented in both the health and the education sector. GGB as a social accountability tool was piloted in selected community schools and health posts, and later scaled up in other schools and health posts based on its impactful findings and effectiveness in improving public services. GGB is an indicator-based assessment of public services through qualitative and quantitative indicators and subsequent scoring to each indicator by the service providers and citizens. The five step implementation process culminates in a joint action plan followed by periodic monitoring of the progress made on the implementation of the GGB action plan.

Sectoral use of SA tools presented in tabular form

S.N	SA Tools/Interventions	Sectoral/Thematic Implementation	Implementation Level	Focus & Coverage
1	Public Hearing	Health/education/local governance	Provincial/Local level	Overall service delivery of an institution
2	Public Audit	Local development & Infrastructure	Provincial and Local level	All infrastructural projects & women-led programs also covered.
3	Social Audit	Local development, education & health	Local Level	Community schools, health posts (with focus on women and marginalized groups' access to health services) and local government
4	Right to Information	Health, education, finance, justice, human rights, corruption,	Federal and local level	CSOs and NGOs are filing RTI requests on health, education, human rights and corruption related issues.
5	Community Score Card	Health and education	Local level	Health posts, community schools & justice sector
6	Citizen Report Card	Health, education, land revenue, agriculture	District level	District hospitals, land revenue, agriculture, education (community schools).
7	Public Expenditure Tracking	Education, target-groups budget allocation and social security allowance	Local level	Scholarship funds (girls and dalit students' access to funds), target groups' budget allocation and social security allowance.
8	Good Governance Barometer	Education and health	Local level	Community schools and health posts (with focus on improving teaching learning environment in community schools)

8. Most Commonly-used Social Accountability Tools in Education Sector

8.1 Social Audit

Social Audit is one of the commonly practiced and most-popular SA tools in Nepal's education

"We do organize social audit every year. Though we invite stakeholders, very few of them actually participate in the process. I have felt active discussion and interaction during the social audit is very limited"

- Mr Dhal Bd. Khatri, Head Teacher

Nepal Rastriya Sec. School, Surkhet

sector. Community schools use this tool annually to discuss and update school-related issues to parents and concerned stakeholders. As the law makes it mandatory to all community schools, KII and FGD participants shared that social audit has given civic engagement opportunities to CSOs, parents, and school authorities to discuss issues in community schools. One of the challenges, as they commonly highlighted, was that social audit is becoming a ritual and a formality in its practice in recent times. The ritualized

practice as a part of fulfilling administrative requirements by community schools seems to have limited social audit's enormous potential in improving the teaching learning environment through civic engagement opportunities.

8.2 Community Score Card (CSC)

Community Score Card is the second-most common SA tool in Nepal's education sector. CSC has been in use since 2010 with the World Bank's support through the Program for Accountability in Nepal. CSOs and INGOs with support from USAID, SDC and EU used it to improve services in community schools. One of the issues with CSC, as shared by most of the KII participants and informed by the literature review, is its technicality in the process consisting of five stages which requires expert facilitator and a follow-up process. KII participants in Gulmi, Ramechhap, Kathmandu and Karnali province shared that CSC has been effective in improving the teaching learning environment in schools as the CSC process culminates in a joint action plan to be monitored with scoring on indicators by the parents/students and teachers alike as a part of the process.

"CSC is one of the most effective SA tools in education sector. Save the Children has also implemented it in community schools of Madhesh province"

*- Dil Air, Project Manager
Save the Children*

As a process, CSC is implemented in five stages that includes sensitization of community and service providers about CSC, preparation of input tracking matrix, preparation of performance score card by the community, preparation of self-evaluation score card by service providers, interface meeting.

8.3 Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS)

Other most frequently and commonly used SA tool in Nepal's education sector is the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey. Literature reviews and discussions with KII and FGD participants in Kathmandu and Karnali province shared that PETS has been used to track the flow of budgets especially in the distribution of scholarship funds in community schools. The tool has been effective in exposing anomalies in the distribution of scholarship funds and has also contributed to enhancing budget transparency and accountability in community schools. As a process, PETS is a questionnaire-based survey which tracks allocation vs expenditures from origin to destination. The steps include preparing questionnaires, data collection, analysis of data and finally disseminating the findings among the stakeholders.

8.4 Right to Information

Right to Information as a social accountability tool has been used by CSOs sporadically in Nepal's education sector. Documents review and KII with participants in Kathmandu, Madhesh and Karnali shared that RTI has been used by CSOs to demand information regarding distribution of scholarship funds in community schools. With promulgation of RTI law in 2008, its use in Nepal's education sector has been very limited compared to other sectors. KII participants working on RTI issue in Kathmandu, Banke and Madhesh province highlighted inadequate sensitization, awareness

“RTI seems to be least used SA tool in education sector. The reason could be inadequate sensitization and capacity building of the citizens about the benefits of RTI law”

*- Rakesh Mishra,
RTI Activist, Banke*

building and local power dynamics as reasons behind limited filing of RTI applications in the education sector. Though there has not been any study on which sector has used RTI most, KII and FGD discussions showed that more RTI applications have been filed seeking information on infrastructure and service delivery. However, the tool has huge potential and opportunities to improve transparency and accountability in community schools.

8.5 Good Governance Barometer

Good Governance Barometer is a new SA tool to Nepal's education sector. Literature review and KII interviews with participants found that GGB has been used in community schools of Sindhupalchowk, Gulmi and Rukum districts. The tool was effective in improving the teaching learning environment, accountability of SMCs and teachers and overall performance of the community schools through the five-step implementation process. If implemented with the buy-in of the process from the government, school authorities and CSOs, GGB has potential to improve the performance of community schools through enhanced transparency, accountability and participation in the process. GGB process is structured on FGD as a data collection methodology. It includes building community buy-in/credibility, preparation,

modeling and scoring, analysis/restitution/action planning, implementing the action plan and finally endline activity.

8.6 Girls and Inclusive Education Network

Girls and Inclusive Education Network (GIEN) is not a SA tool but is a platform that comprises of a group or a system of interconnected people collectively advocating for the special needs of women, girls, children with disabilities and marginalized groups, to ensure they have access to equitable learning opportunities. GIEN seeks to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships, which emphasize governmental linkages and the private sector. GIEN consists of girls, youth, and adult members as representatives from various stakeholders at the school, municipality, provincial, and federal levels.

9. Summary of Findings

- **Institutionalized and non-institutionalized SA tools/mechanisms:** Around a dozen of SA tools have been in practice in Nepal over the last two decades. Out of them, Public Hearing, Public Audit, Social Audit, Right to Information, Citizen Charter and Grievance Management Mechanisms are institutionalized by the government. While other SA tools like Community Score Card, Public Expenditure Tracking Survey, Good Governance Barometer and Citizen Report Card are non-institutionalized but are in practice.
- **Use of limited SA tools in education sector:** Though Nepal has around 25 years of SA implementation history, Social Audit has been institutionalized in Nepal's education sector by the government. Social Audit is mandatory for all community schools. Apart from this, few other SA tools like CSC, PETS, GGB and RTI have been implemented by CSOs/INGOs in a select number of community schools in Nepal.
- **Capacity gaps among CSOs and government:** Although some level of capacity has been developed among CSOs in implementing SA tools over the last few years, CSOs and government agencies, especially local governments, still highlighted insufficient technical knowledge and understanding of SA tools especially CSC and PETs. Capacity gaps in terms of due process of social audit and other SA tools like CSC and PETs were observed at the level of CSOs and local governments when it comes to implementing them in the education sector.
- **Local governments yet to frame/localize SA guidelines in federal context:** Nepal's transition to federal system has devolved '22 exclusive powers' to local governments. This is a good thing but it has also left some gaps. In social accountability sector, local governments have to formulate/customize SA guidelines (PH, PA & SA) in

the new federal context and implement them. At present, it was found that local governments are yet to formulate/localize SA guidelines. This gap seems to have hindered the implementation of government-owned SA tools at the local level and in the education sector also. None of the local governments consulted during the study process are yet to formulate such guidelines.

- **Inadequate resource documents/manuals on SA tools for education sector:** Resource materials on SA tools for general use are available. However, it has been observed that there are hardly any resources/knowledge documents on SA tools specifically designed for use in education sector/community schools.
- **Limited use of RTI in education sector:** Since 2008, RTI law has been used more extensively and frequently by CSOs and NGOs in Nepal. They have filed RTI requests at public agencies demanding information on public services. However, use of RTI in the education sector has been found to be limited. Only a few RTI requests were filed seeking details of distribution of scholarship funds. It shows there has been very limited sensitization of parents, students and stakeholders in using RTI as a social accountability tool in the education sector.
- **Participation of women and socially excluded groups remains limited:** Social accountability tools have ensured participation of citizens with service providers/policy makers in the process. These initiatives and mechanisms have created opportunities for people at large to question and raise concerns with the authorities on public services. When we talk about participation of women and marginalized groups in the SA process, their engagement has been limited to passive participation which is more about their numbers only. They are invited in the process just to make the event look inclusive and diverse in numbers. Participation of women and other socially marginalized castes and groups has been limited in terms of their attendance and physical presence³³.
- **Political patronage and local power dynamics influence the implementation of SA tools:** Power dynamics and highhandedness at the local level have in some cases undermined the effectiveness of SA implementation. Local governments assign the responsibility of facilitating SA processes like Public Hearings and Social Audits to local journalists and to persons in their contact who often facilitate these events in ritual manner limiting critical discussions and interactions in most cases.

³³ Social Accountability in Maternal Health Services in the Far-Western Development Region in Nepal: An Exploratory Study, International Journal of Health Policy and Management, 2019

- **SA tools serve as civic engagement platforms to CSOs/citizens:** Social accountability tools have served as civic engagement mechanisms to citizens, CSOs and NGOs as platforms for having access to information on services, programs, budgets and other details of a public agency. The opportunity to participate in the SA process has allowed the citizens and CSOs alike to be empowered and informed enabling them to perform better oversight functions that contribute to improved service delivery and trust towards the government agency.
- **Intergovernmental coordination and gaps in SA implementation:** With federal structure, extensive power has been devolved to local governments. The Constitution allows the local government to frame laws and guidelines as required. Previous guidelines on SA tools enacted in the unitary system (pre-federal time) remained inactive in the federal system allowing SA tools' implementation being compromised and constrained in absence of intergovernmental coordination and oversight.

10. Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Overall Challenges:

- It was found that community schools (SMCs and teachers) during KII discussion in Madhesh Province (Parsa & Siraha) were found unaware of Social Audit's due process and methodology whereas local government officials especially Education Officers were aware of SA's mandatory provision and its process.
- Many local governments have not yet framed social accountability guidelines on Public Hearing, Public Audit and Social Audit in the federal context which was found to have hindered the implementation of SA tools.
- CSOs/NGOs don't have sufficient skills set and knowledge to implement new social accountability tools in community schools which are more technical and require methodological expertise.
- It was found that SA tools get implemented as long as there are financial resources or funding from the donor agencies. This has raised a question on sustainability of social accountability tools.
- Practice of social accountability tools (PH, PA, SA) is getting more ritual. This is because government agencies including community schools want to meet the legal requirements and administrative obligations just by completing them rather than organizing them in the true spirit of the concept and their purpose.

Lessons Learnt:

- Capacity building and sensitization of SMC, school officials, local government authorities and CSOs are key factors for effective implementation of SA tools.
- It is important to ensure governments' buy-in and ownership of SA tools which largely depends on engaging government agencies/authorities in each and every process of SA tools' application.
- Fostering trust and mutual collaboration between service providers and citizens in improving service delivery depends on the use of SA tools as civic engagement platforms for collaborative governance rather than confrontational use of these tools.
- Producing manuals/resource documents and skillful SA facilitators/practitioners helps effectively implement SA tools in education sector.

11. Strategic Recommendations

Based on lessons learnt and findings of the study on the implementation of SA tools in Nepal, the following key strategic recommendations have been made.

- A key challenge to implement social accountability tools in the education sector is the lack of customized SA training manuals and resource documents. Therefore, designing customized SA related manuals and knowledge documents is a key to effective application of SA tools in the education sector. CSOs jointly with the local government can contribute to generating these resources.
- CSOs, SMCs and school authorities have limited knowledge and understanding of SA concept and its practice including policy provisions in the education sector. If they are capacitated and sensitized on social accountability tools including Social Audit, it will broaden their knowledge of social accountability, existing tools and approaches which ultimately paves the way for their effective implementation in community schools. CSOs can support to local government in sensitizing them about SA tools, due procedures and their application.
- Sensitizing citizens, parents, students about the right to information as a social accountability tool can play a crucial role in creating their access to information on school related issues. It is recommended to sensitize these groups about RTI along with the government bodies so that it will prepare supply and demand side both; citizens to file RTI requests and governments to respond to these requests on time.

- Given the two decades of implementation of SA tools in Nepal, some of the SA tools have been used in the education sector. These tools include Community Score Card, Public Expenditure Tracking, Right to Information, Social Audit and Citizen Report Card. These tools can be implemented in target community schools by preparing a cadre of SA practitioners and relevant resource documents/knowledge products/manuals. CSOs can support and take the lead in implementing some of these tools/mechanisms jointly with the local governments.
- Nepal's transition to federalism has left many local governments without guidelines on Public Hearing, Public Audit and Social Audit. This gap offers opportunities to provide technical support to local governments for formulating SA guidelines. This type of technical support will contribute in institutionalizing and sustaining the practice of SA tools at the local level in federal context. CSOs can support to local governments in localizing/drafting SA guidelines.
- While implementing new SA tools (which are not institutionalized), CSOs are recommended to first organize orientation workshop with the concerned stakeholders including local governments, brief them about the tool, its due process, their role at different steps during the implementation and get the buy-in and ownership. This will prepare them in advance and will ease the implementation process.
- Sustaining the practice of non-institutionalized SA tools/mechanisms at the local level should be tied to local government's budget allocation and planning process. Engaging local governments in SA process as a part of the government buy-in and ownership can be a good start towards sustaining the SA implementation. Lobbying and advocacy with local governments by demonstrating the impact/achievements of SA process can incentivize the local governments in tying up with the budget allocation for SA tools' sustainability.

12. Way Forward

Based on the findings and recommendations, organizations and relevant stakeholders can optimize their support and resources in three key areas of SA implementation in education sector.

1. **Capacity Strengthening/Sensitization:** It is important to strengthen the capacity of local government officials, community schools (SMC and teachers) and CSOs to broaden their understanding of social accountability and its potentials to improve teaching learning environment in community schools.

2. **Preparation of Resource Documents/Manuals:** Since there are no resource documents and manuals on application of SA tools in education sector, preparation of resource documents (manuals, booklets, flyers, etc.) on some of the social accountability tools can be a good start towards pushing this further in Nepal's education sector.
3. **Implementation of SA tools:** Community Score Card, Public Expenditure Tracking, Right to Information and Social Audit can be implemented in community schools given their effective implementation and success in Nepal.

Annex -I: List of KII and FGD Participants

S. N	Name	Institution	Position	Location	Modality
1	Mr Dil Bahadur Air	Save the Children	Project Manager	Kathmandu/KII	In-person
2	Dr Dipesh Ghimire	Tribhuvan University	Governance Expert/SA Practitioner	Kathmandu/KII	In-person
3	Mr Taranath Dahal	Freedom Forum	Executive Director	Kathmandu	In-person
4	Mr Madhu Prasad Ghimire	Ministry of Education	Under Secretary	Kathmandu/KII	In-person
5	Ms Hira Kunwar	Integrated Rural Development Society	SA Practitioner	Gulmi/KII	Virtual
6	Mr Janak Sharma	Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration	Under-Secretary	Kathmandu/KII	In-person
7	Mr Bishnu Pokhrel	Good Governance Foundation	General Secretary	Kathmandu/KII	In-person

S. N	Name	Institution	Position	Location	Modality
8	Mr Ghanashyam KC	NGO Federation of Nepal, Provincial Chapter	President/SA Practitioner	Surkhet/KII	In-person
9	Ms Manju Tamang	Barhabise Municipality	Deputy Mayor	Sindhupalchowk/KII	Virtual
10	Mr Nabaraj Pathik	Human Rights and Awareness Development Center	SA Practitioner	Ramechhap/KII	Virtual
11	Mr Poshta KC	Pro Public	Project Manager/SA Practitioner	Kathmandu/KII	In-person
12	Mr Rakesh Mishra	Information and Human Rights Research Center	Executive Director/RTI Activist	Banke/KII	Virtual
13	Mr Dirgha Raj Mainali	National Information Commission	Secretary	Kathmandu/KII	In-person
14	Mr Hasta Pun	Gurbakot Municipality	Mayor	Surkhet, KII	In-person
15	Mr Hikmat Roka	Suryajyoti Secondary School	Head Teacher	Surkhet, KII	In-person
16	Mr Prakash DC	SMC, Gyanbhandar Secondary School	Chair	Surkhet, KII	In-person

S. N	Name	Institution	Position	Location	Modality
17	Mr Dhal Bahadur Khatri	Nepal Rastriya Secondary School	Head Teacher	Surkhet, KII	In-person
18	Mr Balbir B.K	Gurbakot Municipality	Chief Education Officer	Surkhet, KII	In-person
19	Mr Qaiser Munir	Institute of Social Accountability and Policy Sciences	Technical Director	Pakistan/KII	Virtual
20	Ms Mamta Mahato	Paterwa Sugauli RM	Vice Chair	Parsa/KII	In-person
21	Mr Chaturananda Thakur	Laxmipur-Patari RM	Chair	Siraha/KII	In-person
22	Mr Rambalak Paskan	Laxmipur-Patari RM	Education Officer	Siraha/KII	In-person
23	Mr Binod Kumar Singh	Shree Jantananda Sec. School	Head Teacher	Siraha/KII	In-person
24	Mr Bhagmani Roy	Sarup Mukhiya Lower Sec. School	SMC Chair	Siraha/KII	In-person
25	Mr Kazi Ferdous Pavel	Institute of Informatics and Development	Senior Director-Research	Bangladesh	Virtual
26	Mr Bindu Lal Regmi	CSO Representative		Surkhet/FGD	In-person
27	Mr Maharup Khatri	CSO Representative		Surkhet/FGD	In-person
28	Mr Hikmat Nepali	CSO Representative		Surkhet/FGD	In-person
29	Ms Sunita Chand	CSO Representative		Surkhet/FGD	In-person

S. N	Name	Institution	Position	Location	Modality
30	Mr Govinda Koirala	CSO Representative		Surkhet/FGD	In-person
31	Mr Dil Bd. Gurung	CSO Representative		Surkhet/FGD	In-person
32	Mr Chandra Lamichanne	CSO Representative		Surkhet/FGD	In-person
33	Mr Tapendra Saud	CSO Representative		Surkhet/FGD	In-person
34	Ms Sunita Giri	CSO Representative		Surkhet/FGD	In-person
35	Mr Nischal Kandel	CSO Representative		Surkhet/FGD	In-person
36	Mr Paras Jaiswal	CSO Representative		Parsa/FGD	In-person
37	Mr Abdul Sattar	CSO Representative		Parsa/FGD	In-person
38	Mr Prem Shah	CSO Representative		Parsa/FGD	In-person
39	Mr Sajir Mansor	CSO Representative		Parsa/FGD	In-person
40	Mr Ram Pd. Pandit	CSO Representative		Parsa/FGD	In-person
41	Ms Neela Ram	CSO Representative		Parsa/FGD	In-person
42	Mr Chandesh Chaurasiya	CSO Representative		Parsa/FGD	In-person
43	Mr Dipesh Kumar Chaudhari	CSO Representative		Siraha/FGD	In-person
44	Mr Govinda Raj Bista	CSO Representative		Siraha/FGD	In-person

S. N	Name	Institution	Position	Location	Modality
45	Mr Sujit Chaudhari	CSO Representative		Siraha/FGD	In-person
46	Mr Sanjay Chaudhari	CSO Representative		Siraha/FGD	In-person

Annex -II: Guiding Questions for KII & FGD

Guiding Questions for CSOs and INGO representatives

1. How do you understand the concept of Social Accountability (SA) tools?
2. How do you perceive the implementation of SA tools in the broader context of federal and subnational level?
3. How is federal and subnational governments' response to SA tools and their implementation?
4. Do you think SA tools are being institutionalized in Nepal?
5. Which are the specific laws/regulations/guidelines that promote SA initiatives in Nepal?
6. To what extent, have federal and local governments tried to institutionalize or own SA tools?
7. How has your organization contributed to promotion and implementation of SA tools?
8. Which are the most popular SA tools being used by the federal and subnational governments?
9. Which are the most popular SA tools being used by the CSOs?
10. Which are the most commonly and frequently used SA tools in education sector?
11. In your experience, how many SA tools are in implementation in the context of Nepal?
12. Do you think implementation of SA tools is GESI-friendly?
13. In your personal and organizational experience, which are the most effective SA tools?
14. Has the implementation of SA tools made any difference in improving the quality of public services?
15. In your experience, are there any good or best practices of SA tools or even failure cases?
16. How do you assess the overall implementation of SA tools in terms of its effectiveness, result-orientedness, citizen participation, accountability and transparency in government functioning and service delivery?
17. What major challenges and issues have you felt/experienced during implementation of SA tools?
18. What are the strengths/good aspects of SA tools' implementation based on your experience?
19. What are the future opportunities of SA tools' implementation?
20. Are you familiar with good/best practices of SA tools at global and regional level?
21. Lastly, anything you want to share about SA tools that I have not asked.

Guiding Questions for CSOs for Right to Information

1. How do you experience implementation of Right to Information (RTI) as a Social Accountability (SA) tool at federal and subnational level?
2. How do you assess federal and subnational governments including CSO's efforts/initiatives in implementing RTI since 2007?
3. How have federal and subnational governments including CSOs contributed to promote RTI as a SA tool?
4. To what extent, have federal, subnational governments and CSOs tried to fully internalize the provisions of RTI?
5. What is the scenario of pro-active and reactive disclosure of information at federal and subnational level?
6. Are there any federal, subnational governments and CSOs that have fully implemented proactive disclosure provisions?
7. In your experience, has there been any difference in people's access to information in the last 17 years? If yes, how?
8. Has the implementation of RTI as a SA tool made any difference in improving accountability and transparency in government's service delivery system?
9. Are there any good or best practices of RTI as a SA tool at federal and subnational level?
10. Are you aware of and share any examples/best practices of RTI being used in education sector for improving quality of education?
11. What the major challenges and issues related to RTI implementation as a SA tool?
12. How would you describe the strengths of RTI as a SA tool?
13. What are the future opportunities of RTI? Any areas that have remained untapped?
14. Any good/best practices of RTI's effectiveness you want to share from global/regional level?
15. Lastly, anything additional you want to share about RTI that I have not asked.

Guiding Questions for Government Agencies/Local Governments

1. How do you experience implementation of SA tools at federal and subnational level?
2. Are there any specific laws/regulations/guidelines that promote SA initiatives in Nepal?
3. Do you think SA tools are being institutionalized in Nepal?
4. How has federal/local government contributed to promotion and implementation of SA tools?
5. To what extent, have federal/local governments tried to institutionalize SA tools?
6. Which are the most popular SA tools being used by the federal and subnational governments?
7. Which are the most popular SA tools being used in Nepal?
8. In your experience as of now, which are the most effective SA tools?
9. Which are the most popular and commonly practiced SA tools in education sector?
10. Has the implementation of SA tools made any difference in improving teaching learning environment in community schools?
11. Has the implementation of SA tools made any difference in improving the quality of public services and demanding public sector accountability?
12. Are there any good or best practices of SA tools or even failure cases?
13. Do you think implementation of SA tools is GESI-friendly?
14. How do you assess the overall implementation of SA tools in terms of its effectiveness, result-orientedness, citizen participation, accountability and transparency in government functioning and service delivery?
15. What the major challenges and issues related to SA tools?
16. What are the strengths of SA tools in government's experiences?
17. What are the future opportunities in SA tools' implementation?
18. Any good/best practices of SA tools you want to share from global and regional level?
19. Lastly, anything you want to share about SA tools that I have not asked.

Guiding Questions for FGD

1. How do you share your experiences of participating in SA tools' implementation process?
2. Do you think SA tools are a good platform for improving quality service delivery?
3. Are of aware of any SA tools that are being practiced by community schools?
4. Which SA tools that you have heard or practiced much?
5. Do you know any laws/guidelines/policy that federal or sub-national level came up with to implement SA tools?
6. What are the tangible impact and achievements of SA tools in your opinion?
7. What is the response of federal and sub-national level toward implementing SA tools?
8. Do you find SA tools' process participatory and inclusive? if yes, how?
9. How effective is the SA tools' process in promoting quality education in community schools?
10. Do you think implementation of SA tools is GESI-friendly?
11. What are the major challenges and issues related to SA tools that you have observed?
12. What are the strengths of SA tools in your experience?
13. What are the future opportunities in SA tools' implementation?

Guiding Questions for KII with International Participants/Representatives

1. How do you understand the concept of Social Accountability (SA) tools?
2. How do you perceive the implementation of SA tools in your country?
3. How is federal and subnational governments' response to SA tools and their implementation?
4. Do you think SA tools are being institutionalized in your country?
5. To what extent, have federal and local governments tried to institutionalize or own SA tools?
6. How has your organization contributed to promotion and implementation of SA tools?
7. Which are the most popular SA tools being used by the federal and subnational governments?
8. Which are the most popular SA tools being used by the CSOs in your country?
9. Which are the most commonly and frequently used SA tools in education sector?
10. In your experience, how have SA tools contributed to promote civic engagement opportunities?
11. In your personal and organizational experience, which are the most effective SA tools?
12. Has the implementation of SA tools made any difference in improving the quality of public services including education services?
13. In your experience, are there any good or best practices of SA tools or even failure cases?
14. Do you think implementation of SA tools is GESI-friendly?
15. How do you assess the overall implementation of SA tools in terms of its effectiveness, result-orientedness, citizen participation, accountability and transparency in government functioning and service delivery?
16. What major challenges and issues have you felt/experienced during implementation of SA tools?
17. What are the strengths/good aspects of SA tools' implementation based on your experience?
18. What are the future opportunities of SA tools' implementation?
19. Are you familiar with good/best practices of SA tools at global and regional level?
20. Lastly, anything you want to share about SA tools that I have not asked.

Annex-III: Success Stories/Best Practices

Education Services Get Better in Childcare Center: A Case of India ³⁴

Pargadih is a village with more than 450 households, divided into 4 hamlets, with a diverse population of tribals, dalits, and Muslims in Jharkhand, India. The village is situated about 20 km from the block headquarters. The childcare center in the village has been dysfunctional for about six months and providing services in Pargadih was an additional duty for the frontline worker from a neighboring village. It was difficult for her to cater to the needs of more than 147 children between 0 to 6 years of age. The only service provided has been immunization, once a month.

Pravah, a local NGO in the state-initiated community score card process, during which the community identified certain areas where service delivery has been poor. They developed the indicators and scored the quality of the services against each indicator. A similar process was conducted with the service providers (i.e., with the front-line staff). Both community and service providers were oriented about the Community Score Card process before hand, to avoid conflicts and confusion.

After completing the scoring processes, an interface meeting was organized between the service providers and the frontline staff known locally as *anganwadi* workers. In the interface meeting, there were a lot of discussions, where service providers talked about their constraints and challenges, while the community members expressed their dissatisfaction with the quality of services provided. After conducting a community scorecard exercise, the results were presented to senior officials. They took stock of the situation and intervened, which resulted in the following:

- Scales (for weighing children) were supplied to all the childcare centers in the block.
- The front-line workers started visiting the centers regularly until a new appointment for the village was finalized.
- Pre-school education was started for children between 3 to 6 years of age.

³⁴ <https://www.civilsocietyacademy.org/post/community-score-cards-a-powerful-tool>

Notably, this process helped the senior officials make decisions to improve the service regularity not only in village Pargadih, but also other service delivery centers under that administrative block.

Improved Education Services Through GVA: A Case of Romania³⁵

Romania was recognized as an independent country in 1878. After wartime Soviet occupation, Romania became a Communist state, but it was not part of the Soviet Union. It was ruled under the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceausescu between 1965 and 1989. The 1990 elections were the first since 1937. The Communist Party dominated the political system up until 1996. Romania is a member of the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Romania is ranked 52 on the Human Development Index, with one in five Romanians living under the poverty line. Romania's infant mortality is double that of the EU average. World Vision began work in Romania in 1990 and has programs to improve maternal and infant mortality, child nutrition and economic development. Citizen feedback on teaching quality in schools was facilitated by World Vision in 20 schools and a report presented to the national government. The government disseminated the report to all schools and education authorities in the country's 41 counties. It was widely publicized through more than 13 articles and radio broadcasts, and published on the website of the Ministry of National Education.

At sub-national level, improved infrastructure and heating at several schools was undertaken by government after CVA activities supported school community lobbying for these priorities. Out of 20 school action plans, developed to lobby the government for improvements, 18 plans were completed and there were infrastructure improvements in 18 of the schools including water access, roofing, toilets, playgrounds, surveillance cameras and the purchase of a school bus.

CSC Strengthens Education and Health Services: A Case of Bangladesh³⁶

The Private Rural Initiatives Program, a local NGO in Bangladesh, implemented the project "Citizen Engagement for Quality Services" from February 2010 till March 2012 in 21 villages united into nine wards of the Adarvita Union of Madarganj *Upazila* in Jamalpur District of Bangladesh. Under the project, Community Score Card (CSC) was implemented in nine wards of the Adarvita Union as people in this geographic location were suffering especially from food shortages, limited employment opportunities and poor service delivery, particularly in the area of education, health and agriculture.

³⁵ Scaling social accountability: Evidence from Asia, Africa and the Caucasus, The World Vision: 2019.

³⁶ Can Community Score Card Make a Difference: A Case of Bangladesh, Affiliated Network for Social Accountability South Asian Region, Dhaka, 2012.

CSC produced important achievements in terms of community empowerment and service providers' accountability. It promoted the sense of voluntarism among community members as well as improved communication, coordination and negotiation skills and service-related technical knowledge of volunteers needed for their constructive interface with relevant service providers. A contribution was made to women's empowerment through: i) triggering their interest in the issues such as child upbringing (education), family planning, nutrition, immunization, etc. (health); and ii) targeting women as volunteers (as a result one third of community core volunteers' group are young women, while the average age of women in the group was 26 compared to the average male age of 41).

As a result of extensive awareness-building input by the members, community residents were more aware of their rights (in terms of service access and quality, including service provision standards) and obligations (particularly in education in relation to children attendance). The benefits of CSC to the poor were associated with increased awareness of the importance of children's education (particularly for girls) and of service entitlements (access to scholarships for children, access to free medication, access to agricultural subsidies, etc.).

Through CSC, remarkable improvements in education services provision in Nayapara governmental primary school was registered in the target school facility from 7.4 to 8.5 on average in 2011 and 2012 respectively. Similarly, improvement in health services provision was registered in the target community clinic from 5 to 6.5 on average in 2011 and 2012, respectively.

School Drop-out Rate Decreases in Community School-A Case of Dhaunsha³⁷

Community schools in Nepal are facing decreases in the enrollment patterns of students over the last many years. Retaining students and increasing their number is a tough challenge to government/community schools. Janata Rastriya Primary School situated in Kajara Ramaul Village Development Committee (VDC) of Dhanusha district was also mired in decreasing trend of students. School was facing this problem despite having good infrastructure and qualified teachers.

Janaki Woman Awareness Society implemented CSC in Janata Rastriya Primary School with financial support from Public Financial Management (PFM)/Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). Sharp decrease in number of students and absenteeism was an issue that drew the attention of the parents and school management during CSC focus group discussions. Student

³⁷ Citizen Engagement in Public Financial Management/Multi-Donor Trust Fund: Compilation of Case Studies, Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) & The World Bank, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2017.

retention strategy was included in CSC action plan and the responsibility to implement it was bestowed on teachers and School Management Committee (SMC).

SMC and teachers discussed and agreed on a small initiative that was those students who have highest records of attendance in a month would be rewarded. Gifts like pencils, erasers and sharpeners were purchased and distributed among the students having the highest attendance records. This simply changed the scenario because absenteeism of students radically got reduced. Ten students received the award in July whereas the number of students receiving these awards shot to 18 in August. "I don't want to get absent in school since I received award last time," said Ms. Anjani Kumari Mahara, a fifth grader. "Small initiative has really triggered encouraging and noticeable reforms at school," added Mr. Shyamsundar Yadav, a school principal.

End of Proportional Distribution of Scholarships-A Case of Saptari³⁸

Dalit and girl students studying at Shree Janata Rastriya Primary School in the Mayenakaderi VDC of Saptari district were not receiving the full scholarships they were entitled to. The school was distributing scholarships to all Dalit and girl students proportionately. The Scholarship directives mention that school management should prepare a list of Dalit and girl students, and send it to the District Education Office (DEO) for funds. And the scholarship should be distributed only to those students mentioned in the list and approved by DEO. But in practice, it was discovered that the scholarships amount was being distributed proportionately to 17 more students than the recommended list. As a result, a meagre amount was given to the students. School management was not listening to the objections raised by the parents regarding this proportional disbursement of scholarships.

The Dalit Society Service Organization, with financial support from the Citizen Engagement in PFM/MDTF program, implemented CSC where this issue was raised by the parents and discussed. Finally, in joint meeting between parents, teachers and members of the SMC, it was accepted that Dalit and girl scholarships were being handled proportionately. This practice was against the government directives, thus, the principal of the school, Krishnananda Rajak, made a commitment that proportional disbursement of scholarship would end soon and that school management would distribute scholarships to only to those it was meant for.

As per this commitment, the school has stopped distributing scholarships proportionally. 34 Dalit students and 27 girl students have received their full scholarships. Parents have become more aware which benefit both the parents and the students who are now able to use their scholarships funds properly. Ms. Bulanti Devi Khag, a resident of Badahara-9 shared "We did

³⁸ Citizen Engagement in Public Financial Management/Multi-Donor Trust Fund: Compilation of Case Studies, Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) & The World Bank, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2017.

not know much about scholarships earlier but after the discussion program, we knew how much scholarship fund that our kids should receive from the school.

Teaching Learning Environment Improves in School: A Case of Siraha³⁹

School Management Committee (SMC) was not being formed for the last four years at Shree Primary School situated in Bishnupur, Harinagara Village Development Committee. Absence of SMC had also affected fulfilling teacher's quotas on the one hand and impacted construction works in the school on the other. Of the four teachers' quotas, only three teachers were serving. The absence of a management committee had also encouraged teachers to abstain from duties affecting regular teaching and learning activities. In fact, school was in complete disarray.

Mahila Uddhar Sewa Kendra, a local NGO in Siraha district, with financial support from PFM/MDTF implemented CSC. During the conduct of CSC at the school, issues such as lack of teachers, inadequate financial resources, irregular teaching learning, lack of mid-day meal for students, lax monitoring and supervision were discussed and strongly raised by parents and students. Teachers, parents, former SMC members and concerned stakeholders participated in CSC which culminated in formulation of a joint common action plan to resolve major issues within three months.

As per the commitment in common action plan, a nine-member SMC was formulated in August 9, 2016. Mid-day meal has been arranged for the students. Teacher has been hired in one vacant position. SMC has also decided to procure computers at school. In coordination with newly formed SMC, Rs 100,000 has been allocated by District Education Office for procurement of sport materials for students. "Community score card has triggered crucial reforms in our school in a short time," said Ram Briksha Sada, a local parent. "CSC has made us accountable and realize our duties toward the school," said Sanjaya Mandal, a parent.

Comparative Assessment of Public Services: A Case of CRC⁴⁰

Governance Watch Pvt. Ltd with funding from SDC implemented CRC survey in seven service delivery government agencies to measure satisfaction, access and other dimensions of the

³⁹ Citizen Engagement in Public Financial Management/Multi-Donor Trust Fund: Compilation of Case Studies, Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI) & The World Bank, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2017.

⁴⁰ Report on Citizen Report Card Survey, Governance Watch Pvt. Ltd, Kathmandu, 2016.

service in seven districts Khotang, Okhaldhunga, Ramechhap, Sindhuli, Achham, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Surkhet and Kalikot districts. Trained data collectors were mobilized to fill up CRC questionnaire from seven government agencies and five Village Development Committees from each district. They were asked to sit in front of respective government offices for ten days from 10 am to 5 pm to fill up questionnaires from 100 service users from one sectoral office in ten days.

Two filter questions/qualifiers were asked to each respondent to make sure that he/she has used the service at least once in the last six months. All together 700 data from each district was collected by the CRC enumerators which totalled 6300 data from seven sectoral offices. These collected data were analysed by a statistician through computer software. Findings of few questions have been presented below with data of respondents disaggregated on basis of gender and caste.

Among 6300 CRC respondents in seven sectoral agencies of seven districts, female respondents (as shown in above table) were 2146 (34 %) whereas 4154 (66%) were male respondents. Jajarkot and Achham districts had 45 and 39 percent female respondents which was the highest compared to other districts. Though the project tried to interview equal number of male and female service users during the CRC survey, expected number of female service recipients could not be interviewed due to female being busy during crop plantation season. It is also due to difficult geographical terrain; more number of male service users could be seen around service centres.

Out of 6300 CRC respondents, service users from Dalit and Janjati groups represented 16 percent and 23 percent respectively. Their number were 975 and 1474 respectively. This shows that major chunk of respondents was from category "BCT" (Brahmin/Chhetri/Thakuri). Service users from BCT category were 3851 in number which was 61 percent.

Districts Agencies	Number			Percentage		
	Dalit	Janajati	BCT*	Dalit	Janajati	BCT
Achham	164	12	524	23	2	75
Dailekh	133	55	512	19	8	73
Jajarkot	143	84	473	20	12	68
Kalikot	153	7	540	22	1	77
Khotang	93	370	237	13	53	34
Okhaldhunga	70	261	369	10	37	53
Ramechhap	56	263	381	8	38	54
Sindhuli	56	276	368	8	39	53
Surkhet	107	146	447	15	21	64
Total	975	1474	3851	16	23	61

* BCT refers to Brahmin, Chhetri & Thakuri

The findings show that average satisfaction level among the service users in nine districts reached 51 percent in 2016 against 35 percent baseline. It has increased by 16 percent on average. Satisfaction among service recipients in Dailekh reached 56 percent from 35 percent in baseline. Similarly, satisfaction level in Khotang also increased to 54 percent from 34 percent baseline. Satisfaction among service users in Achham also increased to 52 percent from 35 percent baseline in 2014. The table below presents the comparative increase in satisfaction level of people seeking services from seven sectors (DEO, DHO, DFO, DWSS, DAO, DLSO & DDC⁴¹) at district levels.

Satisfaction Level among Service Recipients								
Districts	DEO	DHO	DFO	DWSSO	DAO	DLSO	DDC	District-wise Average
Achham	50	52	49	47	55	53	58	52%
Dailekh	49	60	57	55	58	54	56	56%
Jagarkot	45	50	49	41	56	54	55	50%
Kalikot	39	44	40	44	48	43	50	44%
Khotang	48	55	49	47	59	60	60	54%
Okhaldhunga	49	52	55	48	56	57	54	53%
Ramechhap	51	58	59	57	60	54	62	57%
Sindhuli	47	50	47	50	53	49	54	50%
Surkhet	40	47	45	42	49	48	54	46%
Average of 9 districts								51%

The CRC findings from seven district-level government agencies were shared with the respective agencies and civil society through media and report sharing program. CRC survey helped identify gaps, improve weaknesses and strengthen overall service delivery mechanisms as service providers took it as feedback for further improvement.

GGB Improves Education Services in a Community School: A Case of Gulmi⁴²

Gulmi is a district in Lumbini Province located 208 km west of Kathmandu and has 12 local governments. Chhatrakot rural municipality is one of them. Like in many other districts of Nepal, quality of education is questionable. Local government, though education up to secondary level now fall under its jurisdiction, is yet to put education in its priority. Maindanda Secondary School, located in Hardineta-3 of Chhatrakot rural municipality, is one where GGB was implemented because learning achievements and results were not satisfactory.

⁴¹ DDC-District Development Committee, DAO-District Agriculture Office, DHO-District Health Office, DEO-District Education Office, WSSDO-Water & Sanitation Sub-Division Office, DLSO-District Livestock Office, DFO-District Forestry Office

⁴² Project Completion Report, Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project, FHI 360/USAID, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2022.

The problems in this school were various. Teacher's accountability was poor since they hardly taught full time in the class. Students especially belonging to pre-primary level were not able to afford lunch because they came from poor socio-economic background. Seating arrangement for students of pre-primary students was not good. There were hardly any meetings between teachers, parents and students for sharing learning achievements. Low performing students did not have any additional coaching classes. Girl students especially belonging to disadvantaged community suffered most due to lack of sanitary pads during menstruation. These are only few problems that plagued the community school. Things have become different now. Teaching learning environment and many other things have improved. Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project was implemented by FHI 360 with support from USAID in 34 districts of Nepal. Gulmi was one of these districts and Integrated Rural Development Society as a local partner of FHI360 implemented the project in the district.

Through use of GGB tool, qualitative and quantitative indicators were developed through discussion among local stakeholders. Stakeholders such as service seekers, schoolteachers, school management committee members, elected representatives, among others, provided scoring on each of the indicator based on their experiences to assess the governance situation of the school. Scoring on each indicator was later compiled and analyzed through a GGB formula. This helped draw the findings which portrayed the gaps, weakness and strengths in the school. Based on the findings, stakeholders drew up GGB action plan with a list of actions, responsibilities and timeline followed by a periodic review and monitoring of the action plan through the monitoring committee.

"Last year SMC met 15 times to address what we agreed in the GGB action plan"

-Narapati Kafle, Chair, SMC, Maindanda Secondary School

Citizens and stakeholders focused on implementing the action plan which led to improvement of services and governance system in the school. Accountability of teachers has increased because of their timely arrival and departures leading to an improved teaching and learning environment. Teacher now enter classrooms with daily lesson plans. Classrooms of kindergarten level were redecorated, information being disclosed regularly through notice board, school is regularly providing mid-day meal to students, sanitary pads on request to menstruating students, students coming to schools after 10 o'clock are not allowed to enter, regular meetings between teachers, parents and school administration initiated. Students are being distributed scholarships on time, book corners are kept in secondary level classes and School Management Committee meets more frequently than in the past. To encourage girl students to attend classes even when they are having periods, school has started providing sanitary pads on free and a female teacher has been designated for providing it. School has

formed a grievance handling committee to deal with students' grievance and information such as scholarship recipients is made public through notice board.

RTI Request Expedites Distribution of Scholarship-A Case of Banke⁴³

"We have been able to do many new things in our school because of GGB,"

-Amrita Thapa, Head Teacher

Right to information (RTI) request filed by a local CSO activist Mr. Rakesh Mishra in Nepalgunj, Banke district in mid-western region of Nepal, has helped promote transparency in distribution of scholarship funds to students in a community school. A lower secondary school in Banjaregaon, Indrapur, had not distributed any scholarship amount to its students for the last three years. Local youth Mr Mishra filed RTI request in January, 2014 at the school seeking information on why scholarship funds was not distributed to the deserving

students. After the RTI request was filed, school authorities in mid-February, 2014 provided the information which stated that school administration distributed scholarship funds to the girls and students from disadvantaged groups.

Tirth Ram Verma, school principal, shared that the school immediately distributed NRs 76, 725 as scholarship funds for fiscal year 2070/071 to students which was received from District Education Office (DEO). He also promised to distribute NRs 52,000 and another NRs 55,000 as scholarship funds of the earlier two fiscal years 2068/069 and 2069/070 within a week's time. After weeks' time, when the matter was followed up, school principal Verma shared that all the pending scholarship funds were distributed to the students. When the RTI was filed, DEO had also written to the school management committee about the issue. This is how a simple RTI request mounted pressure on the school authorities which pressured them to distribute pending scholarship funds to the students of a community school in Banke district.

RTI Exposes Misuse of Scholarship Through Forged Signatures: A Case of Bara⁴⁴

Thirty-six students of a community school in Kalaiya of Bara, a district in the southern plains of the country, were deprived of their right to get scholarship funds. A local youth Mr. Mukesh Kumar Kushwaha of Kalaiya municipality-14 filed RTI application on December 31, 2014 at Shree Durga Mandir Higher Secondary School seeking details of scholarship recipients. Responding to the application, the school authority on January 6, 2015 provided a 24-page document with the certified copies of the receipts of the amount distributed as scholarship to

⁴³ Information and news: Examples of Investigative Reporting through RTI, Freedom Forum, Kathmandu, 2015

⁴⁴ Information and news: Examples of Investigative Reporting through RTI, Freedom Forum, Kathmandu, 2015.

the students of Grade 1 to 12 from the dalit community, girl students and the meritorious students.

The RTI requester Mr Kushwaha later verified the details by asking the students whether those figuring in the list had actually received the scholarship. It was found that around 40 students had not received scholarship funds though their signatures were forged on the list by some teachers. After this, the issue was further taken to school management committee and school authority. In response, school principal Mr Manoj Yadav assure Mr Kushwaha that should would provide the scholarship funds to the 40 students. Within a week, the school distributed NRS 14,400 to those 40 students at the rate of NRs 400 per student.

Later on, the school started distributing scholarship funds to the students in a transparent manner. The District Education Office (DEO) of Bara provided NRs 208,300 to the school in FY 2014/15 as scholarship funds to the students. On October 2016, the school distributed scholarship funds to 529 students including Dalit, girls and meritorious students at the rate of NRs 400 per student in the presence of school supervisor Mr Manjoor Alam and DEO representative.