



**THE FUNCTIONING AND EFFECTIVENESS OF
SCHOLARSHIP AND INCENTIVE SCHEMES
IN NEPAL**



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ACRONYMS

ACA:	Annapurna Circle Association	HMG/N:	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
ARNEC:	All Round National Education Committee	IIDS:	Institute for Integrated Development Studies
B.S.	Bikram Sambat (Nepali Calender)	INGO:	international non-Governmental organization
CDO:	Chief District Officer	LDO:	Local Development Officer
CERID:	Centre for Educational Research Innovation and Development	MDG:	Millennium Development Goal
CLC:	Community Learning Centre	MOES:	Ministry of Education and Sports
DACAW:	Decentralized Action for Children and Women	NEC:	National Education Commission
DAO:	District A.D.ministration Office/r	NER:	net enrolment
DC:	Distribution Centre/s	NGO:	Non-Government Organization
DDC:	District Development Committee	NNEPC:	Nepal National Education Planning Commission
DEC:	District Education Committee	NPC:	National Planning Commission
DEO:	District Education Office/r	OSP:	out of school children programmeme
DOE:	Department of Education	PARHI:	Population and Reproductive Health Initiative
DSMC:	District School Management Committee	PDO:	Population Development Officer
EAWEP:	Equal Access for Women to Education Project	QIP:	Quick Impact Project
ECD:	early childhood development	RC:	Resource Centre
EFA:	Education for All	REDP:	Rural Energy Development Project
EGWN:	Education for Girls and Women in Nepal	RP:	resource person
EIPG:	Educational Incentive Programmemes for Girls	SAC:	Social Awareness Centre
EMIS:	Education Management Information System	SESP:	Secondary Education Support Programmeme
FfE:	Food for Education	SMC:	School Management Committee
FMC:	Food Management Committee	UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund
GER:	gross enrolment rate	VAM:	Vulnerability Analysis Map
GFEI:	Global Food for Education Initiative	VDC:	Village Development Committee
GIP:	Girls Incentive Programmeme	WDO:	Women Development Officer
GPI:	Gender Parity Index	WEU:	Women's Education Unit
HLNEC:	High Level National Education Commission	WFP:	World Food Programmeme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study aims to answer a number of questions concerning the functioning and effectiveness of scholarships and incentives intended for girls and children of disadvantaged communities. The desire to understand various incentive schemes from local perspectives arises from the need to provide policy makers, planners, administrators, educators and donors with important insights to help improve the management of existing incentive and scholarship schemes. Initiated primarily to generate understanding about the management, functioning, institutional arrangement, potential impact and constraints related to Government and UN scholarship/incentive schemes, this study also uncovered some unexpected issues and information. One of these issues a debate on the concept and intention of scholarships.

Three districts – Rasuwa, Saptari and Surkhet – were selected for the study based on topography, ethnicity and the availability of different scholarship/incentive schemes. The study used interviews, group discussions, observation and case studies to capture the reality at the local level. Primary level girl students and their parents were the primary respondents. In addition, the data was collected from a number of other respondent groups such as fellow male classmates, non-recipients, teachers, head teachers, school administrators, District Education Office (DEO) personnel, School Management Committee (SMC) members, and resource persons. Additionally, the staff in-charge of implementing the scholarships and incentives granted by various UN agencies and INGOs were also interviewed.

Major Findings and Emerging Issues

Types, management and institutional arrangements

Besides the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) and World Food Programme (WFP) scholarship/incentive programmes, a number of schemes managed by NGOs, schools, philanthropic individuals and donor agencies were also found. The management of various scholarships varied according to the provider. In the case of MOES scholarships, district level management is found to be the same while three patterns of scholarship management were explored at the local level.

In the case of Government scholarship schemes, the District School Management Committee (DSMC) manages the distribution of scholarships in all three study districts. The District Education Officer (DEO) is the chairperson of this Committee. Not all respondents of the study found the selection procedure or criteria justifiable. Conflicting opinions were found.

For example, in Rasuwa the DEO official found the criteria for recipient selection clear, while some teachers regarded it as unclear. In Saptari, a formula was developed to allocate the *Dalit* scholarship quota to schools, while in other two districts no such basis was reported.

Profiles of committees and schools

All of the study districts had a DSMC. SMCs had been formed in all of the schools studied in Rasuwa and Surkhet. In Saptari, none of the selected schools, except one, had a functioning SMC at the time of the fieldwork. The formulation process for DSMCs and SMCs in all of the study districts and schools was found to be the same. The composition of DSMC in all of the study districts was almost the same, i.e., majority of upper caste Hindus dominated the committees. In the case of SMCs, although different districts had diverse composition, still the representation of upper caste Hindu was substantial.

Functioning of scholarships/incentives

In all three study districts, most of the respondents agreed that the available scholarships/incentives reached the needy population, but complained that they did not cover all of the needy children. According to the teachers, since the scholarships/incentives have been in place, the girls' enrolment and school attendance have increased in the selected schools. In Saptari, the scholarship money has brought some changes to girls' education with a few exceptions. In most cases incentives in the form of food and oil were reported to be the most effective in increasing girls' enrolment and attendance.

As the selected schools lacked statistics regarding recipients, their admission and drop-out trends, and beneficiary-wise schemes, a complete picture could not be produced regarding the schemes and their effects. Schools for several reasons did not pay attention to the collection, storage and retrieval of the information on scholarship/incentive schemes. One of the reasons for this is the uncertainty of funding in the following year.

Procedure and impact monitoring

The monitoring of procedures and the impact of scholarships/incentives was either not systematic or regular in any of the three study districts. The challenge in the area of monitoring is associated with existing managerial and institutional arrangements, and with the current political situation. Both challenges seem to have affected the Department of Education (DEO/DOE) scheme more than other schemes. Specifically, making excuse in the name of conflict, accessibility is the case of studied districts.

Barriers/constraints

In all three study districts, one problem that may stop or discourage girls and their parents from claiming benefits is lack of information about the availability of various kinds of scholarships/incentives. Parents are intimidated by teachers and head teachers and are afraid to ask freely about these schemes. DEO officials also reported that the budget is not released on time and consequently quota division (dividing allocated scholarship money according to the number of recipients) and allocation (managing the distribution of funds to students) are delayed. This prevents the DEOs from informing all of the potential recipients on time. In Saptari, the primary barrier/constraint regarding the scholarship/incentive scheme is the inadequacy of the fund. The Government's inability to provide support to all of the target children as announced has created problems at all levels – DEO, schools and parents. In this situation both have enough reasons to blame each other. The DEOs complained that they have to face severe pressure from schools but can not do much unless funds arrive.

Communication mechanisms

In general, the modes and channels of communication involved in the implementation of scholarships/incentives are governed by managerial and institutional factors linked to the central level. Hence, communication modes and channels are inadequate with respect to access to incentive-related information at the local level. In practice, at the local level a radio announcement is made to inform parents about the *Dalit* scholarship. But schools do not receive adequate funds to cover all the *Dalit* students enrolled in their respective schools. In this situation although the communication seems to be appropriate, in reality it doesn't serve the parents' purposes. In Saptari, no mechanism to inform the community or parents about scholarships was found. In relation to other types of schemes, parents usually learn about them through their school-going children. A similar trend was found in the case of UNICEF and UNFPA scholarships. The WFP scheme, however, has a separate office and mechanism at the district and sub-district levels to inform schools about incentives. As the WFP scheme has been regular for the past few years, schools as well as parents are well informed of scheme's managerial aspects.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Background and Rationale

Scholarships and incentives have long been used as a means of promoting girls' education in most developing countries where Governments are struggling to improve the status of girls' education. Policy makers, planners, educators and donors often believe that scholarships and incentives can boost up girls' enrolment, retention and learning achievement in schools. Scholarships and incentives are distributed in the form of small stipends, subsidies, food (e.g., cooking oil or mid-day meals), uniform allowances, accommodation in hostels and so forth. In Nepal, too, scholarships and incentives have been used as a major strategy to promote girls' education since the 1970s. All major actors involved in the development of education in Nepal - the Government, international development agencies, UN agencies and the donor community - have combined scholarship and incentive schemes with several other reform interventions.

There has been substantial growth in girls' enrolment at the primary level. Girls' net enrolment (NER) increased from 64% in 1999 to 77% in 2003 – a gain of 13% over a five-year period (Table 1). During the same period, boys' NER saw a growth of 9% from 79% in 1999 to 89% in 2003. Furthermore, this cannot only be attributed to scholarships. The gain in girls' NER tells only one side of the story. When girls' NER is compared with that of boys, one can observe a serious gender gap. The gap between girls and boys remains above 10 percentage points.

Table 1: NER in Primary Level by Gender (1999-2003)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total	72.0	80.4	81.1	82.3	83.5
Girls (G)	64.4	74.6	75.1	76.8	77.5
Boys (B)	79.2	86.0	86.9	88.7	89.4
Gap (B-G)*	14.8	11.4	11.8	11.9	11.9

DOE (2003: 23) * UNESCO's own elaboration from DOE (2003: 23) data.

Despite a very slow increase in the NER for 2004 of 0.7%, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) has not changed from 2003 to 2004 and remains at 0.87 (DOE, 2004:23). It should be noted that there are significant gaps in NERs across the development regions and ecological zones (Table 2).

Table 2: GPI in NER (2004)

	GPI in NER
Nepal	0.87
Mountains	0.88
Hills	0.94
Terai	0.79
Valley	0.93
Eastern	0.91
Central	0.80
Western	0.92
Mid Western	0.87
Far Western	0.89

DOE (2004: 23)

Equally, the promotion, repetition and drop-out rates of girl students in Grade 1 have registered non-significant improvements during the statistical period from 1999 to 2003. In 2003, only 50.8% of girl students in Grade 1 were promoted to the next grade, the remainder either repeated (33.7%) or dropped out of school (15.5%), suggesting a huge wastage of educational resources.

Table 3: Promotion, Repetition and Drop-out Rates of Girls in Grade 1 (1999-2003)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Promotion	42.1	44.7	47.4	48.1	50.8
Repetition	37.7	41	38.3	36.6	33.7
Drop-out	20.2	14.3	14.3	15.3	15.5

DOE (2003: 37)

While scholarships and incentives are believed to be an effective means of addressing the poor enrolment and low retention of girls, the results of some studies designed to assess the impact of these schemes are less convincing. Although some evaluation studies conducted by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) and CERID have reported the positive impact of scholarships and incentives on girls' enrolment, the situation is less than satisfactory as measured in terms of the gross enrolment rate (GER), NER and a host of other educational indicators.

Markedly, the relationship between incentive schemes and girls' education does not appear to be so simple. The actual functioning of scholarship and incentive schemes may be different from what is visualised by policy-makers, planners, educators and donors. Often quantitative, convenience-based, externally planned and executed questionnaire methods of research study do not provide the full picture of what is happening in the field because such methods do not capture the socio-psychological and cultural realities associated with the phenomenon. Such studies often report the observations of the researchers themselves, not the inside stories, experiences, feelings and interpretations of the real people who are to be

benefited by these schemes. While scholarships and incentives have at least four decades of history in Nepal, very little is known about how these schemes function and the extent to which they have been effective in meeting the expectations of the beneficiaries.

Given these realities, a number of questions have remained unanswered: How are these schemes planned, implemented, and monitored? How do these schemes interact with local cultural values and decision-making systems? What value is attached to scholarships and incentives that come from above? Who are the actual recipients of these scholarships and incentives? What processes are involved in the management of these schemes? What decisions are made at the point of delivery and who makes these decisions? What do the recipients and managers of these schemes have to say about the provisions? What are the behaviours expected of the recipients? How well do the scholarships and incentives provided fit the needs of children and families? What are the roles of different actors – local, district and central – in designing, implementing, managing and evaluating these schemes? This study aims to answer these and many other questions concerning the functioning and effectiveness of scholarships and incentives intended for girls and children of disadvantaged communities. Understanding the various incentive schemes from local perspectives will provide policy-makers, planners, administrators, educators and donors with important insights that can help improve the management of existing incentive and scholarship schemes. In a nutshell, the study intends to explore the inside stories of scholarship recipients, local perspectives and local situations in relations to scholarship and incentive schemes, the functioning of different scholarship schemes, the management of incentive schemes and the accessibility of those schemes.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to explore and understand the functioning and effectiveness of the scholarship and incentive schemes being implemented in Nepal under the MOES and various UN agencies. The experiences of international non-Governmental organizations (INGOs) are also discussed because they contribute to the promotion of girls' and disadvantaged children's education. The study attempts to analyse all aspects of the schemes, lessons learned and experiences gained. Specifically, the study intends to accomplish the following objectives:

1. to examine the different types of scholarships and incentives currently granted by Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) and various UN agencies;
2. to map the processes involved in the management of the various schemes.

3. to explore how various scholarships and incentives function (do they reach targeted population and motivate them and their families to send and retain their children in school?);
4. to explore the institutional arrangements and social, cultural and economic conditions under which these scholarships and incentives are provided to girls attending primary schools;
5. to identify barriers and constraints that may stop or discourage girls and/or parents from claiming these benefits;
6. to understand the impact of scholarships and incentives on recipients and their families and the community perception of beneficiaries; and
7. to explore and assess the efficiency of communication channels used to disseminate information concerning scholarships and incentives from the central Government or UN agencies down to the ultimate beneficiaries;

Study Coverage

Although the study's aim is to investigate the functioning and effectiveness of UN agency and Government funded scholarship schemes, other scholarship schemes available in the schools were also studied. Other schemes studied includes the girls' education support programme of District Development Committee (DDC) which is intended for economically disadvantaged girls.

Study Process

The study used qualitative research methods including individual and group interviews, case studies, group discussions, observations and document reviews. Girl students from the primary level and their parents were the primary respondents. In addition, data was collected from a number of other respondent groups such as fellow male classmates, non-recipients, teachers, head teachers, school administrators, District Education Office (DEO) personnel, School Management Committee (SMC) members and resource persons. Additionally, the staff in charge of implementing the scholarships and incentives granted by various UN agencies and INGOs were also interviewed. In order to gain a holistic view of the context and content of scholarships/incentives in the schools of Nepal, the following major areas were investigated:

- identification and analysis of the different types of scholarships and incentives granted by the two major stakeholders: the MOES and various UN agencies;

- the basis and rationale for existing scholarships and incentives; and the criteria and the timing of disbursements as well as the amount and composition of funds and goods provided both in theory and in practice;
- the intended and unintended consequences of providing scholarships and incentives on girls, their families and the communities where they live at the institutional, social, political, cultural and economic level;
- a holistic, but not exhaustive, comprehension of the institutional, social, politico-cultural and economic impacts that scholarships and incentives may have on the girl recipients, their families and other stakeholders;
- analysis of the perceptions of local actors (teachers, SMC members and parents) towards the existing incentive schemes considering their caste, ethnic, social and occupational identities; and
- analysis of the subjective perceptions generated by girl recipients, their families, the community to which they belong, and the institution itself (school, DEO and UN agencies).

Review and Analysis of Existing Documents, Study Reports and Laws

Policy documents, research reports and relevant literature were reviewed in order to explore the rationale behind various scholarship and incentive schemes, the envisioned management of UN agency and Government-funded scholarship and incentive schemes and the nexus between the national policy framework and various scholarship and incentive schemes. In addition, research and policy reports were reviewed to identify their findings and methodological framework in order to juxtapose the existing research.

Identification and Selection of Target Groups

Although the primary targets of this study were primary level girl students receiving any kind of scholarship or incentive from the MOES or any UN agency, secondary level girl students were not excluded. The study, therefore, covered the following schemes: (a) UN agency girls' education incentive/scholarship programmes (WFP and other UN agency-funded incentive programmes) (b) HMG/N scholarships (Girls Education Scholarship, *Dalit* Scholarships, Disable Scholarship and SESP Scholarships); and (c) scholarships provided by INGOs and the DDC. In order to explore and make sense of the social and economic impacts of scholarship/incentive programmes, families, schools and communities, as well as the recipients, were also included in the study.

Due to their topographical, caste and ethnic variations, Rasuwa, Saptari and Surkhet districts were selected as study sites. All three study districts had scholarship and incentive schemes in operation funded by both the Government and UN agency. Districts were selected to ensure the representation of topographical and ethnic diversity, not just the availability of scholarship and incentive schemes. Rasuwa district represents the northern Himalayan region and the Tibeto-Burmese ethnic groups that live there. Saptari district was selected to ensure representation of the Terai region and *Dalit* population. Surkhet represents the western region and has an ethnic composition from the mid-hills, inner-Terai and western Nepal. As the study aims to gain an understanding, rather than make generalisations for the entire system, the study used a relatively small group of participants as depicted in Table 4.

Table 4: Total Sample Size*

	Districts			Total
	Rasuwa	Surkhet	Saptari	
Number of schools	3	4	5	12
Number of scholarship recipient students: Grade 4, 5, 7 & 9	32	22	20	74
Number of parents of recipient	30	21	16	67
Number of non-recipient students (from upper Grades)	15	16	17	48
Number of teachers	20	12	25	57
Number of parents of non-recipients	17	16	12	45
Number of head teachers	3	3	5	11
Number of SMC members	9	12	2	23
Number of education officials in DEO	3	9	2	14
Number of implementing officers of various UN agencies	3	3	4	10
Number of officials of NGOs	--	5	1	6
Total number of participants	132	119	104	355

* The sample size represents all participants who were included in interview and group discussion.

Rationale for Selecting Schools

Because of the nature of the study, only three schools each were selected in Rasuwa and Surkhet districts while five schools were chosen as 'field schools' in Saptari district. Although the selection of schools was made after consulting DEO officials, four criteria were devised to select schools for fieldwork. Firstly, schools with different types of

scholarship and incentive schemes within the scope of the present study were selected for fieldwork. Secondly, the selection tried to represent at least two types of schools out of primary, lower secondary and secondary schools. Thirdly, schools were chosen for their representation of the different ethnicities that constitute respective district's population so as to capture the reality from the multi-ethnic perspective. Fourthly, given the ongoing conflict situation, accessibility was one of the criteria for selecting schools.

Research Instruments/Methods

The research employed the following instruments/methods to uncover information about the functioning and effectiveness of the scholarship programmes. In doing so, field-based, participatory and emergent instruments and methods were considered. Some of the key instruments/methods are given below.

School profile

School profiles were prepared to understand the overall socio-cultural settings, composition of students and stakeholders, and geographic location of the schools.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted considering the metaphor of *interviewing as mining and travelling* (Kvale, 1996). An interview guideline was developed to generate extensive and intensive information about attitudes, feelings, emotions and opinions about the local functioning of scholarships and incentives. The guideline was designed to contribute to a holistic understanding of the functioning, as well the immediate and potential impact, of scholarships/incentives.

Group discussions

Owing to the nature of the study, we felt that it was equally important to gather information on the collective perceptions and feelings of families, children, teachers and neighbouring members of the community about the schemes and programmes under which scholarships and incentives are granted. A guideline for group discussion was developed in a view to initiate and promote group dialogue amongst the different actors concerned (the girl recipient, her fellow male and female classmates, her family, the school teachers and neighbouring members of the community). At least one group discussion per school surveyed was conducted.

Observation and analysis

The study used the ethnographic method of observation to triangulate and enrich the understanding of the phenomena. Although a complete participant observation method was not possible, the phenomena (the school, the girl recipients' family, and the school lives of girl recipients) under study have been richly represented through documented observation.

Case studies

In each district, three case studies were done of families and girls receiving scholarships and incentives. Household setting, her activities at school, the nature of her interactions with her family members and her overall activities at home. In other words, the girl recipient's normal school days and holidays were captured in such cases. The purpose of the case studies is to depict the immediate impact of scholarships/incentives and recipients' realities, behaviours, relationships with other members of their family and their attitudes towards education and learning. Accordingly, the case studies are not presented separately in the report; but used to discuss the different areas explored.

Pre-Testing of Study Tools

A pre-test was carried out in order to test the appropriateness of intended investigatory methods and tools. Two secondary schools in the Kathmandu Valley with a number of scholarship recipients were selected to test the interview guidelines on head teachers, teachers and students; and to test the method of ethnographic observation in classrooms and around the school premises. The pre-testing experience was used to improve the wording, sequence and sentence pattern of the major interview questions. Similarly, sharing sessions between lead researchers, co-researchers and field researchers helped to identify pertinent issues to address while performing ethnographic observation.

Data Collection

After completing the pre-testing and participating in a two-day orientation on interviewing, group discussion and ethnographic observation, three field researchers were sent to the field in the second week of August 2005. The field researchers, together with their local field assistant, spent almost three weeks in the field capturing layers of reality through individual interviews, group discussions, ethnographic observation and case studies. In order to enhance the quality of the data collected, the field researchers were asked to maintain a journal and keep field notes as they encountered different participants. Continuous

communication between the field researchers and the principal researchers helped field researchers to capture the reality as intended by the study.

Analysis of Data

After the fieldwork, the field researchers provided the principal researchers with detailed reports. The dialogue between field and centre-based researchers helped make sense of the reality in the field. Furthermore, the transcripts of the interviews and group discussions, case studies, school profiles, and the field researchers' journals were also collected. Specific stages of analysing interviews, observation reports and group discussion were adopted as thematisation, linking, interpreting and reporting (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). Furthermore, direct quotations from participants have also been presented wherever necessary.

Limitations of the Study

The study was designed to give a socio-cultural understanding of the local-level functioning of MOES and UN agency-funded girls' scholarship and incentive schemes in three districts. The findings cannot be generalized to other districts, scholarships or situations. However, this study can be used as the basis for further inquiry to inform policy-makers as well as to improve implementation practices.

Report Organization

The report is presented in four parts. Part One outlines the background and methodology, Part Two reviews the existing major scholarship/incentive schemes, and Part Three presents a district wise discussion of the different types of scholarships/incentives available in the selected districts. Part Four presents the study findings and emerging issues together with the implications for the future.

PART TWO

REVIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP/INCENTIVE SCHEMES

The main purpose of this Part Two is to review and summarise the policy documents, research reports and other relevant documents on scholarships, incentives and support provided towards school children by various agencies. The information gathered in interviews with relevant personnel has also been utilised to supplement the literature review where necessary. After a brief historical introspection, the Part Two continues to overview the scholarship policy of the Government and UN agencies. Different types of scholarships are presented with respect to scope and criteria. Part Two also provides a synopsis of the research studies carried out in Nepal to date with a specific focus on girls' scholarship issues. Part Two helps to internalise the processes and findings of different research studies. Two concludes by identifying experiences that can be learned from the past efforts.

Policy Framework of Incentives/Scholarship Programmes in Nepal

Mapping out the history of girls' incentives and scholarships in Nepal requires us to briefly overview the historical documents that helped formulate the education system in Nepal. The concept of incentives for girls and children from disadvantaged communities was non-existent in the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) report (1955). Later, All Round National Education Committee (ARNEC) (1961) suggested establishing residential schools so that a large number of boys and girls could come to school. However, the ARNC Commission did not explicitly mention the concept of scholarships/incentives for girls and children of disadvantaged communities. In 1971, the concept of girls' incentives was introduced after the Equal Access for Women Education Project (EAWEP) started recruiting girls from rural areas to train them as teachers. After being renamed EGWN in 1983, the project continues to provide girls with stipends for teacher training courses (CERID, 1991). For the past one and a half decades educational policies in Nepal have addressed the issue of equity and access with respect to the education of girl children and children from disadvantaged communities. The National Education Commission (NEC, 1992) pointed the need for a comprehensive policy to bring marginalised communities into the education system. Similarly, the High Level National Education Commission (HLNEC, 1999) also forwarded this suggestion with an added focus on the access and equity of women to education. Other policy initiatives such as the Education For All National Plan of Action 2002, and the Secondary Education Support Programme 2002, have clearly indicated the

need for inclusive education through a multitude of strategies including scholarships and incentives for those who are marginalised and excluded from the existing education system. Primarily, the notion of scholarship has been directly or indirectly conceptualised as a means of ensuring a larger circle of inclusion for those who are still deprived of access to education.

The Tenth Five-Year Plan, National Planning Commission (NPC, 2002), has prioritised the education emphasising on the access of women, ethnic minorities and disadvantaged communities to education. To further the objective of gender mainstreaming and social inclusion, the plan has formulated different strategies including the establishment of Community Learning Centres (CLCs), the recruitment of more women teachers, the provision of scholarships and education loans, and strategies to address the needs of disabled/differently able children. Together with other programmes, the provision of various scholarships to girl children has been considered the basis for increasing the Gender Parity Index (GPI) from 0.6 to 0.8 during the Tenth Five-year Plan.

The Education for All (EFA 2004-2009) programme puts more emphasis on new and improved scholarship and incentive programmes for girls and children from disadvantaged groups. The programme further envisages that such scholarships and incentives will be tested, adopted and scaled up accordingly as per the recommendations in the impact evaluation study of existing scholarship schemes. Moreover, the programme further aims to reduce gender disparity and inequality through various means in which scholarships and incentives are considered strategic.

Similarly, the SESP (DOE, 2003) considers the provision of scholarships as a means of enhancing the quality of education. Specifically, the programme states that the “availability of secondary schools close to their homes is required for parents and female students to feel secure about their attendance” (DOE, 200, p.23). Until this vision comes true, the programme has formulated short-term strategies such as an effective network of hostels for girls to encourage participation in lower secondary and secondary education. Moreover, categorising activities into four components, the programme focuses on creating a learning environment that welcomes all children who have completed primary education. Furthermore, the programmed envisions providing an education that also addresses the needs of girl children and children from disadvantaged communities and minority groups. In addition to improvements to the physical and psychosocial environment, and the curriculum of secondary schools, initial support through different types for children from vulnerable communities is essential to bring them to secondary school.

The EFA National Plan of Action makes it clear that “extremely disadvantaged hard-core groups need special preferential treatment to guarantee their access to education” (MOES,

2002, p.45). What might be the form of this preferential treatment? Can it be for non-educational support? The EFA National Plan of Action proposes some non-educational support for those children who belong to marginalised and disadvantaged communities such as food, jobs for their parents and other forms of material support. The concept of residential schools for children from poor rural families has been regarded as a priority to overcome the exclusion of such children from the school system. Giving much emphasis to parity in four areas, such as parity in access, parity in quality, parity in relevancy and parity in management, the EFA National Plan of Action puts forward the idea of inclusion through planned support to those children who are still out of school.

With seven thematic goals — early childhood development (ECD), universal primary education, equity and gender parity in education, enhancing the quality of basic and primary education, promoting adult literacy, encouraging the learning of life skills, and increasing access of indigenous and disadvantaged people to school education — the EFA National Plan of Action has proposed scholarships for girls and *Dalit* children in order to increase their access to primary education. Together with other strategies to make primary education accessible, the provision of school feeding programmes in the areas where the nutritional status of the children is low has been proposed as a strategy to achieve the EFA National Plan of Action. Furthermore, addressing the existing situation of gender disparity, the EFA National Plan of Action proposes five policy strategies: provide scholarships/incentives for girls to join school and complete the full cycle of schooling; make the school environment gender friendly; enable the participation of girls through affirmative actions; implement gender sensitisation programmes; undertake reforms for gender sensitive curricular materials—to improve gender parity in education. In essence, various scholarships and incentives are regarded as the main strategic option to achieve the two major goals of the EFA National Plan of Action.

Policies Contexts of UN Agencies

The emphasis of UNESCO's policy on education is to enhance sustainable human development, play an important role in poverty reduction, promote universal human values and tolerance, and cope with the challenges posed by new information and communication technologies. Accordingly, UNESCO has envisaged that implementing policy-strategies requires decision-makers to embrace the spirit of EFA to achieve its goal (UNESCO, 2004). The conceptualization of the agenda of EFA is itself a turning point in the formulation of an all-encompassing policy for basic and primary education. The notion of EFA has helped UN member states to formulate their policies towards achieving the goal of bringing all school-going age children to education. Therefore, in order to address the global problems of

exclusion, drop-out and out-of-school children, UNESCO has formulated a number of policy guidelines to address the diverse causes of exclusion of girls and children from disadvantaged communities in its member states. However, the daunting task of providing education for all is not as easy. As a member state cannot alone solve the problem of multiple exclusion of girls and children from disadvantaged communities in a short period of time.

UNESCO has formulated various policy-frameworks that are aligned with right-based education, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), fast-track initiatives and other frameworks that are instrumental in making education equitable, accessible and relevant to the life of girls and children from disadvantaged communities. In so doing, UNESCO in its role as an advocate of education for girls and children from disadvantaged communities has placed emphasis on overcoming the multiple barriers to the education of the girls and children from disadvantaged communities (Ridley & Bista, 2004). As the economic burden created by the cost of schooling has caused poor families to pull their children out of school especially girls, UNESCO has been monitoring how the scholarships and incentives are helpful in achieving the goal of gender equality and inclusion in education. In so doing, UNESCO has a clear emphasis on tying incentives to the goal of poverty reduction.

Drawing upon the framework of right-based education, UNESCO (2001) has raised the issue of inclusion of girls in education as essential to ensure the full enjoyment of their human rights. Looking at the three levels – right to, right within and right through – of the right-based framework, the starting point ‘right to’ is regarded as the point of departure in the issue of girls in education. How is it possible to implement the ‘right to’ approach to girls’ education? How can we bring the girls of poor families within the framework of education? The solution according to UNESCO (2003) is to employ multiple strategies including scholarship and incentive schemes.

UNICEF in its various publications (UNICEF, 2003; UNICEF 2004) clearly places an emphasis on girls’ education. With a focus on gender equality in education, UNICEF enunciates that “*removing fees or offering financial support to families with daughters in school (UNICEF, 2004, p.1)*” can help bring girls within the framework of schooling. Indeed, UNICEF (2004) has clearly articulated that “*many girls are kept at home to help with domestic tasks*”, and thereby excluding them from school. Indeed “*supplying communities or women’s groups with equipment such as mills to grind cereals, huskers, carts and plastic barrels for water conservation, can decrease the amount the work to be done so that girls can be freed to attend school (UNICEF, 2004, p.7)*”. Specifically, UNICEF has placed emphasis on investing in girls’ education so as to support all children, including boys. Clarifying the practical implication that investment in boys does not help much in

achieving the goal of poverty reduction, UNICEF (2003) advocates the idea of investing in girls' education so as to have multiplier effect in the community and state.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has clearly identified two basic phenomena – the hunger trap and food insecurity – that are preventing many Nepali children from going to school. Obviously, hunger is caused by poverty and does not allow its victims to think of anything other than survival. A common coping strategy for victims of the hunger trap is to reduce the meal size and use cheaper food items, thereby affecting their health in the long run. Similarly, the consequence of food insecurity is increased hunger, malnutrition and undernourishment. Given the prevalence of the hunger trap and food insecurity in most of the high mountainous regions of Nepal, the number of school-going age children, especially girl children who are out of school remains substantial (WFP, 2003). Specifically, the serious problem of the hunger trap causes many children to leave school without completing the whole-day's learning activities, and even stops them from going school. The dimensional effect of the hunger trap is low enrolment, ineffective teaching/learning activities and the denial of the empowerment of women. Specifically, women and girls are regarded as severe victims of the hunger trap because preparing and managing meals is their responsibility.

In this context, together with its *seven food assistance principles* (WFP, 1996) WFP has clearly placed an emphasis on bringing “*about sustainable improvements in food security for the most disadvantaged, particularly women and children, in high food-insecure areas, mainly the far and mid western hill and mountain regions of the country*” (WFP, 2003, p. 28). Regarding women as key agents of positive change, the WFP programmes intend to reach among the women and girls. Focusing on the dimensions of food insecurity – availability, access and utilization – the WFP initiatives are based on three activities: Rural Community Infrastructure Works, Food for Education, and Assistance to Mother and Child Health Care. Given the scope of this research, WFP policies supporting basic primary education, especially the education of girls and children from disadvantaged communities, is discussed in the following paragraphs.

When survival becomes the main priority for families, sending children to school contradicts their reality. Without tackling the phenomenon of hunger, poor families do not realise the need of education for their children. Realising the negative ripple effect of hunger, the primary focus of WFP's Food for Education (FfE) activity is to help increase the enrolment and attendance of girls and children from disadvantaged communities through food support. The tough school life of such children becomes relatively satisfying and enjoyable as they start getting nutritious food and health-related support at school. The second thrust of this policy is to support the families of those girls who are regularly attending school. WFP anticipates that incentives and support to their families will result in increased enrolment,

reduced drop-out and increased attendance of girls in school, and thereby contributing towards the national goals of education for all.

Types of and Management/Distribution Procedures of Scholarship/Incentive Schemes

The cost of schooling for poor families in Nepal is still high although school education is free. The direct annual cost of schooling, including admission and examination fees as well as the cost of educational materials, is about Rs.819 for a child studying at primary level and Rs.1819 for a child studying at secondary level (IIDS, 2004). Although it was a small scale research, IIDS study made a significant finding. According to the research, the opportunity cost of a child attending school is very high. A child studying at primary level can do household chores of worth Rs.4607, and Rs.8792 for a child studying at secondary level. Given the high cost of schooling, it is likely that poor families will continue to avoid schooling their children. And if they have to choose between schooling their son or daughter, most families prefer to send their son(s) to school, keeping their girl children at home to do day-to-day household chores (UNICEF, 2004). In order to ameliorate this situation of multiple exclusion of girls and children from disadvantaged communities, different types of scholarships, incentives and support have been provided by HMG/N, UN agencies and I/NGOs to individuals, families and schools.

Generally, four types (Table 5) scholarship and incentive schemes are found to be in place. These are: 1) monetary support to individual students, 2) material support to individual students and their families, 3) monetary and material support to schools, and 4) monetary support to families.

Table 5: Scholarships/Incentives Schemes Provided by Different Agencies

Name scheme	Type	Recipients	Eligibility Criteria	Amount	Provider
Scholarships for Children with Disabilities	monetary support	individual students	different level of disabilities, ethnic minorities and girls	Rs.10000, 5000, 3000 and 500 as per the level of disabilities	HMG/N
Booster Scholarship	monetary support	individual students	first son or daughter of those parents who were excluded from primary education	Rs.500 per student for the first year of his/her schooling	HMG/N
Primary School Scholarship	monetary support	individual students	All <i>Dalit</i> students and 50% of poor students	Rs.350 per student per year	HMG/N
Girl Student Scholarship	monetary support	individual students	50% of girl students of 6-10 years of age studying at primary level	Rs.350 per student per year	HMG/N
Lower Secondary /Secondary Full Scholarship	monetary support	individual students	girls, ethnic minorities, backward castes, students without having any other scholarships, prioritised school	Rs.1700 per student per year, however, only Rs.1000 is given to the student and Rs.700 is separately granted to the school to make the necessary arrangements for the learning of that same student	HMG/N
Lower Secondary/Secondary Freeship Scholarship	monetary support	individual students	the same criteria as of the previous one except for those who are studying in Grade6 and 7	Rs.700 per head per year	HMG/N
Feeder Hostel Scholarship	monetary support	individual students	girls, remote districts, without a school near home, backward community	Rs.12000 per head per year living in remote districts Rs.1000 per head per year living in hostels of other than remote districts	HMG/N

Name scheme	Type	Recipients	Eligibility Criteria	Amount	Provider
Scholarship for Oppressed and Dalits	monetary support	individual students	boys and girls from dalits community studying in Grade6-10.	Rs.500 per head per annum	HMG/N
Scholarship for Martyr's Children	monetary support	individual students	daughters and sons up to the second generation, studying in recognized teaching institutions, no multiple scholarships	---	HMG/N
Girls Incentive Programme	material support	mothers	girls with 80% attendance	2 litres of vegetable oil per month	WFP
Mid-day Meal	material support	schools	students from Grades 1-5/1-8 students	4 litres of vegetable oil and fortified blended food	WFP
Scholarship for Girls	monetary support	individual	six PARHI project districts	Rs.350 per student per year	UNFPA
Incentive for disadvantaged Children	material support	individual students	15 DACAW districts, OSP graduates and regular school going children	yearly, need based	DACA W/UNI CEF
Scholarship for Girls	monetary support	parents	regular girl students from public schools in Surkhet and Doti districts; and girl students who pass the end of Grade tests	Rs.3000 per year (Grade1-8) Rs.5000 (Grade9-10)	DDC*

* This scholarship scheme is funded by DANIDA. This was initially initiated under Decentralization Action Support Unit of DANIDA.

HMG/N MOES schemes

Table 5 shows that at present providing students with monetary support is common under various scholarships. Most of the Government scholarships under the EFA NPA (2004-2009) or the SESP (2003-2012) (MOES, 2004) are in the form of *monetary support to individual students*. The quota of different scholarships for different schools is determined by the Department of Education (DOE) as per the information provided by schools to the Department of Education (DEO). At the district level a committee called the District School Management Committee (DSMC) is formed to look after the entire process of school selection and the distribution of scholarships. Provisionally, public notices about scholarships are broadcasted on local FM radios and posted in newspapers. At the local level, School Management Committee (SMC) is responsible for the selection, distribution and overall monitoring of different scholarships.

In addition to the above mentioned scholarships the MOES has a separate incentive package for schools. Such incentives are provided on the basis of a school's performance in terms of girls' enrolment, *Dalit* and other disadvantaged children's enrolment, SLC results, girls' retention, etc. The SMC is responsible for the appropriate use of monetary support while the DEO and relevant sections in the DOE are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the provided incentives. This report, however, only covers schemes that directly go to the students or their families because the scope of this study does not include the school incentive programme.

UNFPA

UNFPA funded Population and Reproductive Health Initiative (PARHI) project covers six districts namely, Saptari, Mahottari, Rautahat, Dang, Dandeldhura and Kapilvastu. In the case of scholarships provided by UNFPA under PARHI, the scholarship budget is released by the UNFPA project office to the districts (currently it is in six districts and targets 800 girls) after they send in their certificate of expenditure (COE). At the district level, a committee chaired by the LDO, including the DEO, the PDO of UNFPA and other relevant officials, looks after the project activities including the scholarship scheme. A focal person from among the DEO personnel is designated to oversee the operation, including the monitoring and evaluation, of the UNFPA scholarship. At the local level, the SMC is responsible for selecting and distributing the scholarship.

WFP

WFP provides support under their Global Food for Education Initiative and Food for Education are *material support to individual students and their families*. WFP has been providing food to school children and an additional incentive of vegetable oil to mothers whose daughters attended school on 80% of the total school days. With the aim of increasing

access to basic primary education so as to achieve the national goal of education for all, currently public primary and lower secondary schools in stipulated districts are supported through FfE (Grades 1-5) and GFEI (Grades 1-8) (see Appendixes for the names of the districts).

The districts selected for inclusion in these programmes are known districts in terms of food insecurity according to national data. Vulnerability Analysis Map, a continued assessment programme of WFP, has also determined the current programme districts as food insecure districts with negligible exception. More important is which areas and locations within the district will be selected. All the selected schools situated in the district headquarters will be excluded from the next fiscal year (2006/07).

Together with a midday hot meal of *haluwa*-fortified blended food (maize, wheat and soya), sugar, iodized salt, vegetable ghee and a monthly take home ration of 2 litres of vegetable oil per month for the families of girls with 80% or more attendance, a de-worming programme is in effect in FfE and GFEI target districts. With the aim of improving the health and nutritional status of about 450,000 students, de-worming tablets are distributed twice a year to FfE and GFEI districts.

The reason for selecting *haluwa* is that it is considered less attractive to adults and, therefore, of less public interest. *Haluwa* is also traditionally acceptable for children. Moreover, it is easy to prepare at school where logistics is a huge problem. Oil was selected because it is a high value commodity and easy to transport. A household survey was also conducted by WFP in Doti and Dandeldhura in this respect. Options were given to each household and oil was the most preferred choice.

There are three sub-regional offices of WFP located in Nepalgunj, Dandeldhura and Kathmandu. Previously, the Food for Education programme of MOES had a separate office in the district but later it was merged with the DEO. The office had become a mere food distribution office and the FfE programme began to be viewed as an isolated activity. It was not understood in relation to its overall educational impact. The DEO had other incentive programmes as well and was responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the educational impact (enrolment, retention, etc.) of its incentive programmes. Therefore the FfE programme was moved to DEO. Temporary staff took care of the FfE programme under the supervision of the District Education Officer. However, those who left were not replaced by new staff. As a result, the team in the district began to shrink resulting in fewer hands to facilitate and monitor the scheme at the district level. This situation on the one hand and significant contribution of the Government to FfE on the other, the WFP personnel argues for MOES/DOE's lead in identifying and deciding the target area and target

population. In doing so WFP personnel think that MOES/DOE will be utilising the FfE programme more extensively to achieve EFA goals by linking food support with education.

The selection of schools and quotas for the midday *haluwa* programme is done by the steering committee chaired by the Secretary of the MOES. However, decisions are made as per the information provided by the FfE unit within the respective DEO. The following criteria are considered while prioritising schools for the FfE programme:

- schools situated within the area of maximum risk in terms of food insecurity;
- catchment areas with disadvantaged communities or having a minimum school enrolment rate from such communities;
- schools with comparatively less enrolment rate of girls,
- schools in the area/region targeted by other educational reform initiatives;
- public or community schools registered with HMG/N and having no profit making intent and
- legally registered pre-primary schools.

Food is delivered by WFP to the district headquarters. The DEO with the help of project staff from the MOES manage the delivery of the food from district headquarters to the distribution centres. According to the understanding, the MOES and WFP each pay 50% of the total cost of transportation and handling from the district headquarter to the distribution centres.

According to the activity guidelines (WFP & HMG/N, 2004), it is mandatory for each school under the project to constitute a Food Management Committee (FMC) in order to transport the food from DCs to the schools, cook the food properly and distribute to the target students. In order to make the FMCs more effective WFP has contracted local NGOs in 2003 to mobilise the committees, make them aware and enable them to take responsibility for transporting and cooking the food. This pilot initiative is in effect in Surkhet, Nuwakot and Baitadi. WFP is yet to determine whether involving NGOs in FfE service delivery is more effective or not. In the meantime, WFP in collaboration with REDP/UNDP and ESAP/DANIDA, has been supporting schools to build improved cooking stoves to cook the meal at school.

In the case of the GIP, a vegetable oil distribution card is issued by selected schools on the recommendation of the respective teacher. Girls who are present 80% of the time are eligible for the GIP monthly take-home incentive. Not more than two daughters from one family

attending the same school are eligible. The distribution of such a take-home rations is carried out only in the months with a minimum of 10 school days.

A district level committee under the chairpersonship of the DDC chairperson has been formed. The DEO and the CDO are also the members of this committee. The WFP representative (from the sub-regional office) is also a member but his/her participation in the school selection meeting is not mandatory. Applications are sought from the schools. Schools that are interested, and show a desirable degree of commitment and are located in food insecure areas are selected. Schools are supposed to submit a profile, including the impact of the mid-day meal and the number of students, when they apply for next year's support. The committee should evaluate this report and sign agreement with each school each year. According to WFP personnel, in reality this has hardly happened, and thus the same schools are continuously receiving support under the programme without signing the mandatory formal agreement with the school and DEO/FfE unit.

Monitoring and reporting is divided between the schools, the DCs, the FfE project monitoring officer in the DEO and the central agency. At the district level, for the last two years, a WFP paid staff has been assigned to each district with the primary responsibility for food security assessment. They also monitor schools situated in and around the VAM sample community. They do not necessarily visit all the schools receiving FfE support. Similarly, the FfE project monitoring officer in the DEO is also responsible for the overall monitoring of the programme in the district. Keeping records of relevant information and reporting to the line agencies are essential tasks of the monitoring staff. However, they too primarily concentrate on the food distribution and management. Similarly, guidelines related to storing foods, food distribution from DCs, and the midday hot meal distribution are regarded as the major areas for monitoring in the programme at the local level.

DDC

Considering the context of poverty and the high cost of schooling for poor families in Nepal, it is assumed that *monetary support to families* encourages families to send their children, especially girls, to schools. Upon this assumption DANIDA has been giving monetary support to DDCs to increase girls' participation in schools in Surkhet and Doti districts. Thus the criteria for the selection of students under this scheme is purely based on economy.

To manage this scholarship, a seven member Girl Child Scholarship Programme Mobilization main committee was formed under the chair of DDC President. Other members include the Vice President of the DDC, women representative member of the DDC, the DEO, the WDO, and District advisor. The DDC Secretary acts as the member secretary of the committee. After this, a village-level selection committee is formed by the district-level

committee in order to make the selection process equitable. The village-level selection committee must consist of at least one female teacher. The village-level selection committee recommends the names to the DDC. The DDC sends the recipients' names to DEO in order to avoid duplication.

Under these schemes, the scholarship money is deposited to the DDC fund. Two copies of the identity card of the recipient is made; one is kept at DDC and the other by the recipient. Each recipient must also produce a letter from the school confirming her Grade promotion when collecting the scholarship money. Training and orientation programmes are also conducted for recipients' parents in order to orient them about the proper use of scholarship money and about the importance of girls' education.

This scholarship scheme was implemented in four phases starting from 2057/58 B.S. (2000/2001 A.D.). This is the last year of the scheme. Those who are currently receiving the scholarship will continue receiving but a new phase will not start.

The monitoring of this scholarship scheme is the responsibility of the DDC. In Surkhet, a *Dalit* NGO was contracted to monitor and evaluate the scheme in 14 VDCs in 2003. The DDC also sends its personnel to monitor to the respective schools and VDCs.

UNICEF

UNICEF, through the DACAW project, has been providing material incentives to disadvantaged students. The incentive includes school bags, uniforms and registration fees. In 2004, two hundred and forty-four children (girls and children from disadvantaged communities) from Kaski, Tanahu and Nawalparasi received such incentives. The recipients are usually Out of School Children Programmed (OSP) graduates, but the project is not limited only to them. School enrolled children have also received support. In the same year UNICEF, together with the DEO and VDCs, developed the education matching fund in 21 districts, specifically to cover the cost of uniforms, stationary and registration fees for girl students. Similarly, 250 disadvantaged children (68 boys and 182 girls) from two remote villages in the same district were also provided with school supplies and school entrance fees.

The selection of recipients is done entirely at the district level in collaboration with the DEO, DDC and partner NGOs. UNICEF sends the budget to each district annually. Each November a joint review meeting is held at the district level. The DEO is present in the education related review meeting. Based on that review, the next year's planning is done. The district DACAW project committee, based on the information and situation of the

district, decides the amount of the scholarship/incentive for the next year. Sometimes the DEO requests the DACAW to supplement the Government's scholarship.

Additionally, UNICEF together with WFP, has been providing material support to students and schools in 90 VDCs in eight conflict affected districts namely Humla, Kalikot, Jumla, Mugu, Dolpa, Rukum, Jajarkot, Bajhang and Bajura under the GIP.

To conclude, most of the scholarships are intend to increase enrolment, rather than retention and completion of the desired level of schooling. In the initial stages, such scholarships and incentives can play an important role in bringing out-of-school children to school. Perhaps effective monitoring systems and other in-school and out of school supports that have a direct link to the performance of recipients, help to enhance the value of scholarships. Although the relevant documents (MOES, 2004 and 2005; WFP, 2003) pertaining to scholarships and incentives have identified monitoring indicators, still most of the indicators (MOES, 2004 and 2005;) are merely based on enrolment status. In a nutshell, reviewing the different types of scholarships and incentives, with respect to the amount given to each individual recipient and the criteria for selection, it appears that Government has been prioritising the education of girls and children from disadvantaged communities. For example, apart from clearly labelled scholarships such as *Dalit* and girls' scholarships, the selection criteria for other scholarships is aligned with the notion from supporting girls and children of disadvantaged communities.

However, some very critical questions are still unanswered: To what extent does the amount given to a recipient cover his/her cost of schooling? To what extent are the stipulated criteria specific? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that selection is carried out as per the criteria? Which types of scholarships/incentives are most effective in addressing the issue of participation of girls and disadvantaged children in education?

Research Studies Related to Girls Scholarship/Incentive Programmes

Obviously, policy-makers, donors and flagship activists argue that scholarships and incentives targeted at girls and children from disadvantaged communities have a significant impact. But can we say that all scholarships and incentives produce positive results? Do they reach the target group? Do they really make a difference to the lives of recipients? In which circumstances can they operate effectively? Keeping these questions in mind, this section looks at previous research studies and tries to connect the findings and methodology related issues.

Quite a few research and review studies related to girls' incentive and scholarship programmes have reported the effectiveness of such schemes in terms of quantitative indicators such as enrolment rates, attendance and promotion rates. A recent review study (WFP, 2005) reported an annual 5% increase in the girls' enrolment rate since 2001 in GIP sample districts. Furthermore, the same study has compared GIP and non-GIP districts with respect to the attendance of girls and promotion rates and reported that GIP districts possess a better numerical index than the non-GIP districts. In this sense, the GIP can be justified as a supporting factor in increasing girls' enrolment and attendance. The report also quotes local stakeholders expressing positive opinions about the GIP initiative.

A study carried out by CERID (2003) in Khotang, Parsa, Kapilvastu, Nawalparasi and Darchula reported an example of non-receipt of incentive amounts by girls because their names were missing from the list. Aimed at exploring the extent to which incentive programmed – Educational Incentive Programmes for Girls (EIPG), *Dalit* Scholarship, and Primary School Scholarship for all girls – have increased the participation of girls and children from disadvantaged communities, the study reported various reasons for the low participation of girls in education including early marriage, religious reasons (the Muslim community preferred Madrasas to public schools) drop-out, the use of children for household chores (particularly in the case of occupational castes such as *Kami*, *Damai*, *Chamar*) and insufficient classroom space. The study reported an average annual increase in the enrolment of girls of a 25.8 % in the study districts. EIPG whereas the statistical indicators pertaining to the impact of *Dalit* Scholarship programme were found to be less. However, statistical results do not often reflect the 'what is happening part' of the intended programme. While it becomes a matter of impact, a long-term trend together with inside stories can help probe the level of impact.

Drawing on the notion of scholarships as behaviour modifier, UNESCO (2000) has defined incentives as 'something used to modify behaviour of individuals or groups of individuals in the interest of achieving a particular goal "in a study on the viability and usefulness of incentives to promote girls' participation in primary education in Pakistan. Based on 546 respondents the study reported that 49% of respondents termed the incentives useful. Although other numerical evidences, such as enrolment and retention, were not reported, perceptions of students, teachers, parents/community members, and field managers were both positive and negative towards the incentives. Other findings, especially related to the management of scholarship schemes, include weaknesses in the Government management system; delayed schedules of programmes, an unfair proportion of budgets allocated to programme management and incentive schemes; and weak coordination among various agencies working in the area of girls' incentive schemes. Although the survey method is popular for finding background information about the studied phenomenon, it sometimes

may mislead. the respondent because of the disposition towards the text and the person who approached for the field information. Similarly, survey questions based solely on opinions do not probe the reality that is the other side.

Describing the various incentive schemes of the Government and other organizations, not including the FfE and GFEI, aimed at improving girls' education, CERID (1998) in its *Evaluation and Review of Incentive Schemes to Encourage The Participation of Girls and Women in Basic Education (Phase I)* found that incentive programmes are not effective in terms of enrolment and attendance of girls in schools. Substantially based on the survey method, the study recommended restructuring the quota of scholarships according to the number of girls studying at the primary level. Using field-based methods the study further unearthed socio-cultural biases, although some issues were raised, that were hindering the effectiveness of various schemes. However, when CERID (1999a) carried out the *Phase II* study in the same area, the findings showed that the incentive programmes had a positive impact with respect to the enrolment of girls at the primary level. In relation to the management-related issues and problems, the study recommended some measures, including community awareness raising and social sensitisation to increase girls' participation in education. Furthermore, the same study raised the issue of social audit to monitor the effectiveness of girls' incentive schemes.

With the objective to find out how effective incentive schemes are to explore the uses of scholarship money by recipients, to collect the opinions of guardians and education personnel towards girls' incentive schemes, and to identify the expectations of the beneficiaries, CERID (1999b), referring to five major incentive programmes – primary school scholarship, primary school girl scholarship, nutrition programme in primary level, free textbook, and scholarship for *Dalit* students – reported that a need-based approach to setting up and distributing incentive schemes was essential. The study, quoting various respondents, used the term 'messy situation' to signify the reality of multiple, vaguely defined, poorly managed and unmonitored incentive schemes. In its recommendations, the study highlighted the need for a participatory approach in order to mainstream girls according to the culture of education.

Looking at the effectiveness of *Dalit* scholarships, various problems such as inadequate incentive quota, untimely delivery of scholarships, and delayed information about students were reported in a study conducted by CERID (1999) for MOES. Furthermore, reports of unavailability of records of the *Dalit* population, even in the Dalit Committee, indicate a messy situation which by no means represents the envisioned system of functioning at the local level. Perhaps this is the result of a lack of monitoring. Or perhaps it is a result of a gap between centre-based planners' and administrators' and local committees members'

understanding of record keeping? With a recommendation of an alternative programme for out-of-school *Dalit* children, the study suggests creating a local scholarship fund in coordination with the VDC, school and DDC.

A study carried out by WEU/BPEP (1997) reported that about 75% of head teachers selected poor and intelligent girl students, as opposed to girls who come from educationally deprived families, and castes and ethnic groups, for scholarship and 66% of recipients used the money to buy educational materials. Basing the entire study on the survey method, the study did not have any scope for the in-depth exploration of issues related to the functioning and impacts of scholarships. WEU/BPEP (1996), in its second study entitled *A Study on Women's Education Scholarship Programme*, aimed to assess the functioning and impact of scholarship programmes for girls and women. With the use of survey-related tools, the study reported that the drop-out rate for the recipients was less than that for non-recipient; the majority of the recipients were from an agriculture background; and that recipients were interested in continuing with higher education and entering the teaching profession. In another study, WEU/BPEP (1995) aim at monitoring and evaluating the scholarship programmed, it was found that a) only 16% of the recipients were *Dalit* girls; b) 93% of recipients were from families with an agriculture background; c) no mis-use of scholarship funds was reported; d) about 74% of recipients were found to be spending their scholarship on education related things and only 10% reported giving it to their parents for household expenses; e) teachers and schools were found to be the main sources of information on scholarships for girls; and f) the main problems with scholarship distribution are related to the selection of girls and delayed arrival of instructions and the scholarship amount. Although the study was designed according to the survey method, it has raised some pertinent issues about the local-level functioning of scholarships, communication channels (paraphrased), and the management of scholarship schemes which could help inform policy-makers.

In an evaluation study of scholarships and dress distribution programmes for primary school children, CERID (1986) found that uniforms were not distributed on time, beneficiaries were not well aware of schemes; the distribution of uniforms and scholarships was unjustified; scholarship money was not used properly; and some schools did not receive incentives at all. In its recommendation, the study talks about making all beneficiaries aware of scholarship schemes; the formation of local-level committees to enhance monitoring; and making girl students and their parents aware of the proper uses of incentive money. Issues related to the local-level functioning of scholarships, local perceptions towards scholarships and socio-cultural situations preventing girls from benefiting could be explored in order to look into the surface results.

To conclude, two issues appear at the fore, showing a connection between the design and the findings of various studies. Although most of the reviewed research studies reported a positive impact by girls' scholarships on the face value data, various issues, problems and questions remain unanswered. In most of the reports, the increase in the enrolment rate has been presented as the key indicator of positive impact. Such an interpretation does not represent a holistic view of impact because the term itself entails rather a multidimensional meaning. In the case of the functioning of the various schemes, most of the studies reported anomalies with limited information. Richly presented contexts could help policy-makers to draw a map of the functioning of scholarships at the local level, and thereby help them to reformulate and/or strengthen existing functioning mechanisms. Indeed, uncovering the local issues relating to scholarships, the local perspectives towards such schemes, the cultures that help interpret scholarships and the conditions under which they operate are essential in order to establish complete findings. Though various research studies tried to report (albeit shallowly) a number of issues related to the functioning of incentive schemes, a systematic explanation of functioning at the local level and effectiveness through local eyes was left unexplored. For this, the methodological design demands a sociological and issue-driven inquiry, for which the present research has been designed.

PART THREE

EXPERIENCES FROM THE DISTRICTS

Part Three has three sections divided according to the study districts visited. Three to five schools were selected in each district. This part of the report discusses the scholarship/incentive situation in each district with specific examples from the selected schools. Examples are also drawn from case studies of selected girls who have been receiving scholarships/incentives. Part Three basically gives a picture of scholarship/incentive schemes by the field researchers as encountered. Part Three will assist in building an understanding of the ground reality of the scholarship/incentive schemes described and discussed in Part Two. The analysis and interpretation appear in the final part of this report.

Types and Management of Scholarships/Incentives

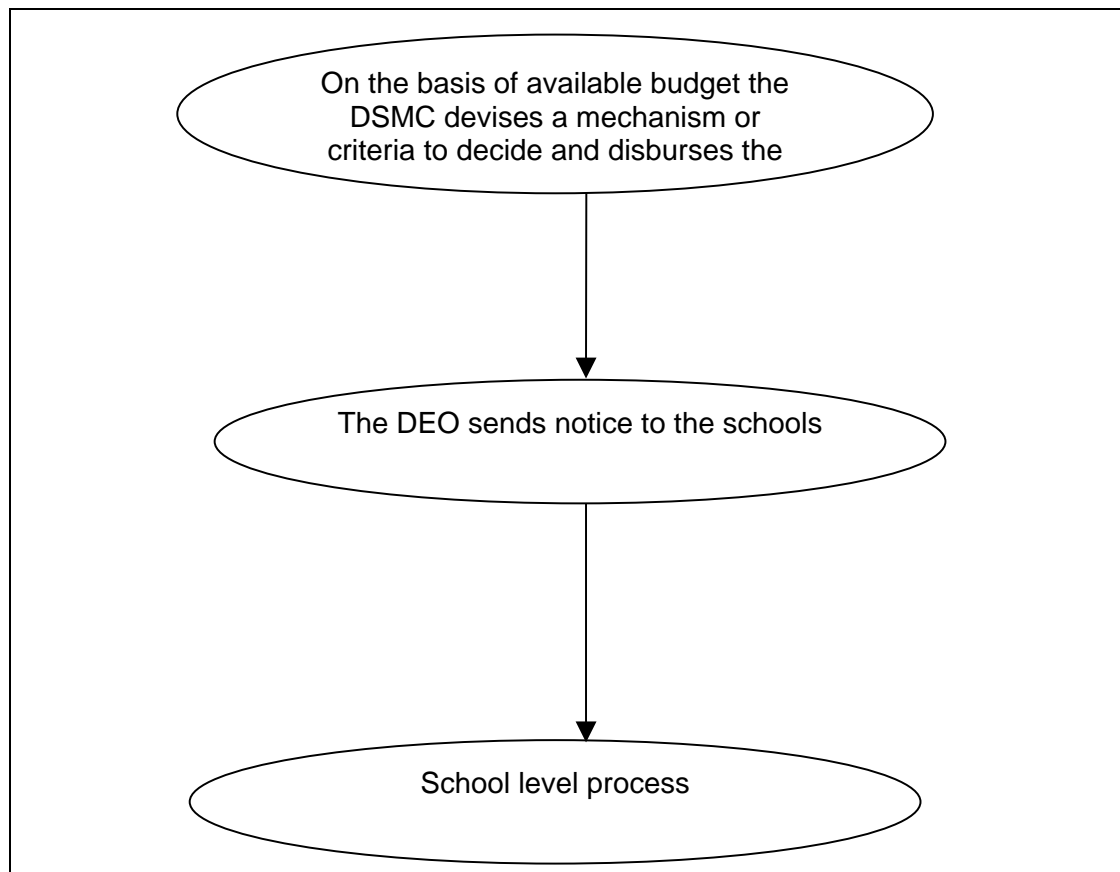
A variety of scholarship/incentive schemes are available in the study districts – Rasuwa, Surkhet and Saptari (see Appendix 1). These schemes can be generally grouped into five broad categories – the Government scheme, UN agencies' scheme, NGO/INGO scheme, school scheme and individual/family scheme. One scheme which did not fit into any of the above category was DDC scheme provided to the girls through DANIDA. This scheme was available in Surkhet. Likewise there is one Feeder hostel in Nuwakot the adjoining district of Rasuwa. Therefore this hostel covers Rasuwa as well. Eight quotas are allocated to Rasuwa in this hostel. The nature of these scholarship/incentive schemes have been discussed in the previous section.

In the case of the Government/MOES schemes districts always face challenges. As specified in the guideline prepared by the DOE, in all three selected districts DSMCs are formed. Although the DEOs play a significant role in the distribution and management of scholarships/incentives, the DSMC makes the decisions regarding the allocation of available scholarship money to the schools. Usually, schools are asked to send school statistics by 7th Jestha (May), the second month of the Nepali calendar and of the academic year. The statistics should consist of a grade-wise, caste- and ethnicity-wise, and age-wise description of the student population. DSMCs base the allocation on these statistics. But children keep on coming for admission months later. The schools can't deny admission to these children. Therefore schools can't provide the exact number of potential recipients by 7 Jestha. On the other hand, due to other reasons (i.e., technical, geographic, etc.) sometimes DSMCs don't

receive the data on time from the schools. In this case they have to make a decision on the basis of the previous year's enrolment data. On top of all these difficulties, the districts usually receive inadequate funds for scholarships from the centre. Therefore, they have to devise some other mechanism or criteria to distribute funds to the schools.

Regarding individually established scholarships, and schools' own scholarships, the criteria in all three districts is merit based. Such scholarships are provided mostly to upper Grade students starting from Grade eight and are solely managed by the schools. A common process applied to disburse funds from districts to schools is reflected in the Figure 1.

Figure 1: District level process of disbursing scholarship funds to schools



Three patterns (Figure 2) were identified in the selection of recipients of the MOES/DOE provided scholarships/incentives. In all three patterns, the primary responsibility for selecting the recipients rests with the teachers and head teachers.

Figure 2: School level process of selecting recipients

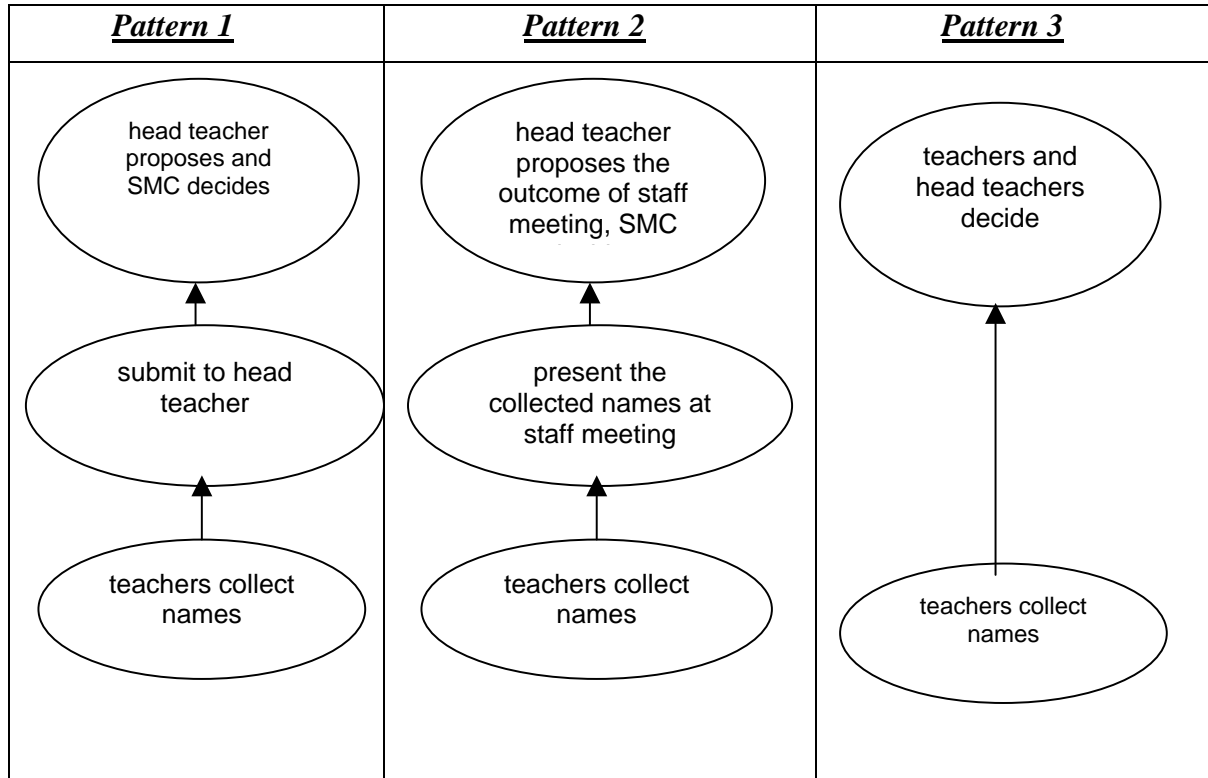


Figure 1 and Figure 2 indicate that there may not be a uniform criteria when it comes to allocating scholarship money to schools and to students. Although the hard data was not available, according to teachers interviewed from selected schools, the drop-out rate among recipients is negligible.

Section I: Rasuwa District

As it is their programme, the provision of finance and staff should either be done by the DEO or by the WFP itself. The teachers should not be overloaded.

Profiles of Committees and Schools

The DSMC of Rasuwa district: The DSMC of Rasuwa district comprises six members under the chair of the DEO. The Committee also includes representatives from disabled and *Dalit* organizations. Ethnically, there is no representation of *Janajati*. Except for one *Dalit* member, all members are Hindu upper castes. Including the committee chairperson, three members are from Government offices (DAO and DEO). There are no women in the DSMC of Rasuwa.

The processes of SMC formation: The process of SMC formation is in line with the Education Act. First, a parents' general assembly is organized by the previous SMC on behalf of the school. Candidates are elected only if the number of nominees is more than required. For instance, if more than two women are interested in candidacy, there is an election. All parents are qualified to cast vote. This procedure was adopted for SMC formation by all three schools studied.

School Profiles

School A: School A is a secondary school (Grade 1-10), situated in the district headquarters and five minutes walking distance from the DEO. The school was established in 2035 B.S. (1979 A.D.). Altogether, the school has 16 teachers – 5 female and 11 male. Eleven of the teachers are *Janajatis*, four of them are *Brahmin* and one is a *Dalit*. The total number of students enrolled this year (2005/2006) is 326. Geographically, the school is divided into two sites: the primary section situated below the main road, and the lower secondary and secondary sections (6-10 Grades) situated above the road. Thus, the teachers and students from the primary section rarely mix with those from lower secondary and secondary section as they have separate spaces for their playgrounds and for teaching. Ethnically, all the members of the SMC of School A are *Janajati* and three are *Tamang*. The Committee currently does not have a teacher representative or a representative from the Ward, but there is a woman representative.

The school represents the *Tamang* community as the majority of students in the school are from the *Tamang* community. However, a few *Brahmin*, *Chhetri*, *Newar* and *Dalit* students

are enrolled in the school. For this reason, the school is highly influenced by the local feasts and festivals of the *Tamangs*. During Lhoshar, Buddha Purnima and other local festivals the school remains closed.

School B: School B is a lower secondary school (Grades 1-8). This school is situated in Laharepauwa VDC which is quite far from the district headquarters. The school is an hour walking distance from Pasang Lahmu Marga (road.) that leads to the district headquarters at Dhunche. The school was established in 2039 B.S. (1983 A.D.). According to the DEO, the school has the highest number of students in the district. Altogether, the school has 337 enrolled students: 155 girls and 182 boys (in the 2005/2006 academic year). Out of 10 teachers three are female and seven are male. The school represents a multi-ethnic community as the school has *Tamang*, *Brahmin* and *Dalit* students. There are seven members on the SMC of School B. Unlike School A, six of these members are upper caste Hindus including the chairperson, and one is a Lama. There is also one woman on the committee.

School C: This is a primary school situated in Dhaibung VDC. The school was given a temporary permit on 4 Magh, 2050 B.S. (January/February, 1994 A.D.) and received permanent approval on 10 Falgun, 2052 B.S. (February/March, 1996 A.D.). Although it is far from the district headquarters, the people here are educated and the place is more developed than the district headquarters and other remote places. The school is very near Pasang Lahmu Marga. The number of students is not so large as there is a higher secondary school only 7 minutes walk away. There are five teachers: three are female and two are male. Two of them are *Janajati* whereas three are upper caste Hindu *Brahmin* and *Chhetri*. The school has 121 students: 55 boys and 66 girls. Most of them are from the *Janajati* community while a few of them are *Dalit*, *Brahmin* and *Chhetri*. The five-member SMC of School C has three upper caste Hindu members while the chairperson is from *Janajati*. There is one woman on the committee.

Scholarship/incentive management and institutional arrangements

The DSMC manages the distribution of scholarships in Rasuwa. The DEO is the chairperson of the Committee. There are eight other members in the Committee. The Committee develops the criteria used to distribute funds to schools and students, but the DEO is the one who is responsible for the timely disbursement of scholarship funds to the schools.

At the school level, SMCs are responsible for selecting the recipients. It was reported that head teachers and teachers are also involved in the process (as shown in Figure 1). This was the case in all three schools studied. The schools primarily follow the criteria set by the

DEO/DOE. However, not all respondents found the selection procedure or criteria justifiable. Contradictory opinions are found. For example, one DEO official said that *"the criteria for selecting eligible children is very clear and precise. It is based on family economic status and the intelligence of the student"* but the interviewed teachers from School B unanimously voiced that *"the criteria is vague in the sense that intelligent students may not necessarily be poor and vice versa"*.

In the case of scholarships incentives provided by ACA Nepal (previously known as ACA Japan) schools authorities are given the responsibility of selecting the recipients. The amount of this scholarship is Rs.3,500/- per recipient per year. To collect it the recipient must go to the central office of ACA Nepal in Kathmandu.

Regarding the management and distribution of incentives granted by WFP, the schools in Rasuwa district collect some money from the students. For example, School B collects Rs.10/- per recipient per month for the transportation of vegetable oil and Rs.7/- per student for the management of the mid-day meal. The collected money is utilised to hire porters and meet the extra burden of cooking and the cost of helpers in the schools.

Functioning of scholarships/incentives

Target: Although many respondents agreed that the available scholarships/incentives have reached the needy, not all needy children have been able to enjoy the support. As reported, the main reason for this is the inadequacy of the funds. For example, in School A, some parents and non-recipient students were not satisfied with the provision of the Government scholarship. Even the teachers, particularly primary level teachers from the same school, blamed the head teacher and the SMC members for ignoring some deserving students. One of the teachers said that Laxmi, an intelligent student who is first in Grade8 and whose economic status is very miserable, should receive the scholarship but has not received any kind of Government scholarship. Laxmi in fact has been receiving support from a former Peace Corps volunteer, but she also thinks that she should receive the Government support as well. She has reason for this belief. Laxmi's friend Ranju has been enjoying the Government scholarship as well as a Peace Corps

Laxmi asked the head teacher why she was not granted the scholarship. She was told that she came from another VDC (i.e., Yarsha) that is why she didn't receive the scholarship. When asked why some outsiders receive and the head teacher did not respond. Laxmi said that she has difficulty in buying kerosene to study at night, and in paying the examination fees. Laxmi revealed that Ranju Rai who has been receiving similar support from a Peace Corps Volunteer also receives the Government's 'Freeship' scholarship.

volunteer's support. Ranju, as reported by teachers, is an active girl who participates in, as well as organizes extra curricular activities at the school. She also teaches dance to the juniors.

In the case of School A, some community members think that some of the recipients do not qualify for the scholarship, while others who do qualify are not getting it. The former resource person who is not currently employed, argued that most of the recipients do deserve support but a few others who also deserve support are left out.

The situation in the other two schools was different. The parents, teachers and students interviewed are satisfied with the selection process in Schools B and C. The non-recipients at these schools were also satisfied with the scholarship distribution procedure. They said that they do not receive the scholarship either because of their poor grades or because they are boys; some have sisters receiving support. The community members of School C, however, simply said that the teachers and head teacher are good, and that they have full faith in them. The community members of School B also thought that the recipients were genuine and/or qualify for the support.

Nirjana, a ninth grader from school A is a *Dalit* girl living with five family members under the same roof, two brothers, her mother, father and herself. Her father is a tailor and her mother helps him in sewing clothes and prepares food for them. One of her brothers is a driver who frequently visits home and brings her exercise books, pens, pencils, etc. On Saturdays she sews clothes to give her parents some relief. She says that she is not only inspired by the scholarship but also by her teachers and parents.

Schools B and C also attempted to grant the scholarship according to teacher and head teacher-defined socio-economic status and intelligence of students, with some adjustment. For instance, one girl child from every house is granted the scholarship in School B. But if a house has more than one daughter, the most intelligent one, and preferably from a junior grade, is provided with the scholarship. However, the SMC chairperson from the same school argues that the provision of scholarships should be based either on family economic status or intelligence. To support his argument he mentioned the names of current and previous *Dalit* ministers and questioned whether their children should get the scholarship instead of poor children belonging to other castes.

However the recipients change each year for no reason other than inadequate funds. In School A, for example, only four of the recipients from 2059 BS (2002/2003 A.D.) continued receiving the scholarship in the following two years. School A distributes the

scholarship on a 'turn-basis'. The current recipients thus are not hopeful of receiving the scholarship in the coming year.

One thing in common among all three schools is that those who fail are not granted the scholarship, except in the case of the *Dalit* scholarship, the handicapped scholarship (available only in School A) and the girls' incentive.

Effects: Since the incentives have reached the targeted population, girls' enrolment and their school attendance have increased in the selected schools, according to the teachers. The school statistics also shows an increase. For example, in School B, there were 111 girls in 2059 B.S. (2002/2003 A.D.), 138 in 2060 B.S. (2003/2004 A.D.), 151 in 2061 B.S. (2004/2005 A.D.) and 155 this year (2005/2006 A.D.). When asked how they know that the increase is because of the scholarship, some teachers argued that the provision of the *Dalit* scholarship has resulted in an increase in the enrolment of the *Dalit* students (boys and girls). According to the school statistics, it seems that this positive change has been brought by the GIP as well. The interviewed parents are also interested in sending their daughters to school. Teachers from School B unanimously said that, *"the girls, these days, are more regular and punctual than the boys"*. Further, a scholarship recipient from School A said that she normally does not miss classes except when she is sick. Her parents also encourage her to be regular. The head teacher from the same school also claimed that the recipients are more regular, punctual and disciplined than the non-recipient.

Scholarships/incentives, however, are viewed both positively and negatively. One of the recipients happily said, *"My household works and the burden has been reduced, divided and shifted to my brother. For example, me and my brother together cut grass for the cattle"*. The majority of parents send their daughters to the school regularly, otherwise they will not get vegetable oil. When asked why only girls are given the scholarship a boy from School C bluntly said, *"To avoid our social discriminatory traditions against girls"*.

In Kamala's (Grade 3 <i>Dalit</i> girl from School C) family, because of their financial situation and lack of food, the scholarship and incentives are of great help, not only for her studies but also for her family's sake.

Regarding the *Dalit* scholarship some come to claim it as a birth right, said some teachers and head teachers. A teacher from School C, referring to another school in Rasuwa, relayed an incidence in which a *Dalit* student joined three schools simultaneously. However, the SMC chairperson from the same school, who is from the *Brahmin* caste believes that the *Dalit* scholarship further intensifies the existing discrimination in society. His viewpoint to some extent exemplifies the experience of some *Dalit* students. These students do not want

to be labeled as *Dalits* through the scholarship provision. Many *Dalit* students interviewed from all three schools were reluctant to specify the kind of scholarship that they receive. They prefer to say just ‘scholarship’ not '*Dalit* -scholarship'. When asked the reason why they received the scholarship many of them said, "*Because we are disciplined and good*". The scholarships/incentives based on caste and ethnicity may make students and community members more aware of upper caste and lower caste divisions and potentially perpetuate discriminatory behaviour, said some teachers and SMC members.

The head teacher of School A claims that the performance of recipients has improved, but teachers from the same school contradict his point of view. They say that no significant change has been observed. The head teacher of School B also believes that the scholarship only makes students obedient, but not necessarily responsible, in their studies. In his opinion there is a risk of students becoming dependent if the scholarship is provided regularly, and they may come to always expect something from others once they are accustomed to receiving scholarship.

Pipal Maya is happy that the scholarship has inspired her to work hard but says that Rs.500 is too little to meet her total educational expenses

Parents are aware of the benefits of sending their daughters to school regularly. But there is still doubt about their awareness and motivation about the long-term benefits of educating girls. It appeared that they are rather inclined towards the immediate benefits that their daughters' education will bring home. One of the parents from School B whose son studies in a science college in Kathmandu said that he will only educate his daughter in a local higher secondary school, even if she performs at par with her brother. This indicates that parents are interested in their daughters' education but are still not sure of sending their daughters away from home even for educational purposes.

Procedure and impact monitoring

The monitoring of the distribution process and the impact of scholarships/incentives is understood to be the responsibility of the providers. For example, the monitoring of the Government provided scholarship should be done by the DEO, including the WFP's GIP although WFP is involved in periodic monitoring. The DEO officials said that the responsibility for monitoring is given to school supervisors and RPs. But teachers from one of the visited schools said that no supervisor had come to monitor so far. The monitoring of scholarships/incentives in Rasuwa, however, seems to be the most neglected part of the

whole process. No one seems to shoulder the responsibility. Partly because of the current situation of conflict, people responsible are afraid to visit schools. A supervisor, when asked why he and his colleagues don't perform monitoring, simply replied that the situation is not in their favour in terms of security. It was reported that they usually visit nearby schools, but not regularly. The school teachers complained that the supervisors usually make ad hoc decisions about the programme without understanding the situation thoroughly. As their visits are irregular and inconsistent, they make hasty decisions, said a group of teachers. One of the supervisor's comments may support this experience of the teachers. He said, "In a parents meeting, we proposed to buy uniforms for scholarship recipients with their scholarship money. We suggested this because some parents often used their children's scholarship money to meet family expenses". Some of the teachers from the selected schools said that they found some parents using scholarship money to buy cigarettes or alcohol or to meet family expenses. However, parents interviewed from the same schools denied this accusation. They said that they have never misused the money and whatever their children wanted to buy, they bought; referring to both educational and non-educational objects.

In the case of FfE and GIP, several actors (DEO/FfE officials, the FMC, and assessment (VAM) of WFP) exist in Rasuwa. However, the teachers bear the primary responsibility in both of the selected schools where FfE and GIP are provided. The teachers and school community seem to take it as some added burden. This burden may have undermined the benefits of the programme. *"As it is their programme, the provision of finance and staff should either be done by the DEO or by the WFP itself. The teachers should not be overloaded"* voiced the teachers and the FMC members of School B. But the DEO/FfE official said that *"the problems at the local level should either be managed by the FMC or the teachers themselves"*. According to the WFP, the primary responsibility for food management is with the FMC.

Barriers/constraints

One problem that may stop or discourage girls or parents from claiming these benefits is the lack of information provided to parents about the availability of various kinds of scholarships/incentives. The parents and community members interviewed were largely unaware of the various scholarship/incentive programmes. The DEO officials reported that the budget is not released on time and consequently quota division (dividing the allocated scholarship money between the number of recipients) and the allocation process (managing the distribution from the district to the students) are delayed. This prevents the DEO from informing all of the potential recipients on time. On the other hand, some schoolteachers

complained that even when the budget is released on time from the centre, district officials do not take prompt and timely action.

Regarding the hostel situated in the Trishuli Higher Secondary School, Nuwakot, nobody from Rasuwa applied for the hostel incentive this year (2005/2006) to receive the available eight quotas. A community member said that a girl from Dhunche, Rasuwa fell pregnant while staying in the hostel last year, therefore, parents did not allow their daughters to apply for the hostel incentive. However, the DEO personnel opined that nobody applied simply because the hostel is not in the district and students, therefore, may find it inconvenient to stay away, leaving their parents behind.

Communication mechanisms

The modes/channels of communication involved in the implementation of scholarships/incentives are governed by managerial and institutional factors linked to the central level. This has made the communication modes/channels inadequate with respect to the access of incentive-related information by people at the local level. In practice, a radio announcement is made to inform parents about the *Dalit* scholarship. However, schools do not receive adequate funds to cover all *Dalit* students. In this situation although the communication seems to be appropriate, in reality it doesn't serve the parents' purposes.

The DEO officials said that a notice is posted on the wall of the DEO and that the letters are sent to every school indicating the categories of and quotas for scholarships. Similarly, according to the teachers and head teachers, the schools also post a notice on the notice board and call parents to receive the scholarship money. Most students, however, do not know what kind of scholarships they are receiving or who the provider is. It is very unlikely that they know how much they are entitled to and for what purpose. In the case of the FfE programme, recipients and their families are not fully aware of the purpose or intention of the support.

In the FfE programme, it was found that the food commodities are delivered to different DCs and the goods are then taken to the schools by the teachers and the FMC members. The FfE official sets different dates for the delivery of goods to different DCs. The school teachers themselves visit the DCs on the distribution day and get the necessary information from the FfE officials who are present at the DC. If the date for food delivery is altered, the teachers/schools are informed by letter in the local newspaper. The DCs are quite far from the schools. The teachers from School B reported that they have to walk a long distance to reach the DC to complain or inform the authority about the programme.

Section II: Saptari District

I have four children in this school. Only Santosh got money. I expected at least to receive support for Ashok who is disabled. (Paro Devi Ram)

Profiles of committees and schools

DSMC of Saptari district: The DSMC of Saptari district comprises six members under the chair of the DEO who is nominated by the Government. The Local Development Officer (LDO), the Teachers' Union representative and the Higher Secondary School representative are among the other members of the DSMC. The DEO is the Member Secretary of the Committee. There is no representation of women and *Dalits* on the DSMC of Saptari.

The process of SMC formation: The process of SMC formation is performed according to the Education Act (Seventh Amendment). A parents' general assembly is organized by the previous SMC of the school. As reported by parents and school teachers, an election is rarely held. Most of the committee members are appointed unanimously. All of the parents are qualified to vote. However, out of five schools visited, only one had a functioning SMC.

School Profiles

School A: School A, a higher secondary school (Grades 1-12), established in 2003 B.S. (1947 A.D.) is located near the DEO in Rajbiraj, the district headquarters. Currently, there are 601 boys and 459 girls at this school. There are 18 male teachers and 7 female teachers. The student and teacher population represents multi-ethnic groups such as *Singh, Kayastha, Yadav, Rajak, and Musahar*.

School B: School B, a higher secondary school (Grades 1-12) established in 2048 B.S. (1992 A.D.) is located in western Saptari about 30 kilometres from the headquarters. The school is close to the highway. There are 569 boys and 426 girls in School B. There are 14 male teachers and 2 female teachers in this school. Female teachers teach at the primary level only. School B is also a multi-ethnic group of students. Although *Tharu* ethnicity dominates the student population, *Paswan, Musahar, Bishwakarma, Gupta, Singh, Yadav, Tamang, Khan* and *Chamar* are other major groups attending this school. This school has a functioning SMC and the chairperson is a *Newari* man. Other members included local ethnic groups.

School C: School C, a primary school (Grades 1-5), established in 2025 B.S. (1969 A.D.) is located south-east of the district headquarters. It is about 17 kilometres away from Rajbiraj, the district headquarters. There are 490 boys and 392 girls at School C. There are 7 male teachers and no female teachers. This school alone has 882 students, which is much higher than the previous years, according to the head teacher. As a result School C suffers from inadequate physical facilities. The student population includes *Yadav, Paswan, Khan, Bishwakarma, Singh, Gupta and Kayastha*. The hill tribes such as *Tamang, Bishwakarma, Brahmins* and *Chhetris* are less in number. There are some *Muslim* students in School C as well.

School D: School D, a secondary school (Grades 1-10), established in 2008 B.S. (1952 A.D.), is located about 25 kilometers south-west of the district headquarters. There are 907 students at this school. Out of them 496 are boys and 411 girls. There are 12 male teachers and 2 female primary level teachers. One of the teachers in secondary level is *Muslim* community. This school is also comprised of multi-ethnic groups – *Yadav, Singh, Gupta, Paswan*, and *Musahar* being the majority among the students population.

School E: School E, a secondary school (Grades 1-10) established in 2015 B.S (1959 A.D.) is situated in Sambhunath VDC, about 5 kilometres from the East-West Highway and about 31 kilometres from Rajbiraj, the district headquarters of Saptari. There are 1015 students at this school; 537 are boys and 478 are girls. There are 14 male teachers and 2 female primary level teachers in School E. *Tharus* are in the majority among the student population in this school. Mainly *Gupta, Singh, Yadav, Paswan, Bishwakarma, Saha, Musahar, Doom*, and *Chamar* attend this school. The school is surrounded by a brick wall.

Scholarship/incentive management and institutional arrangements

As per the rules of the DOE/DEO, Saptari also has a DSMC which sets the criteria for of scholarships/incentives distribution and makes other necessary decisions regarding the scholarship fund. As the number of potential recipients exceeds the available funds, the DSMC has to come up with different ways to fairly distribute the fund. For example, the case of *Dalit* scholarship, which is supposed to be provided to all the *Dalit* students, is not enough. Therefore, the DSMC in Saptari used the following formula to decide how much each school should get.

$$S = Z * R = 0.53 * R$$

Total quotas available for Saptari district *Dalit* students of primary level = X = 15,571(as per the record)

Number of admitted students in Saptari district *Dalit* students of primary level = Y = 29,229
(as per the available record)

$$Z = X/Y = 0.53$$

Number. of *Dalits* in a particular school = R

Number of quotas available for that particular school = S

In the case of the Girl Student Scholarship (i.e., scholarship for 50% of girls) as the amount is inadequate, all the selected schools gave priority to girls performing well academically when distributing it. Likewise, in School A and School B, the Freeship scholarship from SESP is also distributed on a merit basis for the same reason, according to school authorities.

In the case of the UNFPA scholarship, the responsibility for selecting and distributing the scholarship is given to school authorities. Nevertheless, a focal person has been assigned at DEO to look after the UNFPA education programme. According to this focal person, recipients of this scholarship should represent the underprivileged and educationally and economically backward communities.

The UNICEF DACAW project also provides material support to OSP graduates wanting to go to school and those already in school. The project's district level education committee, in which the DEO is also a member, decides the recipients.

At the school level, as in other districts, the school authorities select the students. The head teacher, teachers, and *Dalit* representatives (in the case of *Dalit* scholarship) jointly decide who should get the scholarship/incentive. All of the visited schools, except for School B, had no functioning SMC. Thus, the decisions about the recipients are solely made by the head teachers and teachers. Due to the absence of SMCs, making decisions about the beneficiaries and the distribution of scholarships are viewed as an added burden by the head teachers and teachers. Most of the teachers and head teachers interviewed opined that there should be a separate programme for scholarships with additional management provisions including human resources. For example, the head teacher of School D said, "*It is too much work for us. It is so hard to convince the parents who are not benefited by this kind of support. Look at this crowd* (pointing to the crowd of people outside the office)." He further added, "*I think HMG should have a different unit to deal with this programme.*" Even in School B, where a SMC exists, the chairperson and the head teachers admitted that decisions are made by the teachers not the Committee. The head teacher of this school said, "*School staff make decision about who shall receive the different types of scholarship programmes. We have an SMC which is also involved in the selection and distribution procedures*".

The nature of the scholarship itself was not acceptable to some teachers and head teachers interviewed. The head teacher from School A said, *"The Girls' scholarships scheme gives us a great headache. Parents are not using this money properly. Had HMG supported all of the schools equally with the amount of Rs.2,000,00/- per year and provided Free-ship scholarships for all, it would be more effective"*. A teacher from the same school further added *"If we distributed material rather than money it will be more effective"*. In response a DEO personnel complained that *"Once, one of the head teacher distributed school dress instead of Rs.250/- per recipient because he owns a fabric store. He made each recipient sign the receipt of purchase for the uniforms. Some of the parents complained to DEO. The DEO sorted this problem out with some negotiation and gave directions not to distribute in kind"*. He also complained of witnessing cases where the RPs and head teachers together misused the scholarship fund.

Regarding the disbursement of the fund, the DEO instructed schools to distribute the money from the schools' funds to be reimbursed later, but the schools did not agree to do so because they were sure that they would not receive adequate money. The head teacher of School D showed a letter from the DEO and said, *"I received this letter on the fifth of Bhadra 2062 B.S. (August 28, 2005 A.D.). According to this notice I have to distribute first installment of the Dalit scholarship for Grades 1 to 5 from the school's resources on the occasion of the National Children's Holiday, 4 Bhadra 2062 B.S. (August 27, 2005 A.D.) and that amount will be refunded later on. I went back to the DEO office and found out from the notice posted on the board, the available quota for my school which was less than what my school required. What would be the situation had I followed the letter?"* Regarding this issue a DEO official said, *"You don't know any thing about them. They will sell you in the market. This is not a big deal. They just needed an excuse"*.

In the case of UNFPA, according to the focal person, due to the death of the father of the DEO's accountant, the scholarship has not been distributed this year. The UNFPA district officer also admitted that, due to some problem, the scholarship fund has not been transferred yet.

Functioning of scholarships/incentives

Target: As in other districts, the scholarship money has reached the target population with a few exceptions. Yet there is room for improvement of selection, distribution, monitoring and evaluation procedures. The selected schools lacked statistics about the recipients, their admission and drop-out

Gita Rajak, a fifth grader from School B, gave first installment of her scholarship money to her mother. Her mother handed it over to her father who bought her decent dress from the money.
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trends along with beneficiaries according to the scholarships that they have received. A list of recipients provided by School B is only for this academic year. The list, however, does not specify the type of scholarship that each recipient is getting; and this is the school with functioning SMC.

Similarly, the head teacher of School C claimed that "*Scholarships have reached poor, talented, disabled and Dalits. I already have made the list with my staff. We are going to distribute the scholarship very soon.*" The list was not available on the first visit to the school. It was during the second visit that the list was provided. Giving example of the criteria, the head teacher said that, if there is more than one child coming to his school from the same family, only one is given the scholarship.

Non-recipients also want to receive the scholarship. But their grudge is against the system but, not their recipient friends or neighbour's children. Both non-recipients and some recipients found the criteria irrational. In one discussion the respondent referred to a case where a *Dalit* girl from a well-off family received the scholarship but another *Dalit* girl from a very poor household did not. Some non-recipients' parents thought that the criteria should purely be based on performance.

This school is number one school for the UNICEF project. We doubled the number of *Dalit* students in comparison to the previous academic year before the Booster Scholarship programme.

If only I could continue receiving the scholarship I would study higher and take care of my family. (Pooja Biswakarma, a fifth grader) from School C)

Some parents of recipients are, however, not happy because not all of their children received the scholarship money. They think that the head teacher and teacher are not fair. A man whose grandson, Sajan Kumar, has been receiving the scholarship thinks that his grand daughter, Manju, should also receive it. He was referring to the *Dalit* scholarship and said that the "*Government gave for all. I cannot trust the teachers. They do not call a parents' meeting to form the SMC or to select recipients*". On the other hand, a teacher from the same school where Sajan and Manju study said that they can not make everybody happy. He also complained that parents come just to ask for money but do not send their children to school regularly.

As official records of recipient are not available in the schools, it is almost impossible to determine who is getting what, how much and why. For example, Saraswoti Kiran Chaudhary, first girl in her class from grade 10 in School E, said that she received Rs.900/- but Jyoti Prabha Chaudhary, from the same school and same grade but third

I am very thankful to the Government and teachers who provided my girl with this support, because I am *Dalit* and poor. (Father of a girl studying in School A)

in the class, received Rs.1,200/- Neither of the girls knows what kind of support they receive and why that amount or who provided it. The school authorities were not available for verification. It was, however, reported that Jyoti Prabha Chaudhary is the daughter of a former MP from Saptari. If this connection influenced the scholarship distribution, no-one knows.

Regarding the UNFPA support, no-one was encountered in the schools visited who claimed to have received the scholarship. The school also could not provide any records. School E should have been able to provide such information, but could not.

I have four children in this school (Shree School E Secondary School). Santosh only received money. I expected at least to receive for Ashok who is a disabled. (Paro Devi Ram)

Effects: Those who received scholarships/incentives were happy, but some boys did not want to be labelled as *Dalit*. A sixth grader reported receiving money from which his mother buys stationary for him, but for so little money he did not want to admit being a *Dalit*. Similarly, an eighth grader also did not like being called a *Dalit*. But some others were happy to receive it as they are poor talented *Dalits*. However, recipients are not sure whether or not they will receive support next year, but are hopeful.

Usha Kumari is not hesitant to ask her brother to help their mother with the household chores. She said she asked him to do so before receiving scholarship money. Similarly, another recipient, Pooja Kumari Bishwakarma of Grade5 at School C said, "*I help my parents to sweep the floor but at the same time I ask my brother to bring water or to get the vegetables from the garden.*"

The head teacher of School C has mixed feeling about the disbursement process as well as the impact of scholarships. He complained that the, "*parents ask for money now but I had to send the list at the beginning of this academic year. Parents feel it is their right to get money because they are poor and Dalits. They don't see it as their duty to develop educated human resources in their own home. They send their children as an object but not to fulfil the objective of quality education*". Some teachers from the selected schools also complained that the parents do not use scholarship money for their children, but rather for their own purposes.

"It is a great help for me and my parents because they are poor and I can't work like my other siblings. I wanted to help them a lot. Now I feel that after the completion of my studies, I will be a teacher and able to help my family. This support has inspired me to continue my studies. Now my parents will have less tension about my studies." (Usha Kumari Bhagat, a disabled girl from Grade 4)

Nevertheless, some of the respondents observed a change in girls' participation and confidence as a result of scholarships. The head teacher of School B said, "*we have seen a*

lot of changes with the scholarship programmes. Girls' participation and their performance in class activities are admirable. In the last year's S.L.C results, out of three toppers of this school, two were girls". One of the teachers also supported the head teacher's observations with regard to improvements in girls' confidence, enrolment and regularity. However, which kind of scholarship brought changes to which group of recipients still needs to be explored.

Scholarships/incentives have attracted more children but the schools don't have the capacity to serve them all. The schemes have raised awareness about the need for education among the *Dalit* community. Some parents during their interview stated that as they don't have any other resources (land, house, or other kind of property) education perhaps is the only means of survival for their children. But how much of this awareness was generated by the scholarship/incentive schemes is yet to be established.

"I am not happy to get it as a *Dalit* student. I don't like it when people say that I am a *Dalit*."
(Somendra Kumar Paswan)

Procedure and impact monitoring

In Saptari, monitoring/evaluation of the management, distribution and impact of scholarship schemes has not been institutionalised. The presence of different kinds of schemes belonging to different agencies has also created confusion regarding the sharing of responsibility for monitoring. According to a DEO official, the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation are given to the school supervisors. In response, one of the head teachers of the visited schools said that a supervisor had visited his school once in the past and he had submitted the list of recipients and vouchers at that time.

The UNFPA scheme, also puts the responsibility on the other. The UNFPA coordinator, when asked about the monitoring of her scheme said, "*We have given full authority to our focal point. We have an agreement that we provide extra support even for monitoring and evaluation purposes*" When asked if she had tried to see what is happening at the school level she said, "*I cannot do it because I am tired of asking for a vehicle from the central office. I have to look after four kinds of projects including the PARHI project. So, it is not possible for me to travel on a tempo or a bus to visit each school.*" The UNFPA focal point, on the other hand, questioned, "*didn't you ask them why they are here? It is easy to blame others, but they should see how difficult it is to deal with the school authorities*". The district officer of the UNFPA has not been able to monitor or evaluate the scholarship programme.

The contradictory responses regarding the utilisation of scholarships also indicates that the concerned agencies and officials have inadequate knowledge of the functions and impact of

the schemes. The parents claim that they buy uniforms or stationary for the recipients, while the teachers, as mentioned earlier think, that the money is not properly utilised.

Barriers/Constraints

The barrier/constraint regarding the scholarship/incentive scheme in Saptari is primarily the inadequacy of the fund. The Government's inability to provide support to all of the target children as announced has created problems at all levels – the DEO, the schools and with the parents. In this situation each has enough reasons to blame the other. The DEO officials say that the budget is not released on time. They complained that they have to face severe pressure from the schools but they cannot do much unless the fund arrives. On the other hand, not receiving accurate statistics from schools, on time, is also viewed as a constraint by them. *"School teachers always wait until the last moment to submit the list of recipients and that list usually comes after we have asked for the quota from the central level. Still we do not get the quotas that we ask for"* they added. As a result, schools have to either allocate accordingly to a criteria different from the original one, or divide proportionately among the eligible students.

In this situation, from the perspective of the recipients, once they are selected there is no difficulty in obtaining the money. But the money provided is hardly enough to meet educational expenses (examination fees, stationary, uniforms, etc.)

Communication is also an issue. Parents are either not aware of the availability of different kinds of scholarships, or not aware of the fact that they should act within a certain timeframe to be eligible for the support. Then head teacher of one of the visited schools said that the *"parents are coming to ask for support now", the fifth month of the academic year.*

Communication mechanisms

As in other districts, the availability of scholarships particularly the *Dalit* scholarship, is announced on the radio. The school authorities are informed about the availability of other kinds of scholarships either through the head teachers' meeting or letter/notices. The actual amount that is available to a school is often times posted on the DEO notice board. There is no mechanism to inform the community or parents about the scholarships. Parents usually learn about them through their school going children. A similar trend is found in the case of UNICEF and UNFPA scholarships. According to the recipients, teachers ask the students to bring their parents to receive money. Interviewed recipients from all Grades had no idea what kind of scholarship they are receiving or who is providing them with that money. But almost everybody knew about the *Dalit* scholarship. This is perhaps the result of the radio announcement.

Section III: Surkhet District

Sir, I am talented, I am always first or second, but other weak students get the scholarship. I do agree that Dalit and poor should be provided with scholarships but we should also be eligible. Roshani Hamal, a ninth grader.

Profiles of committees and schools

DSMC: The DSMC of Surkhet district is comprised of seven members (one position is currently vacant) under the chair of the DEO. The committee includes representatives from the DAO, DEC, DEO, DDC and disabled and *Dalit* organizations in the district. However, the representation of NGOs in the district is absent. It appears that, including the chairperson, four members are from Government offices. Ethnically, there is the representation of *Janajati*, *Brahmin* and *Thakuri* (a high caste *Chhetri*). There is also one woman in the committee.

The process of SMC formation: The process of formation of the SMC is in line with the Education Act (Eighth Amendment). A general Assembly is held and the SMC is formed. The people approved by the parents are selected for the SMC. The SMC tries to include *Dalit* and *Janajatis* as much as possible. A woman member is mandatory in the SMC. It was reported that the SMCs of all the selected schools hold a meeting once at the time of making decisions about scholarships.

The Schools Profiles

School A: School A is a secondary school (Grades 1 to 10). This is one of the oldest schools on Surkhet and was established in 2018 B.S. (1962 A.D.). It is situated in Latikoili VDC, a semi urban area. It takes 30-45 minutes on foot to reach School B from the main bazaar. There are currently 1004 students studying in the school. Out of 408 students in the primary level, 214 are boys and 194 are girls. There are 29 *Dalits* studying at primary level. The lower secondary level has 335 students; 171 are boys and 164 are girls. Among 268 students in secondary level, 137 are boys and 131 are girls. School A has 17 teachers, including two women from the Government quota, and six, including one woman – hired with the school own resources. There are 16 rooms in School A. Another Additional six rooms are not in a usable condition. In some Grades there are two sections. The school does not have enough furniture. The classes observed had only benches, no desks and students were having difficulty in doing activities including the writing.

The SMC of School A is comprised of nine members. A *Janajati* man is the chairperson of the SMC. There is one woman member, but no *Dalits*. Ethnically, the SMC is comprised of *Janajati*, and *Brahmins*.

School B: School B, a primary school (Grades 1 to 5) with a downward extension (kindergarten) is situated in Birendranagar Municipality, headquarters of Surkhet district. It takes 15 minutes on foot to reach School B from the main bazaar. The school was established in 2046 B.S. (1990 A.D.). The school is in a semi-urban area. There are 390 students in this school, out of which 232 are boys and 158 are girls. There are 157 *Dalit* students in the school. There are five teachers in the school. Out of five, three are Government deployed ones and two are hired from the school's own resource. In School B, three teachers are male and two are females. There are six rooms in this school, out of which three are permanent and two are temporary constructions. All six are used for classroom purposes. After the field visit the head teacher informed in a telephone conversation that the temporary rooms had collapsed and that the school is trying to rebuild them. In addition to these six rooms there is one office room and a kitchen. School B is situated in a *Dalit* neighbourhood. The student population comprises of *Dalits*, *Janajatis*, *Brahmins*, *Chhetris* and *Thakuris*.

The SMC of the school is comprised of eight members. The SMC contains *Dalits*, woman, *Janajati* and upper class Hindus like *Brahmins* and *Chhetris*. Chairperson of the SMC is a *Dalit* man and the woman representative is also a *Dalit*.

School C: School C is a community managed school (community handed over school) established in 2048 B.S. (1992 A.D.). It is situated in Birendranagar Municipality, the headquarters of Surkhet district. It is a primary school (Grades 1 to 5). There are 463 students in the school out of which 223 are boys and 240 are girls. Out of 99 *Dalit* students, 50 are boys and 49 are girls. There are 11 teachers, including four male teachers. Eight teachers are deployed by the Government and three are hired from the school's own resource. There are 12 rooms in this school. Out of these, one is used as an office and another one as a kitchen, the rest are used for classroom purposes. All of the grades, except Grade 3, have two sections.

The overall condition of the school looked well in terms of physical facilities and the teaching/learning processes. The SMC of School C is comprised of eight members. The members include *Dalits*, *Janajatis*, *Brahmins* and a woman. *Brahmins* are in higher numbers.

School D: School D is a high school (Grades 1 to 10) located in Chhinchu VDC. It takes one hour to reach the school by bus from the district headquarters. The school is situated on the

highway. The DEO personnel recommended that we select this school, and the field researcher was also interested to study this school because there are some *Badi* students who attend and who received Rs.5000/- as a *Badi* scholarship this year. But after a day's visit it appeared that the school was not willing to cooperate with the researchers. Moreover, the information regarding sscholarships/incentives was not readily available. The school seemed eager to cooperate but the researcher could not meet head teacher and accountant on the first day, so the researcher returned, and on the second day, the researcher found that the scholarship had not been distributed and that there were not so many students who had received a scholarship/incentive last year. So the researcher had to choose another school. Nevertheless, discussions with the head teacher and the teachers revealed critical issues which are included in the report where appropriate.

Scholarship/incentive management and institutional arrangements

Different processes are involved in the management of different schemes in Surkhet. Yet to manage the DOE/DEO scholarship, Surkhet like the other two districts, has a DSMC. Scholarships/incentives granted by NGOs and donor agencies have their own type of management system. In the case of the WFP Food for Education programme, the FfE/ DEO is responsible for selecting the schools, distributing food and monitoring the process (together with the WFP district monitor).

Due to the shortage of funds, the DSMC had to reduce the quota when distributing the scholarship money to the schools. According to a DEO staff, there is not any hard and fast rule about reducing the quota. *"This year we reduced quota from 30% to 33% for each school,"* he said. They did it on the basis of the total amount of money they received from the centre.

At the school level, the teachers and head teacher select the recipients and forward the list to the SMCs. The SMCs make the final decision about the recipients. It was reported in all the selected schools that cash is distributed to the students from the MOES/DOE scholarship/incentive scheme.

As the fund was reduced this year, schools are finding it difficult to distribute the money, said DEO officials. The schools were instructed to distribute the first installment of the scholarship on 4 Bhadra (Children's Day, August). But none of the three selected schools distributed on that day. In fact, School A did not even distribute the scholarship for the previous academic year. Instead the school spent the scholarship money on building a classroom. The assistant head teacher said that they would distribute the scholarship after receiving the money for physical facility improvement from the DEO.

The head teacher of School B said that her school has been distributing the scholarship to all *Dalits* although the school does not receive the full quota. One way of managing this, according to her, is to give the scholarship to only two children from one family, although there may be more children attending the school from the same family. This practice was observed during the scholarship distribution programme of the school which took place during the field research. But regarding the scholarship provided by (SAC), the head teacher of School B said that this is for conflict victims. But according to the SAC representatives the scholarship given to School B was not meant for conflict victims. This indicates a lack of proper communication between the school and the providers.

School D sent the School Statistic Form of 2062 B.S. (2005/2006 A.D.) to the RC at the right time but the RP demanded the form from the school again after some time. The head teacher said, *“we photocopied and sent the form three times but it did not reach DEO. The DEO thus allocated the quota on the basis of last year's statistics.”*

In the case of the WFP incentive, FMCs are supposed to pick up the goods from the DCs. However, it was reported that in many schools in Surkhet, FMCs are not adequately active. Some incidents that occurred during the field visit to some extent confirm this complaint. For example, during the field visit it was reported that the students of School B had not been getting the *haluwa* for a few days because the cook was sick. The students also said that some of their colleagues from class five do not eat the *haluwa* because it is not properly cooked. While in School C, students were having *haluwa* on their notebooks. When asked about this situation the WFP staff said that there is a problem with water in Surkhet, that is why children are using notebooks. The head teacher said that, initially, there were sufficient plates, but students took them home, therefore, only a few plates are left.

Nevertheless, in the schools visited FMC members carry the goods up to the school, prepare and feed the *haluwa* to the children, and also distribute the oil. In order to mobilise and make the FMCs more active, the WFP has been piloting a collaboration with local NGOs in three districts; Surkhet is one of them. In Surkhet, Sahakarmi Samaj was contracted and positive results have been observed, said the WFP Kathmandu-based officials as well as the field staff. According to them, in some cases parents are willingly contributing some money for the transportation of food from the distribution centre to the schools. School C, which is not covered by Sahakarmi Samaj, has also been collecting Rs.160/- per student, per annum for managing food. None of the three selected schools were covered by Sahakarmi Samaj. The organization is working in 12 remote villages where the researcher was not allowed by the locals to go due to security reasons.

Sahakarmi Samaj has been organizing capacity building programmes for FMC members of target schools. There was one of these programmes during the field visit. Thirteen to fourteen FMC members attended the training. According to these members the FfE/DEO announces the date for delivery of goods to the DCs in the Midwestern Broadcast Centre of Radio Nepal. But the FMC members say that they have returned many times without goods. In May/June and July/August of this year, goods were not delivered to some DCs. In order to carry the goods to the remote areas, the FfE office contracts a contractor. This process was delayed therefore the goods were not distributed in those DCs. The Sahakarmi Samaj representatives claim that, earlier, some cases of misuse of incentives were reported, but these days such incidence do not occur. They even told that when they first took this job, they were going to visit schools and in one tea stall they were served bread made from the flour provided by the FfE programme. The tea stall was using the plates as well provided by the programme as well. According to the members of Sahakarmi Samaj, no information was found about the four litres of oil provided to the FMCs to cook the food. They further said that the oil was utilised by the teachers who were managing the food programme. The members of Sahakarmi Samaj even said that they found teachers separating sugar from the flour and taking it home.

In Surkhet it was reported that many NGOs are distributing scholarships/incentives to school children. During the field visit some of the NGOs supporting students from the selected schools were visited. In Surkhet NGOs are the means for INGOs to reach the students/schools, as in most places in Nepal. For example, SAC is the mechanism for the implementation of Save the Children Norway's scholarship/incentive scheme. SAC has given full authority to the schools to select the children. According to the NGO personnel, the reason is that *"teachers know the real needy students"*. The incentive is distributed in the form of cash. The NGOs work closely with the schools but the primary responsibility for the management of the schemes is taken by NGOs themselves. For example, Aawaj initially collaborated with the schools in selecting and distributing the incentive. But they found cases where teachers recommending non-eligible students. Such incidents made the organization maintain direct contact with the students. All of the recipients have identification cards with enough space to record transactions. The students obtain recommendations from their school and go to Aawaj to collect their incentive, which includes educational materials. The amount of the incentive varies according to the recipient's level. Amount of Rs.700/-, Rs.1,000/- and Rs.1,200/- are allocated to each recipient from primary, lower secondary and secondary levels respectively. The incentive scheme implemented by Aawaj is provided by a Swiss based agency.

In the academic year of 2005/2006, 104 children from 34 schools were benefited by the Aawaj scholarship, and 726 students from 98 schools were benefited by the SAC scheme.

Regarding the schools' own schemes, different arrangements were found. School A distributes scholarships of Rs.150/- to students who secure 1st, 2nd or 3rd position in each grade, where as School C distributes scholarships to one girl and one boy who secure first position in the entire school. School C has given Rs.250/- to two disabled students as well this year.

The DANIDA funded DDC girls' scholarship, as discussed earlier, is allocated only to girls with economically difficult family situations. In other words, the criteria is only financial. Therefore, any girl, irrespective of their caste and ethnicity, is eligible. It was found that meetings are also held with schools and the DEO to avoid duplication. However, Arati BKa, a fourth grader from School C, has been receiving both the *Dalit* and DDC scholarship.

Functioning of scholarships/incentives

Target: The interviews, discussions and observation confirm that the incentives have reached the needy population in Surkhet. Both recipients and non-recipients agreed that the support has reached those who need it. But the beneficiary selection criteria and the institutional arrangements, particularly in the case of the DEO/DOE scholarship scheme, have created some discontentment. Some respondents complained that some deserving ones are left out. This issue is discussed in the following part.

Effects: Incentives in the form of food and oil are more effective in increasing girls' enrolment and attendance. According to the head teacher of School B, *haluwa* has stopped the trend of leaving school at lunch time and oil has persuaded parents to send girls to school. She further added that girls are more regular than boys because of the essentiality of 80% attendance to receive oil. But Government's monetary scholarship is not that effective because "*the amount is too small*", said most of the teachers, SMC members and the head teachers of the selected schools. For example, in the case of School B a student has to pay Rs.100-150/- in entrance fees, Rs.10/- per month for lunch and Rs.5/- per month for oil. On top of all of this, they have to pay exam fees and buy other educational materials including uniforms. It is reported that a similar system is in place in the two other schools as well. The beneficiaries of the Government scholarship complained that it was not enough to meet the school expenses.

Moreover, the school authorities also doubt that the money is properly utilised by parents. The FMC chairperson from School C said that some of the *Dalits* used most of the money from the scholarship to cook meat. The head teacher also agreed with the FMC chairperson's observation. A teacher from School D, however, did not agree with the accusation and said that "*joining hand and mouth is more essential than buying copy and pencil.*"

Regarding NGO provided scholarships, all of the respondents agreed that it is more effective. They agreed that the NGOs have the systems at the local level to follow-up and monitor the support. They said that the support is enough to meet major educational costs. Moreover, NGOs even drop those who are not genuine they added.

The beneficiaries of the FfE programmes are satisfied. But how much the intent of this support has been internalised by the beneficiaries is yet to be seen, because Some of the teachers interviewed, and the participants of the FMC training reported that, previously, some girls left school after Grade 5 because they would not get the incentive at lower secondary level.

All the interviewed beneficiaries were happy to receive support no matter how much or what kind of incentive it was. But the caste-based scholarship scheme is not acceptable to many. The head teacher of School B, referring to a case, justified her position regarding the criteria. She said, "*Dalits regard scholarship as their inborn right*". According to her, the SMC chairperson of her school is a rich *Dalit*, so last year she requested him to give the scholarship to another non-*Dalit* poor child and he

One of my neighbours sent his daughter to school enthusiastically but asked the son to remain home to do the work. (FMC chairperson attending the training organized by Sahakarmi Samaj)

agreed. Later his wife came and demanded that her child get the scholarship at any cost and said that they could give the scholarship to other poor child, but only after they received it. The head teacher thus questioned, "*in which sense Dalit : in terms of caste or in terms of economic status?*" The definition of *Dalit* in terms of caste is not right she said. "There are many non *Dalit* students poorer than *Dalit* students but they do not get any scholarship", she said in frustration. Furthermore, the non-recipient upper caste parents of School C also gave the example of the current *Dalit* minister and asked why the poor upper-caste children did not get the scholarship.

One Badi student at School A could not receive the Badi scholarship because he wrote *Nepali* as his surname. His mother said that he wrote *Nepali* because his friends teased him about being a Badi. But when inquired about this with the head teacher he said that the boy entered school with 'Nepali' as his surname in Grade 1 therefore he thinks that the mother lied.

Like the head teacher of School B, many other teachers and SMC members interviewed we are also not satisfied with the scholarship eligibility criteria. They are also against the caste based criteria. They said that many who earlier replaced their *Dalit* surname with other non-*Dalit* surnames have now changed their surnames back to the original *Dalit*. They did it when the Government announced the *Dalit*

scholarship. Some students are awarded the *Dalit* scholarship although they still hold non-*Dalit* surnames. As it is not difficult in the villages to find out who is who the surname does not really matter. The bottom line is that those who have *Dalit* surnames are sure to be eligible. Therefore, one Brahmin parent whose children go to School C requested the teachers to change his children's surname to a *Dalit* surname so that they could get the scholarship.

In order to change surname, the student should go to the VDC with a recommendation letter from the school. There are eight Badi students in School D. According to the teachers of that school, those Badi students used their original surname when they heard about the availability of the scholarship. Earlier they were using different surnames.

As the scholarship is awarded only to poor girls and *Dalit* students, some of the talented students may get frustrated said most of the teachers and SMC members interviewed. They opined that there is a need for such schemes for intelligent students as well. Roshani Hamal, a ninth grader of School A, became aggressive and demanded the availability of such scheme for intelligent students as well. She nearly wept and said, “*Sir, we are talented, we always come first and second, but other weak students get the scholarship. I do agree that Dalit and poor should be provided with scholarship but we should also get. Every time the teachers enter the classroom they ask only to Dalits and poor students to raise their hands. We have no right to claim.*” The head teacher of the same school also admitted that he had to recommend 10th grader unwillingly. He said, “*I know she is the weakest student in the class and she will not pass at any cost but I recommended her because she met the criteria.*”

There is another scenario where students do not want to take the scholarship as *Dalits* because their classmates tease them but their *Dalit* parents accept the scholarship positively. Gyanu's friends tell her that she receives the scholarship because she is a *Dalit*. She feels bad when her friends tease her. She thinks that it would be better if the scholarship was not distributed as a *Dalit* scholarship. Other *Dalit* students, when asked why they were given scholarship said, “*we are talented, disciplined, and regular so we get scholarship.*” However, many *Dalit* students from the schools visited failed once or twice. When asked, “*Weren't you granted the scholarship for being Dalits?*”, then they said, “*Yes*”.

The head teacher of one of the selected schools admitted that, “*We passed one recipient of the DDC scholarship to maintain her eligibility*”. But another girl from the same school did not receive the scholarship from last year as she could not get through he said. The head teacher of the same school also admitted that the school adds two to three days of attendance to make the girls eligible for oil.

All the interviewed teachers, head teachers, SMC members and the DEO argued that all of the incentives and scholarship have improved the quantitative part of the school education (e.g., increase in enrolment, regularity, continuity) but little improvement is seen in qualitative aspects. For example, Gyanu Basyal, a *Dalit* girl who is in Grade 5 in School B has been receiving the *Dalit* scholarship since Grade 1 and the FfE/GIP since Grade 2 but she failed once in Grade 4. Similarly, Arati Bka, a fourth grader from School C, has been receiving both the *Dalit* and the DDC scholarships. Her scholarship money has helped meet the educational expenses of her siblings as well. But Arati's performance has been going down. She secured first position in Grade 1, third position in Grade 2 and now she is not even among the top ten, says the head teacher. However, she is still considered a talented student by her teacher and always does her homework.

Procedure and impact monitoring

Two kinds of challenges are observed in Surkhet, as in other two districts, with regard to the monitoring of scholarship distribution and its effect/impact. One is associated with managerial and institutional arrangements. Another is associated with the current political situation. Both challenges seem to have affected the DEO/DOE scheme more than other schemes. One of the DEO personnel said *"there are two rulers according to the Maoists: the old ruler and the new ruler. According to them we are old ruler and they are new ruler. We regularly visit the schools in the old ruler area"*. Although the DEO also claimed that schools in accessible areas are regularly visited, one of the teachers from School D where the effect of the insurgency is much less said, *"School supervisors visit our school when they are on their way to Kathmandu"*. Other teachers from the same school, confirming their colleague's statement, said that it has been more than a year since the school supervisor visited their school. According to a former RP scholarship, monitoring does not seem to be a priority. He said, *"We never go to the school in order to monitor the scholarship. We visit schools with some other objective. If we remember the scholarship at that time, we talk about scholarship."*

Regarding the FfE, including the GIP, the FfE unit of the DEO is responsible for both the distribution and monitoring. However, in practice the unit is involved primarily in distribution only. The monitoring of food distribution is limited only to urban areas. The WFP/VAM staff do monitor schools regularly in accessible areas. He also confirmed that, due to security reasons, proper monitoring is not possible. But according to both the VAM staff and the FfE/DEO staff it has been learned that the FfE and other kinds of incentives have reached the target population in remote areas and have been properly utilised and, due to the fear of Maoists, teachers can not misuse the incentive money and goods. It is reported that as FMCs are inactive in many schools, teachers have to take the entire responsibility of lunch management and oil distribution. Only those FMCs Sahakarmi Samaj has intervened are doing better in terms of food management they said.

The NGO-led scholarship schemes are watched regularly to confirm the eligibility of recipients, their attendance and the utilisation of the incentives. The purpose of periodic school visits and/or monitoring is also to avoid duplication. If the recipients are found to be ineligible, they are dropped from the programme. Awaj also provides life skills training to their recipients. For example, Awaj provided training to its female recipients about violence and how to protect oneself from violence. On the other hand, SAC had to organize an awareness/orientation programme for the parents. Some parents of students whom the organization managed to enroll in the school last year began to demand the admission fees from the organization. *"The parents lamented enrolling their children earlier."* said an official from the Centre. Therefore this year the Centre conducted an awareness/orientation programme for the parents of some communities.

Barriers/constraints

The main barrier/constraint that may stop or discourage girls/boys and/or parents from claiming the benefits is lack of awareness about these schemes. Most of the parents of non-recipients interviewed said that they had no idea about the availability of scholarships, other than the *Dalit* scholarship.

Another barrier is that parents are afraid of teachers and of the head teacher's position. One of the parents in a group discussion said that they cannot inquire with teachers about scholarships. Another constraint is that the scholarship distribution time or date is not fixed. Although the DEO announced 4 Bhadra (Children's Day, August) as the distribution date, all but two schools visited had not distributed as at 27 Bhadra (September 12) School B had distributed the *Dalit* scholarship between the 4 and 27 Bhadra. This also left the parents unsure of what to expect.

Human error is another constraint. For example, School D sent the School Statistic Form of 2062 B.S. (2005/2006 A.D.) to the RC on time but somehow the RP demanded the form again after a while. Eventually, the DEO had to allocate the quota to the school on the basis of last year's statistics.

Communication mechanisms

The communication mechanisms vary according the type and provider of the scholarship/incentive schemes. Regarding the DOE/DEO schemes 4 Bhadra (Children's Day, August) as the distribution date of the *Dalit* scholarship, was announced in the Mid Western Announcement Centre of Radio Nepal. However, none of the visited schools reported distribution on that day. This not only raises issues about communication, but also about

coordination between institutions. In this case, between schools and the DEO. The schools may have valid reasons for not distributing the money on the DEO announced date.

DEO posts a notice on its notice board and also sends a letter as well to each school informing them about the amount and type of scholarship available to that particular school. But according to a former RP, last year the DEO did not send any letters to the schools specifying the amount of available for money scholarships. In that case the RP spelled out the total amount of money available in the head teachers' meeting. *"We did not have a clear idea about how much money was available for which type of scholarship,"* said the assistance head teacher of School A. However, this year the DEO did send letters to the schools specifying the amount of money. *"This may be due to the absence of RPs",* said the former RP.

Delay in budget release from the centre also indicates a gap between communication and action. After the budget is released, schools inform the students and call the parents to collect money. Most of the non-*Dalit* parents do not have any idea about the availability of other types of scholarship except the *Dalit* scholarship. *"We do not have any idea about the types of scholarship available and the distribution dates so we cannot claim the benefits"* said a parent from among the non-recipients of School A. The school authorities internally do the selection of recipients according to a criteria that makes it easier for them. As there is always a short fall in the fund they do not announce the availability of the scholarship to the parents.

Beneficiaries are also not satisfied with the communication mechanism of the FfE programme. The FfE programme cannot distribute the goods on time for several reasons. They normally broadcast the postponed date on radio but they never announced the cancelled date. One of the FMC members said, *"We had returned many times without goods and latter the radio informed the next date and we went again to collect goods on the postponed date. This has happened many times. We have to walk 5 hours to reach the Distribution Centre."* One day during field research FfE office said, *"Tomorrow is the distribution date for one centre but we cannot do so due to bandh."* When asked why then the office not announce it on the radio?" The FfE staff/DEO said, *"This is the duty of the officer (referring to the DEO) because he has the authority over finances and so on."* The DEO was in his office for the past few days yet the FfE officer didn't perhaps find it necessary to discuss this with the DEO. It is important to note that the FfE office is housed in a separate building; it is not on the DEO premises.

Regarding NGOs' communication mechanisms, they are directly contacted by their sponsoring agencies and they are also directly in touch with the beneficiaries. As this has reduced the bureaucratic chain, communication seems to be smooth and prompt.

PART FOUR

MAJOR FINDINGS, EMERGING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Section I: Major Findings and Emerging Issues

The main purpose of this section is to report a summary of the crosscutting issues emerging from the study. Although the primary basis for organizing such issues is as per the initial objectives, unanticipated issues and ideas emerging from the field are also presented. Specifically, this section presents issues related to the inconsistent understanding of the purpose of scholarships/incentives, managerial dilemmas, decreased scholarship quotas in districts, accessibility issues, the functioning of scholarships, communication dilemmas and monitoring. As a qualitative, exploratory study, such issues and dilemmas were expected and are discussed appropriately.

Inconsistent understanding of the purpose of scholarships/incentives

- The fieldwork revealed that the purpose of scholarship schemes is not clear. The documents regarding the MOES schemes clearly indicate that the primary focus of various scholarship, especially those intended for primary level students, is to increase enrolment and retention rates. However, the complaints of students and teachers regarding the under-performance of recipients, and even the withdrawal of the support from recipients who fail their end of the grade exam, indicate that people understand scholarships as per their literal meaning, i.e., as *a meritorious support to scholars*.
- While practices and perceptions captured at the field level present a state of confusion regarding the purpose of scholarships, the absence of a scholarship-associated performance indicator has caused many teachers to think of it as meaningless. While our education system itself still values merit-based performance right from the early Grades, scholarship schemes that do not consider improvement in educational achievement do not seem unjustifiable for local actors. The confusion of a head teacher of being compelled to select an under-performing girl for a scholarship scheme is a noteworthy example. Indeed, the conflicting realities can be explained by two contrary perspectives about education the meritocratic versus equity-based perspective. Perhaps the meritocratic perspective sees the value of education in the development of the individual in terms of her/his achievement and performance. On the contrary, the equity-based perspective places emphasis on fairness in input, process and output.

- A meritocratic perspective in school education may not help improve the access of girls and children from disadvantaged communities. While socioeconomic status is different, how can we demand the same performance from all students? It is equally true that unless girls and children from disadvantaged communities are supported, they cannot compete with the students who belong to privileged and well-off families. However, the issue of whether or not scholarships/incentives should be targeted to improve performance, along with access, requires discussion.
- The field reality confirms the long-standing notion that those who succeed on the formal education system are intelligent. Furthermore, those who are up in the social and economic ladder are the ones who are most likely to succeed in education. Therefore, the scholarship/incentive scheme has to be explained in the midst of the notion of intelligence and the success enjoyed by certain caste and ethnic groups.
- The issue of purpose is also linked to the amount of the scholarship. As some studies have shown, the cost of primary education (per year per child) is as high as Rs.5000/- The scholarship amount is very small compared to the actual cost of schooling, let alone the hidden costs. Although officially primary education is free, students are charged different types of fees. In this situation the intended priority of the scholarship amount is unclear. The issue of whether the money can be equated with education is also equally pertinent.

Dilemma in management

- The document review has attempted to institutionalise various scholarship/incentive schemes. In doing so, both the MOES and UN agencies have produced several guiding documents. However, these guiding documents have been prepared at the central level without adequate interaction with the field realities. For instance, in the case of Saptari where there is minimal trust among the stakeholders, the guiding documents do not seem to be able to address this reality. In essence, the guiding documents are guided by a single reality. Moreover, the fact that the primary stakeholders have perceived the schemes as an additional burden also indicates that the whole process of scholarships/incentives is centrally driven and it have not been institutionalised.
- In the Government, as well as in the UN schemes, one type of management system is in place for disbursing scholarships/incentives to the districts. Both schemes have a district level committee to decide the basis for distributing the incentives to schools. Generally, the criteria is based on the number of Dalits, girls and other

disadvantaged children claimed by the schools. However, especially in the case of the MOES, as the money is not enough to cover all eligible children, the DSMC has to come up with its own criteria to divide the available money between the schools. For example, Saptari has its own formula to divide the *Dalit* scholarship between the schools. On the other hand, at the school level, whether the SMC is functioning or not teachers and head teachers play an active role in selecting and deciding upon the recipients in all of the selected schools. Three models were witnessed in deciding the recipients at school level. Generally, those eligible, depending on the form of the scheme, are either *Dalits*, girls, poor or other forms of disadvantaged students. However, as the money is not enough to cover all of the eligible children the schools have to make choices as to who should get the support from among the eligible ones. In this situation, the preferences of locals (head teachers, teachers and SMC members) count. Local decision makers often select recipients on the basis of their own perceptions, world view, preferences and the availability of the fund. In other words, who is poor and deserving is based on their judgment. For example, an active student from Rasuwa is granted the Government scholarship when she is already receiving from other source. The same rule is not applied in the case of another girl. The level of trust among the parents and guardians in the process of decision-making thus varies.

- The absence of a uniformly accepted approach for deciding the scholarship quotas reflects the use of an ad hoc method. Teachers and head teachers have different opinions regarding the selection process which indicates a situation of disagreement regarding the non-selection of some deserving students. However, agreement on selected students as deserving ones does not substantially indicate partiality in the selection process. The only cause of dissatisfaction seems to be the limited fund, which is insufficient for the number of students.
- The view that the scholarship/incentive scheme is an outsiders' programme also surfaces in relation to the managerial dilemma. The field work clearly revealed that various incentive programmes have entailed extra managerial tasks for schools. Although the money that they receive may be less than the required amount, the different schemes need to be taken care of separately and this is added on to the traditional linear administrative and managerial tasks. On one hand, schools are not assured as to whether or not they will be considered for the same schemes next year by the Government, and on the other had, either the SMCs are not functioning at all, or not fully involved in school matters regarding the selection of recipients. The same situation is prevalent in the case of WFP schemes. The FMCs are not active in most cases. The uncertainty of, and the cuts in the fund, also affect the selection

of recipients making it more difficult for schools to face recipients' questions. The on-going grudges of non-recipients towards them also have to be endured. In this situation the teachers view it as a separate programme and an added burden. Therefore, it is unlikely that the schools will own the schemes and make a permanent system to manage and administer the scholarships/incentives schemes. But should they move towards developing a permanent system? Should scholarship/incentive be included in the SIP?.

- The FfE programmed, in which the Government invests substantially, is still not owned even at the central level. The FfE is considered as a potential contributor to achieve the EFA goals. The absence of any indication of this programme in the DOE documents, such as the draft of the Girls Education Strategy (2005) paper, gives enough grounds for justifying this argument. The fact that the FfE office is neither physically located close to the MOES nor close to the DOE, has also put it in a shadow within the total system. The programme office is still housed in the complex owned by the Social Welfare Council under which the programme was initiated. This has also, to a large extent, made the MOES/DOE not fully own and utilise the FfE to its maximum extent for the education sector.
- The centre-based decision to cut the budget is not communicated in a timely manner to the districts and schools level. Hence, the districts and schools only function as a distribution channel, rather than as an active partner of the system. Nor do they have any say over the scholarship scheme and they are not accountable to the recipients. This situation further puts in questions the Government's efforts to establish the decentralised management in education.

Political commitment versus ground reality

- The Government decisions indicate that all of the target students are provided with scholarships. The contradiction between political decision and the ground reality surfaced very clearly during the field work. The scholarship quota decreases every year without any reason. Target groups suffer from this as only those selected among them enjoy the support. The decreasing quota every year uncovers the contradiction between political commitment and the ground reality. Although the state has unveiled a plan to support the education of disadvantaged communities, the decreasing number of scholarships suggests the opposite.

Reaching the unreached

- As mentioned above under the managerial dilemma, with some exceptions, the scholarships/incentives have reached the target population. As the amount is not

enough to cover all deserving children the school authorities have to make choices, even among the eligible ones. In doing so, some deserving ones have to be left out. Nevertheless, the non-recipients' disagreement is not about who received but about the coverage and the criteria. Some teachers and head teachers also questioned the criteria.

- Lack of a proper data management system at the school level has prevented knowledge of the *who*, *when*, *what* and *how* of the schemes. This is true, especially, in the case of Government-aided schemes and the UNFPA scheme. It appeared from the field work that there is no systematic data collection, storage and retrieval system at the school level. The schools do fill out the forms to feed the central Education Management Information System (EMIS). The EMIS is guided by the centre and requires proper a data management system in place at the school level. However, the school personnel are not skillful enough to manage and properly fill out the centrally provided data sheet. The unavailability of appropriate data at the school makes it difficult to trace essential information both about eligible students and recipients. On one hand, the DEO requires a list of eligible students within the first month of the academic year, and on the other hand, parents' socio-cultural and economic situations, as well as the present conflict, make the schools accept and register students at any time of the year. Therefore, schools are often unable to provide the exact number of students needing support. The DEO, who does not get accurate data from the schools, has to rely on the previous year's data. This situation has contributed to inconsistencies in the information and, hence, a gap between the allocated quota and the actual number of eligible students. In addition, the academic and fiscal years begin in different months. If the quota is not determined within the first month of the academic year, the DOE is unable to disburse the funds to the districts within the current fiscal year which expires by the end of the third month of the academic year.

The functioning of scholarships/incentives and the issue of motivation

- The field observation and respondents' perceptions lead to different possibilities regarding parents and recipients' motivations for schooling. The parents' and the students' motivations are associated with their socio-cultural and economic contexts. Moreover, student motivation is further associated with his/her status and/or position in the family and the potential monetary support that they get from the incentive schemes.
- Uncertainty among recipients about whether they will continue receiving the scholarship in the following years has left them puzzled and confused. If money is

the catalyst that brought them to school then there is no guarantee that they will remain in school. Hence, the aim to increase the retention rate is in jeopardy.

- It was observed that recipients are regarded highly by their families after they receive the scholarship. They are respected and their ideas are valued. The case in Surkhet, where a family stopped sending their son to school and started sending their daughter, implies the notion of scholarships as earnings for families. The case of a disabled girl from Saptari also implies the same. In this situation, the motivating factor in sending daughters and sons to school is the money. Is scholarship money or other forms of incentive an earning for the family? Will the children be directed towards other income generating tasks if the scholarship/incentive is withdrawn? What is the value of education to the family? These issues demand discussion at all levels, the centre, the district and school-level.
- Various instances were found where girls who bring scholarship money home are valued more than the boys in family decision-making. While talking about girls' scholarship schemes, however, the issue is not so simple. Their roles within the family, such as looking after their siblings, helping mothers with the household chores and helping families to support their income-related activities, are very important. The money they receive from scholarships might have been viewed as a substitute for their task at home. Therefore, they are freed from household chores to join the school. In these cases, how will the children be treated at home, and will they continue their schooling if they stop receiving the scholarship/incentive?
- The case in Rasuwa of the Feeder Hostel Scholarship seems crucial. Though there were eight seats for the scholarship, no one signed up. Similarly, a parent from the same district did not want to send his daughter to Kathmandu for higher education. The parental preference of sending boys away from home and keeping girls within the family represents the lived reality of these girls. Indeed, this situation further indicates the restricted mobility of girls as a result of parental culturally entrenched constructs about their daughters. The notion that the girls are vulnerable and require extra protection has hindered them from accessing multiple opportunities. This is a valid notion given the situation of a girl from Rasuwa who was in the Feeder Hostel in Nuwakot. Can this situation be improved by monetary support?
- The definition of *Dalit* itself is challenged by *non-Dalits*. On one hand, the *Dalits* claim the scholarship as their right, and on the other hand, especially the recipients, do not wish to be labelled as *Dalits* and want the scholarship to be named

differently. This situation reveals that the caste-based scholarship scheme has raised enough dilemmas that demand intra-caste discussions at the field level. However, various perceptions of the *non-Dalit* stakeholders seems to entail their implicit and explicit ideology of superiority. Their opposition to the caste-based criteria and support of merit-based criteria reveals their position as meritocratic as well as elitist.

Dilemma in communication

- The field study revealed that communication about scholarships/incentives is demanded at least in two different layers: among providers and between the provider and recipients.
- Most of the recipients are unaware of the purpose and the provider of scholarships/incentives. It is hard to find any situation where the schools made it clear to each student and their parents about the purpose and the provider of the scholarship. Parents and students from Saptari were less informed in this matter. Knowledge about the purpose and the provider of scholarships/incentives among parents and students becomes more relevant when a head teacher makes children buy uniforms from his own fabric store. A high performing girl from Surkhet who argued for her eligibility also indicates a lack of communication about the purpose and the provider of scholarships. The field realities indicate that knowledge about the purpose and the provider of scholarships help recipients to be aware of what they are receiving for, and what is expected from them, on one hand, and why one received, and others didn't, on the other hand.
- From a practical perspective, the gap in communication can be argued to be in favour of schools. The schools never know how much they get from scholarship funds. However, people think that everyone deserves Government support. In this situation, it is likely that informing all parents about the availability of scholarships is to invite an unresolvable tension.
- Regarding the communication the centre sending information to the districts and the districts to the schools, the communication is simply one way. In this situation, districts wait for the centre's order and the schools for the district's order. The chain of command is strictly followed. For example, a school alone discusses the scholarship/incentive matter with the SMC, not the DEO. In the case of UN scheme, the communication also seems to be one way and most of the decisions are made at the central and district levels.

- The announcement of postponement, but not of rescheduling, especially in the case of the FfE/WFP distribution, indicates communication of convenience on the part of providers, but of inconvenience to the stakeholders.

Dilemma in monitoring

- Two kinds of challenges are observed regarding the monitoring of scholarship distribution and its effect/impact. One is associated with the managerial and institutional arrangement, another is associated with the current political situation.
- Challenges associated with managerial and institutional arrangements emanate from the policy and practices of Government-funded scholarships. The school supervisors are expected to monitor the overall inputs to the schools. In this case, the teachers expect supervisors to monitor the scholarships/incentives as well. While dissatisfaction regarding the job of supervisors remains unresolved, what, and what not to, monitor, within the scholarship/incentive scheme is another challenge. ‘Who should’ and ‘what is’ are unresolved issues among the UN scholarship/incentive schemes as well.
- Although there are many areas to monitor, the monitoring related indicators are mostly numerical (DOE, 2004). The qualitative aspects such as functioning of scholarships, the performance of recipients and schools, and local practices are not considered as areas to monitor within the Government-funded scholarships.
- There is an EMIS at the central level. Systematic procedures have been implemented to feed data to the EMIS. The EMIS was not developed from the local level. It appears that, at the school level, the procedure is fulfilled just to meet the requirements of the central level. The absence of proper data collection, storage and retrieval system at the school level also justifies this observation. Separate records regarding scholarship recipients were hardly available in the visited schools. Record keeping appears to be sporadic in nature.
- The monitoring and evaluation system was not found to be functioning so as to account for the access and retention of previous scholarship schemes. With the absence of qualitative indicators it is even harder to determine whether, or how much of, the changes can be attributed to the scholarship/incentive schemes alone. The equally valid challenge here is who is to be monitored, the distributors (DEO, school, SMCs), or recipients or both?

Dilemma related to the impact

- A longitudinal study is required to determine the impact of scholarship/incentive schemes on both in the lives of recipients and the education system. This study has provided enough grounds to argue for such a study.
- While the notion of impact entails its literal meaning as the long-term effect of something, the issue of assessing the impact of scholarships opens up multiple challenges. One is that there is no guarantee that intended students receive scholarships for more than one year. The effect of education is not seen immediately. In this situation, when will be the appropriate time to assess the impact of scholarships? Secondly, there is a lack of constant monitoring, composite indicators and proper databases that could delineate the status of access, retention and the progress of recipients, it is hard to decide the positive or negative impact caused by scholarships. If there has been a positive impact, it is very difficult to give credit to scholarships alone.
- Gender equality in education goes beyond access and retention. It includes process and outcome as well. The gender goal of EFA is assessed on these grounds. Scholarship/incentives, which it is argued by DOE/MOES is a major initiative towards achieving gender equality in education, require a long-term qualitative impact assessment. Moreover, the gender-related impact assessment moves beyond the school premise. This study, however, did not reveal any indication of monitoring and evaluation of scholarships/incentives according to the operational framework of gender equality (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2003/2004).
- Assessing the impact of scholarships is a challenge because it is multi-dimensional in nature. For example, educational achievement alone can not be considered an impact of the scholarship because, as mentioned above, scholarships are also used as a source of income. For example, the DDC scholarship has been used by families to invest for income generation enabling them also to send non-recipient children to schools. In this situation, the issue of economic impact is essentially important. However, some questions are still there: Is the economic impact long term? How and when will the economic impact be assessed in relation to the educational impact?
- The above deliberations indicate that assessing the impact of the scholarship requires a long-term and multi-dimensional plan. Moreover, multiple and longitudinal data (both qualitative and quantitative) is required.

Section II: Implications

Significant implications can be drawn from the information, perspectives, issues and discussions presented so far in this report. Such implications are discussed in this section.

Recipient selection criteria

- The outcome of the research indicated that caste-based criteria applied to select recipients is not universally accepted. There is an indication that caste-based scholarships could further widen the 'labelling gap' among different caste groups. Specifically, in the case of the *Dalit* scholarship, the recipients did not want to be called *dalits* and *non-Dalit* recipients had the sentiment, that the *Dalit* students receive the scholarship simply because they are *Dalits*. This situation indicates the need for discussion among the school community regarding the purpose of scholarships. A locally justifiable criteria or norms need to be formulated in order to empower *Dalit* children, not only educationally, but socio-psychologically as well.
- As the centrally prepared criteria for scholarships is not fully accepted, it seems appropriate to allow schools and SMCs to develop a more justifiable criteria in order to maximise the positive impact of the support. However over-arching guidelines are required to ensure gender and social equity. Multiple realities encountered at the field level suggest an extensive interaction with the local level reality before preparing such over-arching guidelines.

Implementable monitoring mechanism

- The deconcentration notion of decentralization, in which the district and school-level authorities are simply authorised to allocate/distribute the money, needs to be revisited. The Government's activities have overt and covert agendas. In other words, monitoring that looks beyond the transferring of money from the centre to the students require expansion so that it will cover the implicit objective of scholarships/incentives, which is the overall quality enhancement of school education. In this case, an objective-based and participatory monitoring system is essential. While there is a need for an external monitoring system, school and community-based monitoring is equally essential.

Scholarship/incentive database

- Although this research did not aim to study the EMIS at the school level, the field investigation process revealed a situation where there is no proper/accessible data about scholarships/incentives at the school level. Even the number of scholarship

recipients is vaguely recorded. This situation indicates that a provision for including information about scholarship recipients in the EMIS is necessary.

Social mobilization

- As the provision of ‘partnering’ with CBOs and NGOs is well demonstrated in various activities, the DOE can collaborate with local CBOs and NGOs to effectively implement the various scholarship and incentive schemes as well. In so doing, the management, including the monitoring, of scholarships can be more participatory and thereby link with the overall educational development of the recipients.

Linking with SIP

- Scholarship/incentive support, which is viewed as a separate short-term programme imposed on schools’ needs to be anchored within the school system. The SIP process provides a forum for discussion as well as for building consensus about the concept, intention and criteria, as well as outcome, of scholarships/incentives. This will enable the monitoring and management of scholarship/incentive schemes to be more responsive and institutionalised.

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Appendix 1: Types of Scholarships/Incentives Available

Districts	Types of Scholarship Schemes
Rasuwa	Government (EFA/ SESP) Individual NGO UNWFP
Saptari	Government (EFA/ SESP) Individual UNFPA UNICEF
Surkhet	Government (EFA/ SESP) Individual School NGO UNWFP DDC (DANIDA)

Appendix 2: Types of Scholarships/Incentives Available in Selected Schools of Rasuwa

Schools	Type of Scholarship	Name of Scholarship
School A	Government	SESP Full Scholarship and Freeship Disabled Scholarship 50% of Girls Scholarship <i>Dalit</i> Scholarship
	Individual	Former Peace Corps Volunteer
	I(NGO)	ACA Nepal
School B	Government	<i>Dalit</i> Scholarship Full Scholarship and Freeship 50% of Girls Scholarship
	UN	Incentives granted by WFP
School C	Government	<i>Dalit</i> Scholarship 50% of Girls Scholarship
	UN	Incentives granted by WFP

Appendix 3: Types of Scholarships/Incentives Available in Selected Schools of Saptari

Schools	Types of Scholarship	Name of Scholarship
School A	Government	<i>Dalit</i> Scholarship 50 % Girls Scholarship Full Scholarship and Freeship
	Individual	Former Peace Corps Volunteer
School B	Government	<i>Dalit</i> Scholarship 50 % Girls Scholarship Full Scholarship and Freeship
	Individual	Bhawani Prasad Scholarship Indra Prasad Scholarship Shiva Prasad Scholarship
School C	Government	<i>Dalit</i> Scholarship Booster Scholarship Scholarship for the Disabled
	UN	Incentives granted by UNICEF
School D	Government	<i>Dalit</i> Scholarship Scholarship for Handicapped and Disabled Full Scholarship and Freeship 50% of Girls Scholarship
	UN	Scholarship granted by UNFPA

Appendix 4: Types of Scholarships/Incentives Available in Selected Schools of Surkhet

Schools	Types of Scholarship	Name of Scholarship
School A	Government	<i>Dalit</i> Scholarship 50 % Girls Scholarship Booster Scholarship Full Scholarship and Freeship
	NGO	Conflict Victim Scholarship Disadvantaged Children Scholarship
	School	Merit-Based scholarship
School B	Government	<i>Dalit</i> Scholarship 50 % Girls Scholarship Booster Scholarship
	NGO	Conflict Victim Scholarship
	UN	WFP
	School	Merit-Based scholarship
School C	Government	<i>Dalit</i> Scholarship 50% Girls scholarship Booster Scholarship
	UN	WFP
	I/NGO/Donor	Disadvantaged Children Scholarship
	School	Merit-Based scholarship Scholarship for Handicapped and Disabled



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