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# **Education and Development 2009**



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## PREFACE

Achieving universal primary education is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. To fulfill this goal, it is targeted to ensure that children in each and every corner of the world, including boys and girls, will be able to complete a full cycle of primary schooling by 2015. Nepal is trying to achieve this goal by bringing all the primary school age children to schools. Moreover, the attempt of providing education to out-of-school children through alternative schooling approach is also helping to achieve the target of universal primary education. Despite these efforts, there is still the need for “reaching the unreached” (i.e. to reach the children who are lacking the access to education) with a view to help achieve universal primary education. Considering this, access to primary education has been given the top priority in the last two decades, and now time has come to place adequate emphasis on the enhancement of quality education.

In the case of higher education, is it possible to provide access to all the expectants? The answer to this question is, most probably, far from being positive. Essentially, higher education needs to be selective in terms of specialization, competence of the aspirants and equity. In Nepalese context, so far, Tribhuvan University has been liberal in providing access to higher education for a large mass of youths especially in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences, Management and Education. The rapid growth of students’ enrollment in TU has demonstrated this reality. However, quality enhancement has not been addressed with due attention. In this regard, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation System being launched under University Grants Commission can stimulate the institutions of higher education for the enhancement of education in coming days.

This issue of *Education and Development* has incorporated articles dealing with a range of concerns in education - including Nepalese higher education and Tribhuvan University, Education for All, gender and inclusion in the context of education, school governance and community mobilization; and some stuffs of pedagogic significance such as the influence of teacher related variables on learners’ achievement, task in the context of language pedagogy, students’ learning achievement in SLC, etc. Moreover, through an article, it has also attempted to share the experience of educational development from the history of Japan.

Finally, CERID would like to extend its warmest thanks to the authors for contributing the valuable articles. Similarly, special thanks are extended to Dr Binod Luitel for language editing, Mr. Gautam Manandhar for Graphic Design and Mr. Suresh Shakya for computer setting.

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**December, 2009**

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## **Role of Tribhuvan University in National Development: Prospects and Challenges**

Dr Basu Dev Kafle<sup>\*</sup>

### **The Context**

Tribhuvan University is celebrating its golden jubilee to mark its glorious 50 years of establishment which heralded a new era of development of higher education contributing directly to the national development of the country by also unfolding the entry of Nepal into the global village.

TU today stands as the largest and the oldest of all six universities in the country, standing atop with the highest student enrollment, largest teaching faculty and a huge number of administrative human resource rendering it a challenging organization to manage both efficiently and effectively.

Established in 1959 with a small number of students with very primitive facilities, TU now enrolls highest number of students (272,746 - 007/008) through its constituent (62% enrollment) and affiliated (38% enrollment) campuses, attracting and commanding more than two thirds of the students towards its educational provisions. The university, mainly financed by the government, has a national visibility all over the country with four faculties, five institutes, 4 research centers and some latest departmental additions such as conflict and peace studies, women studies. The largest educational structure as it is, TU, with also a Center for International Relations to promote international understanding, knowledge, research and cultural relations with international educational organizations, has been in a dilemma of being a mass-friendly or elite-friendly university in Nepal and abroad.

### **TU's Role in National Development**

TU has been found contributing to national development through the preparation and production of human resources mainly in the following areas of expertise:

- Technical education such as science, engineering and medicine
- Professional education such as education, law and management
- Liberal arts education such as humanities and social sciences
- Researches and research activities of topical importance in collaboration with other national and international organizations

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<sup>\*</sup> Professor, T.U.

Nepal's planned development effort coincides nearly with the establishment of TU which had the twin objectives of producing high level human resource to meet the development needs of the country and establishing a strong knowledge base to feed the growing knowledge economy. TU therefore was expected to work both as a teaching and research university so that it can uphold its traditional role of conserving knowledge and culture and the progressive role of transforming society through its updated and applied knowledge base. The ever changing time and growing globalization of the world economy have placed TU at a critical juncture from where it is bound to reengineer itself on a new footing for its role in national development. To be very specific, TU's role in national development has been concentrated mainly on:

- Development of reading culture – the learning, unlearning and relearning cycle (learning organization)
- Redefining and developing its culture of teaching and research so as to relate researches to academic practices
- Unfolding new seats of learning as suggested by the UNESCO: Education for 21st century (learning to know, to do, to be and to live together)
- Marrying societal culture and knowledge with scientific advancements and application
- Deemphasizing adhocism and stereotypes to give room for innovative practices which challenge our work behaviour and attitude
- Deconstructing the non-functional structure to transform itself into a vibrant organization
- Defining and relating its role in development as a cyclical phenomenon of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction in order to move with the time
- Revitalizing its internal resources for their better utilization to address the need of quality in higher education

### **Balancing the Growth: Quantitative Expansion vs. Qualitative Growth**

One of the lived realities of TU today is how to strike a balance between its expanding quantity and desirable quality. The speed with which TU's numerical expansion is taking over its qualitative growth is viewed as a matter of serious concern, given the deteriorating performance standard of TU, increasing student unrest, unionization of the teaching and non-teaching faculty, mismatch between the available resources and the speedy growth and the rigid inflexible structure that does not allow the university to be responsive to change.

The failing balancing act of the university is indicative of the fact that quantity, not quality, will continue to rule the university even in the distant future. As Nepal as

a developing country will be formally open for the global market since 2010 and quality and excellence will be the rule, rather than exception, of the day. Amidst such situation, TU's image has to be projected in order to:

- lift its face from the drudgery and treachery of here and there, now and then, so as to forge its way toward becoming a learning organization
- establish itself as a teaching and research university of values and beliefs, not myths and speculations
- transform itself from being a caretaker university to a promising faith winning university
- help create a value-laden society for all irrespective of the differences, diversities and complexities
- reengineer its rigid structure, reshape its destiny and save it from seeing the dooms day of unwanted failures and frustrations
- workout strategies that place it on a new footing of hope and winning future
- capitalize it to deliver the intended good: creation of able and contributing citizenry that takes care of its destiny from being misguided by the social evils and ills

### **The Dichotomy of TU: Mass-friendly or Elite-friendly?**

Tribhuvan University today, in a span of 50 years' time, caters the needs of 90 percent students who aspire for higher education. It is stuck in the dilemma of working as a mass-based university, which is virtually within the reach of every student, and yet trying to satisfy the qualitative learning needs of the students. Quality has often been associated with a status negating the desired impact – the quality concern.

As a mass-friendly university, it has remained to be popular but often at the cost of quality urge of many students and teachers.

Increasing political interference (*T.U.- Hastinapur*, Annapurna Shiksha, May7, 2009) has rendered it to be a playground of political ideologies which have not so far contributed to the desirable growth of the university. The unionization of teachers, students and TU personnel bears little professional look with interests often in conflict with the intent of the university: building nation through the preparation of qualified, committed and able citizens. A concern is there to make it a quality driven selected organization which is often at odd with squeezing financial resources (resource crunch has always marred the quality imperative of the university) and growing expectations of the people who would like to see higher education made available at a reasonable cost. A compromise between these two aspects has often been the result: the fading face of the university. Such a situation of TU has raised several concerns as:

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- Should TU be declared an autonomous organization with administrative, financial and academic autonomy to generate its own resources to fund the growing need of quality education?
- Should it work as an exemplary organization catering the needs of the few, selected and the elite class of people?
- Should its status be declared as a national (federal) university by dissociating its affiliated campuses which have demanded a separate university of their own?
- What about TU declaring it as a centre of excellence limiting its existence to specific location as Kirtipur with departments, disciplines and faculties that are in high demand and saleable in the market?
- Should it be a teaching or a research university or both?
- What should it be famous for with its international repute?
- Should it continue to work as a think tank of the country (did it ever work like that?)?
- Should politics continue to find its way into the edifice of the university?

#### **Existing Opportunities and Challenges**

##### *Opportunities*

Comparatively speaking, there are more challenges at the TU than opportunities. But a visionary leadership of the University can transform these challenges into opportunities, if it commits itself, politically as well as professionally, to change its course of action and direction. Politically, it should withstand the political encroachment of the government and professionally, it should strike a balance between being a mass university and a center of excellence (elites). Towards this end, the following conditions and opportunities exist with TU.

- The oldest national university, and also the largest one with international recognition
- senior, experienced and qualified faculty members
- established infrastructures and properties of its own
- huge premises of the TU central office and university campus for the desired expansion in the future
- a regular government grant to facilitate at least the minimum delivery of instructional activities with economic security
- an asset and property of millions of rupees which can be wisely utilized for bringing the much needed quality of education

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- an established structure with a framework to guide the future operation
- abundant opportunity to initiate innovative practices
- outsourcing of its human resources by relevant national and international organizations
- revitalizing the research centres to inject innovative practices into curricular transactions

#### *Challenges*

In the same way, TU presently faces numerous challenges which can be tactfully transformed into learning opportunities. Specifically, these challenges can be briefly outlined as:

- striking a balance between a teaching and a research university with lots of research potentials
- transforming political interferences and dogmas into professional promises and interventions
- addressing student unrest with a firm, accommodative and dynamic management
- locally owned campus based management to replace centrally controlled campus management
- constrained faculty development opportunities and squeezing intellectual discourses
- too much dependency on the government leading to residual approach to development of higher education
- resource crunch always marring its qualitative growth and development
- ad hoc and status quo leadership, not a visionary one, to sail through the turbulent waters of the university
- little leadership succession planning, be that in the position of a department head or the vice chancellor or a campus chief
- skewed relationship with the ministries, mainly the ministries of education, science and technology
- adamant, indifferent, tired and unwelcoming faculties
- less resourceful and less updated libraries and learning resource centres
- overpowering student government, vulnerable campus / central administration and a compromising faculty

## **TU in the Future**

TU has a glorious history of 50 years with a visible risk of having a waning face as made evident by its heavily centralized structure, old-fashioned faculties, heavily incurring resource crunch, growing student unrest, unionization of teachers and students, less watchful so called watchdogs, little or unobservable interface of teaching and research, and overall, lack of succession planning and visionary leadership. If this situation continues to exist, TU is bound to see the dooms day in the near future.

As mentioned earlier, TU does not go without prospects. We are very much aware of the fact that it is the largest and oldest university of the country with much more potentials for qualitative growth, that it has the largest structure with the largest number of disciplines and faculties in the offer, and that a strong political commitment of the government to keep it free from political interference can change its ailing face into a vibrant and shining face. Some bold strategic measures are to be taken, as the following, to uplift its face from the drudgery it is living with today:

- Refine, develop and reengineer its role and structure for the intended U-turn in its programmatic approaches, intended coverage and meeting the learning needs of the targeted students.
- Institutionalize TU as a central (federal) university by doing away with its affiliating role, prompting it mainly to work as the think tank for the national and strategic development of the country.
- Regionalize its programs, coverage and services so as to place it on a new footing of becoming a centre of excellence.
- Forge special and intimate institutional relations with similar universities, international organizations and relevant ministries, to regularly update and upgrade the teaching as well as non-teaching faculty in order to capacitate them to deliver the services efficiently and effectively.
- Initiate an open system of ensuring the entry of meritorious persons into the TU service by doing away with the ailing time-bound and politically instigated promotion/entry system.
- Initiate the system of making "succession planning" a contributing experience to avoid the abrupt entry of non-professional and non-performing persons into the TU service system.
- Energize the existing research centres to make continuous search for linking and updating curricular transaction with latest research findings.
- Establish a central institution like NCERT of India, IIEP of UNESCO or convert the research centres into such integrated centre so as to bring the gains of research, training and teaching together in the transaction of curriculum into the classroom.

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- Encourage and develop quality circles, forums, societies, foundations and other alternative educational organizations of higher education to discuss, share, exchange and disseminate recent knowledge, experience and expertise on various topical issues of education bearing national as well as international importance.
- Encourage and support the faculty members for their continuous professional development by offering them various types of incentives in the forms of faculty development programs, study leaves, scholarships and research cum performance bound promotion.
- Initiate and apply PPP in areas of common interest of the university, community and the government.

*When we manage people, we become leaders,  
When we manage ourselves, we become successful.  
Let us manage our university; and bring to it its life and prosperity*

## Policy on Higher Education

Dr Tirth Raj Khaniya\*

### Setting the Context

Different people say different things about university education. University is said to be a mirror of a country. As it is the most important factor for the socio-economic advancement of a country, it is also said to be the main vehicle for national development. Some argue that primary level of education is the most important part of education since it has the highest rate of return; but others say that without quality higher education no country can achieve quality primary education. Thus the importance of higher education is paramount.

University is a very important institution of politics also. According to Jawaharlal Neharu, "If everything is well with the university, everything will be well with the nation." In a way, he finds university as a whole to be a threat for the government, and students a threat for both the government and the authority. As long as a university is functioning well, for him, at least, the government will have a relief. Perhaps, Nepal shares a lot in common with what Neharu said when the issue of Tribhuvan University (TU) comes. That is why the powerful political parties in Nepal have great interest in having a decisive role in appointing vice-chancellors of universities, but they simply do not worry about the deteriorating situation of the universities and their functioning. None of the leading parties seem to have any interest in making universities legitimately functional- asking universities to function under the overall leadership of their senates- as long as the VCs are their men and they serve their political interest.

International experiences tell us that there is a high correlation between the advancement of a country and the development of its higher education. The countries which are called developed today had already accomplished a high degree of educational development before they accomplished physical development. Nowadays, people associate education not only with the physical development of a country, but also with the development of the knowledge societies and knowledge economies. If the modern development and advancement of the whole world is examined from the perspectives of higher education, one would find that the developed countries have done mainly two things: i) making higher education the best possible; and ii) integrating it with national/international development and socio-economic activities. In a way, higher education has now become an inherent part of economic growth and scientific advancement as well as a development partner. That is why, when a country feels not having sufficient hard-working intelligent youths within her territory, it adopts a policy of attracting such people from any part of the world by giving them sufficient incentives of different types. This is one of the reasons why

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\* Member, National Planning Commission



our youths who have gained a high level of degree in science and technology have easy access with attractive incentives to countries like USA, UK and Australia.

Higher education is a versatile area with enormous scope. It is very difficult to cover all aspects of higher education in such a short paper. However, this paper attempts to offer some ideas about how higher education policy can be made and how the policy would guide our higher education in the future. In the new context of Nepal, say under the Sanghiya (federal) structure of the state, we may need different universities working in different areas of the country. They may differ in many ways. The assumption is that after the recent political change, and after the Sanghiya Loktantrik Republic constitution is approved by the Constituent Assembly, there will apparently be certain moves towards bringing about reform in education in general and the Nepalese higher education in particular. The ideas and insights obtained from this exercise and subsequent exercises would offer useful inputs for the future reform of higher education.

It can also be assumed that there would be different universities and higher education institutions in different states/regions after the implementation of Sanghiya Loktantrik Republic Constitution. They may need to address different interests of the people from different ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic and regional backgrounds. In order to cater for the needs of these different kinds of people, different types of higher education institutions will have to be established. They may differ in many ways – e.g. regarding the funding arrangements, infrastructure development, professionals, facilities, focused area of interest, student selection, resource mobilization, collaboration with local productive sectors, availability of human resource, etc. For that purpose, this paper does not prescribe a fixed model; rather some policy insights are offered.

### **Policy on Mode of Operation**

From the point of view of mode of operation, there can, in a broad way, be two types of higher education institutions: **State control** and **state supervising**.

**State control** model favours centralization with large amount of control. This model is not successful in stimulating innovation in higher education. The main reasons are; it does not provide/encourage professional autonomy, organizational fragmentation and diffusion of decision making.

**State supervising** model addresses higher education institutions in terms of autonomy and accountability. This model promotes innovation through professional autonomy, academic freedom and devolves the responsibility for decision making. It also offers good conditions for external and internal efficiency.

Higher education in the world has been changing fast. It is frequently argued that in order to enjoy full benefit of higher education, it is necessary for a country to bring about necessary changes in it. Failing to appreciate the changes taking place in higher education will lead a country to lose both human and physical

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resources in the name of education.

The emerging trend is that higher education institutions are becoming more indirect than direct. The state has more supervisory role than interventionist. In a way, it appears that modern higher education has moved a long way towards becoming independent, self-sufficient, flexible, innovative, realistic, applied-type, needs-based, creative, visionary, anticipative, participatory, open, cost-effective, competitive, etc. It has also moved towards the mass from class though class has still been the main centre for learning. In this pretext, the government cannot direct or control the way higher education changes. Rather, it should be happy with the role of a facilitator. The role of the state, as a matter of fact, is to provide the enabling policy framework to coordinate, regulate, accredit and provide guidance and incentives for both private and public higher education institutions so that they meet national training, research and service needs of the country as well as the emerging demands of the international community. As a result, higher education is forced to move towards more open and flexible path of development for its growth and for being able to address the emerging issues of both financial independence and providing higher education to all on merit basis.

In a broad way, four major policies, as follows, can be put forward for the reform of Nepalese higher education in the new context of Nepal:

- **Diversify higher education programs and structures** to increase their responsiveness to labour market and social demands. Keeping the class or elite approach active, it should move towards both class and mass through open system.
- **Develop sustainable resource mobilization schemes** for higher education institutions to improve their resource base necessary to provide quality teaching and research.
- **Integrate higher education with productive and service sector** for making education qualitative and relevant and generating resources.
- **Develop appropriate implementation strategies** with the involvement of the stakeholders to ensure the success of higher education reform (e.g. political consensus).

## **Policy on Managing Higher Education**

In the new context of Nepal, university education should be given adequate attention in the forthcoming policies of higher education. Generally, universities and professors are conventional. It is not easy to bring about changes in the way they act unless some deliberate interventions are made. The state should bring such deliberate interventions through enabling policies so as to facilitate the management of higher education. Simply making efforts to put a party man in a decision making position does not help enhance higher education.

Basically, there are three areas that deserve attention of the policy makers while

working on the management part of higher education. The policy makers should have conceptual clarity of the issues like **institutional autonomy, responsible accountability and academic freedom**. In addition, it is also important to have **forward looking management** – responding the new changes and needs in the field of interest. Some politicians tend to ignore the concept of institutional autonomy of a university. For example, the Ministry of Finance makes policy on tax on education without any knowledge of Ministry of Education and university. The government creates several teaching positions for a university without letting the Senate of the university make any decision on its human resource needs. In our case, our universities are denied of the right to decide on what they need, how they want to address those needs, and how they want to move towards modernization.

Institutional autonomy is considered one of the important elements for the promotion of a higher education institution. If we want to improve the academic and financial situation of our universities, it is necessary that they are given full autonomy. At the same time, it should also be noted that the university should give autonomy to its central departments and colleges. Autonomy exercised only by the central authority is not institutional autonomy. Until an institution is free to design its program activities for academic reform and resource generation, select the students for admission and the teaching staff, the institution can never exercise institutional autonomy.

The year 2006 has been even worse for TU regarding admission of students due to external pressure; and TU has been enrolling students since then without following any selection procedure. It could not stick to the mandatory provision made by the Senate on entrance exam. Entrance exam is an inherent element of a university if we accept university as an autonomous institution. The worst case is that even after eight months of the commencement of classes in the first year Master's courses in 2008, the central authority of TU is instructing its central departments and colleges to enroll new students under pressure from student union. The pity is that our student leaders feel proud of being able to enroll students without following any standard procedure and set academic calendar. If a college keeps on enrolling students throughout the year, what will happen to its calendar of operation? When the authority of a university has no sense of beginning and closing of an academic year and calendar of operation, what will be the credibility of the university? Can they maintain the credibility of a university?

In the present context, for an institution to grow, it is necessary to hold all the persons involved responsible for what they do. Responsibility belongs to all users, teachers, researchers, students, administrative staff and all those who have management and advisory functions. The scope of university management has extended to business community, productive and service sector; as higher education institutions have started to work collaboratively with these multi-disciplinary partners. The implication is that for a management leader to be successful, for example, it is not sufficient for him only to be academically

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competent, but also to have the knowledge and skills needed to deal with business and service community.

Universities must be accountable to those they receive financial assistance from and the services they provide to. It must be noted that autonomy should not be taken as uncontrolled interference, but it certainly involves the notion of evaluation of the works that universities do in light of what they are supposed to do. Furthermore, universities are required to explain the actions they take and the set programs they fail to perform. They should also be prepared to examine success and failures in a transparent manner so that the rest of the world understands how things are taking place in the university. In other words, there should be performance audit of the university. But who cares? One would find it foolish to ask for a social audit when a university, for example, TU appoints about 2000 teachers on a contractual basis but does not realize the need for calling for a senate meeting for the last three years.

Academic freedom is another element that deserves attention. In the whole world, it is only a university professor and its students who exercise academic freedom. University professors are allowed to think unthinkable. It is their creative and critical mind that leads them to gain Noble Award. University management should ensure this aspect of freedom so as to promote the present level of thinking to the extent possible in the future. It is said that the present state of world development is the result of academic freedom. It is the professors' imaginative and creative thinking that have led the world to witness modern development of technology and advancement. It is in the professors' labs where solutions for many unknown diseases and problems are developed.

For this to happen, research and innovation must be emphasized and adequate funds be made available. It is therefore necessary to make legitimate and moral provisions for institutions to be responsible and accountable for their performances and then enjoy academic freedom.

### **Policy on Establishing New University**

There is no doubt that Nepal needs more universities for several reasons- e.g. to serve the aspiration of those who intend to go for higher education, cater for the needs of skilled manpower, enable the country to exploit the worldwide technology and knowledge for the development of the country, address regional and ethnic disparity, and downsize TU to make it more flexible and manageable for quality products. Furthermore, a proper distribution of higher education institutions across the country also leads to achieve balanced growth in the process of advancement. It should be noted that many big cities in the world today were once just tiny towns for higher education. The higher education institutions thus have gained incredible credibility for contributing to the balanced growth of the country.

The idea of establishing multi-universities was initially introduced by the National Education Commission, 1992 which was formed by the government established

after the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990. The commission put this idea forward in order to provide higher education to the qualified and talented people living in all parts of the country. The spirit of the commission was to establish one university in each development region by bringing the constituent and affiliated campuses of TU within its jurisdiction on a regional basis. Thus, the concept of multi-university was initially brought up to provide more access to those who would otherwise be left out, and to have proper distribution of higher education institutions across the country.

In line with this, in 1992, an Act was passed by the Parliament to establish Kathmandu University (KU) as a non-government university. An important provision made in the Act was that the university was to be established in Dhilkhel, Kavre, outside the Kathmandu Valley. Following a similar trend, two other universities; Purbanchal University in 1993, and Pokhara University in 1996, were established in Biratnagar and Pokhara respectively; though, contrary to the suggestion of the 1992 Commission, the UGC could not play an active role in the process of establishing new universities. The idea of implementing multi-university concept was visualized also by Higher Education Project (HEP 1993-1999) funded by the World Bank. The basic idea envisaged by the HEP was the formation of two regional clusters in the western and eastern development regions. For this purpose, Mahendra Morang Multiple Campus in Biratnagar and Prithvi Narayan Multiple Campus in Pokhara were identified as the lead campuses. Funds under HEP were allocated to these campuses to equip them with adequate facilities so as to allow them to emerge eventually as competent institutions with more autonomy finally taking the shape of a university. The two campuses have adequate students, qualified faculty, infrastructure, and other facilities sufficient for them to emerge as university. These colleges were expected to emerge as universities and bring the TU campuses in the region under their jurisdiction. But instead of promoting these colleges to develop into universities, Purbanchal University in Biratnagar and Pokhara University in Pokhara were established as new universities.

The current situation of the new universities is such that none of them have been able to encourage any of the TU campuses to merge into them, no one has been able to reduce the flow of students to TU campuses, as Prithvi Narayan Multiple Campus alone has more than 11 thousand students - which could be the total number for all the new universities. All of the new universities tend to have almost 50% of their affiliated colleges in the Kathmandu Valley. One would ask, therefore, whether this situation satisfies the reason for adopting multi-university strategy for the development of higher education in Nepal.

Reviewing the policies and strategies regarding the establishment of multi-university, it appears that the new universities have not been established in consonance with what has been envisioned by the government's policy documents. Rather, the establishment of new universities has been influenced more by politics and less by professional inputs. For example, the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) maintains that higher education should serve the national and

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regional needs of the country. In order to expedite the matter, it suggested forming a coordination committee involving NPC, MOE, TU, and UGC. The implication was that technical and professional inputs would be sought before establishing a new university. But such a process was bypassed when the Acts of those universities were passed by the Parliament. Neither inputs were received from a technical committee nor were UGC and other concerned agencies involved in the process.

As a matter of fact, international experiences give us the impression that a university is not established as a new institution, rather a competent college meeting all the basic requirements and enjoying adequate independence and autonomy emerges in the form of university. The trend in higher education is that universities are moving towards becoming result-oriented. This notion has certainly led them to avoid expansion and concentrate on quality products. Worldwide, universities are struggling for becoming "Knowledge Empire" instead of "Territorial Empire". It should be noted that universities with 20 to 30 thousand students under a single campus have been most successful in offering quality higher education in the world. Gaining insights from this, Tribhuvan University, which still accommodates 92% of the students pursuing higher education, should be restructured so as to allow its large campuses emerge as universities.

In a broad way, the following two possible options of state policy may be suggested for the near future:

#### *Transfer ownership of government owned institutions to community*

It is necessary to substantially reduce the number of state-run institutions of higher learning by turning a major portion of them into public higher education institutions managed by the community. At the same time, the number of budget-funded educational grants would be increased substantially to ensure that higher educational institutions have more interest in receiving these grants. These grants should be based on the performance standard as set by the state like quality, research, service to disadvantaged groups, publications, collaboration with the world of work, etc. Access to a higher education for low-income citizens (as in most countries) will have to be provided on the basis of education loans and grants. It is necessary for the state to start looking for the necessary resources, and work out and test a mechanism for providing education loans to low-income people. On top of that, competent scholarship programs should be put in place for talented and disadvantaged students.

The provision for establishing constituent colleges in Karnali and other districts made in the budget speech of the Finance Minister in the year 2008 goes against the argument presented above. It would be a wise step of the parliament if it reviews the provision and moves towards supporting with greater amount of money to those community colleges which are in those districts and locations.

*Regulate privatization of higher education in a competent manner*

Focus should be given on the development of private institutions of higher learning under a competent regulatory framework. One of the major sources of funds generated for higher education worldwide is privatization of higher education. The demand for educational services in the economy is to be expanded – in the case of enterprises and firms, by allowing tax deductions for the cost of education, and in the case of the population, by developing education loans and grants.

Private sector in education has been successful in gaining momentum in education. However, what is important to consider here is that privatization of education has been in operation for long without any regulatory supervision of the government. It is necessary to think over how to bring the private sector under an agreed regulatory framework. Attention should be directed towards how the commercialization of private higher education can be discouraged and how it can be led to be a public service like what community managed public campuses are doing.

The lesson emerged from the past is that instead of opening a new university from a scratch, the government with the involvement of responsible institutions like UGC should allow competent colleges to emerge as universities. Priority should be given to promote public campuses which have both flexibility in the mode of operation and strength in resource mobilization. Now it is up to the Ministry of Education to demonstrate how it has evaluated its past decisions and the extent to which it has gained institutional strengths based on the past experiences.

One gets the impression that individual interest, whimsical decisions, and political favoritism have played a significant role in the development of higher education in Nepal. It is strongly argued that there is need for national debate on major issues of higher education if we want to give higher education a right direction. It is also necessary to work on developing a master plan for higher education. The main argument is that the government should not be guided by personal whims and political interest and also by those ministers who have not seen the door of a university; rather the policy and nature of higher education should guide the government to make decisions on higher education.

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## Reaching the Un-reached: Dhaka Declaration on EFA

Dr Ram Swarup Sinha\*

Education is a basic right and catalyst for attaining sustainable development. It becomes an effective instrument of social changes when it functions as an empowering force by equipping human being with values and essential skills of literacy, numeracy, communication, problem solving and productive work. The state assurance of the entitlement of its citizens to education encompasses the access of the poor and marginalized people of all age-groups to quality basic and continuing education. Asserting the strategic importance of reaching the unreached people in achieving national and global target of Education for All, all the governments in South Asia adopted a number of measures in respective countries. But still there are a number of challenges, because of which these groups of people have remained un-served or underserved from the EFA mainstream programmes. Recalling our resolution in Dakar on 28 April 2000, Katmandu on 12 April 2001 to create a South Asia EFA Forum, Islamabad Declaration 21–23 May 2003, and Second Ministerial Meeting of South Asia Forum on "Reaching the Un-Reached with Focus on Decentralization", a declaration was made on 14 December 2009, which is known as "Dhaka Declaration on EFA".

### Achievements

Since EFA Assessment 2000 and Dakar Framework for Action, countries of the region have witnessed notable progress as indicated by:

- Preparation of the National EFA plans through consultative processes with all stakeholders on strategies and policy development;
- Continuous dialogue with International Agencies and Development Partners for enhancement of funding for bridging resource gaps;
- Publication of National Mid Decade Assessment (MDA) reports with regional synthesis and sharing of the outcomes with all countries of the region;
- Enhanced organizational and institutional capacity to meet the challenges ahead;
- Increased activities to implement continuous assessment, especially of learners' performance and outcome as a basis for in-country and cross-country comparisons;

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- Developed linkages between formal and non-formal systems of education through equivalence;
- Build professional partnerships between Governments, Non-government Organizations and Private sector for sharing resources, knowledge and practices to meet the challenges of EFA and relevant Millennium Development Goals;
- Significant improvement in enrollment and reducing illiteracy, particularly of girls and women;
- Increased efforts in each country for detailed costing of the Education Plans and its linkage with other national strategies and plans including the Country Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP);
- Resources allocated for proactive gender sensitive programmes for quality education including literacy.

### **Challenges**

We note with concern that South Asian countries face many formidable challenges such as:

- High level of poverty and illiteracy;
- Limited awareness amongst the un-reached regarding the EFA programmes;
- Absence of guidelines for promoting public-private partnership;
- Shortage of professionals for planning, implementation and evaluation of EFA programmes;
- Limited use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT);
- Not enough clarity in the role of Local Government;
- Weak South-South and South-North cooperation;
- Inadequate attention to education research;
- Increasing gap in the quality of education between the rich and the poor as well as rural and urban population;
- Lack of effective coordination among the Government, Research Institutions and NGOs;
- Absence of redressal mechanisms for the un-reached;
- Relatively poor quality of education and inadequate learning achievement;

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- Inadequate systematic and regular evidence of learning outcomes;
- Absence of reliable and consistent database to monitor the progress of EFA goals;
- Inadequate funding for EFA from Government and other domestic sources;
- Limited funding from the international community;
- Non-fulfillment of Islamabad Declaration on allocation of 4% of the GDP for education;
- Lack of balance in prioritizing the budget allocation for programmes;
- Limited involvement of the local Government in management and financing education;
- Insufficient budgetary allocation to non-formal education and skill development;
- Global economic crisis inhibiting the Government and Development Partners to maintain or enhance the level of financing;
- Absence/inadequate application of standards, norms and regulations for private educational institutions;
- Inadequate institutional provisions for education and educational support of children affected by disaster, conflicts and post conflict situations.

#### **Collective Statement**

Taking note of the above achievements as well as challenges and our commitment towards implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action for achieving EFA goals, we recognize that education is the most crucial factor influencing the economic, social, political and human aspects of life and to ensure peace, solidarity and prosperity of the nations of this region;

We, therefore, collectively affirm and commit, in the context of Reaching the Un-reached to:

- Enforce the right to education for all effectively, if needed through amendment or fresh legislation to make it justifiable;
- Examine the main causes of exclusion and barriers to education for the un-reached;
- Identify the un-reached groups;
- Prepare a disaggregated database;

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- Review/enact law for decentralization of formal and non-formal education planning and management;
- Review and reformulate education policies and practices to reach the un-reached;
- Review/prepare the necessary policies, strategies and practices for effective decentralization;
- Strengthen institutional and organizational capacity for education planning and management;
- Ensure participation of all stakeholders including community, media and civil society organizations in achieving EFA goals;
- Establish effective monitoring, evaluation and feedback mechanisms for measuring the outcomes;
- Establish network and collaboration with other sectors contributing to EFA;
- Undertake a comprehensive assessment of resource requirement for achieving EFA with specific reference to reaching the un-reached;
- Allocate at least 6 percent of the GDP to education;
- Avail all opportunities for mobilizing internal collaborative fund;
- Determine the gap between the required and internally available resources;
- Mobilize resources through external funding;
- Ensure better coordination and cooperation among the countries of South Asia for resource mobilization;
- Determine the gap in the availability of human resource and create adequate infrastructure for its development;
- Urge the Development Partners and corporate sector to increase/provide funding to ensure realization of EFA goals by 2015;

#### **Declaration**

Acknowledging International Development Partners' support in facilitating the activities of the South Asia EFA Forum and consistent efforts to reaching the un-reached through decentralization of planning and management for achieving Education for All, Second Ministerial Meeting of South Asia Forum made a declaration as :

**"We, the Ministers and representatives of Governments and Non-government Organizations from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, attending the Second Ministerial Meeting of the South Asia EFA Forum in Dhaka on 13 – 14 December 2009, recognize the progress and challenges in achieving the EFA goals, especially reaching the un-reached shared by the South Asian countries as reflected in the country reports, We place on record that despite significant diversities among the countries with respect to size, geography, culture, social dynamics, level of economic development, etc, we consciously select the theme "Reaching the Un-reached with focus on Decentralization" and resource mobilization as our obligations to achieve EFA goals."**

### **Strategies for Reaching the Un-reached**

A set of comprehensive strategic measures are required to be taken to meet the challenges and achieving EFA goals. Based on the lessons from previous experiences and good practices from within and outside the countries, we, the participants of the Second Ministerial Meeting of South Asia EFA Forum held in Dhaka in December 2009, develop through a consultative process and adopt the following strategic measures

1. Revisiting programme objectives, contents and expected competencies to meet the learning needs of various population groups
  - Reviewing programme objectives and identifying gaps
  - Redesigning different programme components along with indicators and tools for assessment of learning
  - Ensuring quality of learning through sustainable programme package (e.g., long-term literacy programme)
  - Re-identifying the learning needs and outcomes/competencies
2. Review and updating of existing policies and legislation to ensure access of the hard to reach/excluded groups of population to quality education
  - Analysis of effectiveness of existing policies and legislative provisions in reaching the un-reached/excluded people in providing basic and continuing education
  - Identifying areas of improvement in the constitutional/legislative provisions and policies to support increased access of the un-reached/excluded people
  - Making provisions to ensure inclusiveness and accessibility through

formulating new policies/laws or updating existing policies/laws

3. Identifying the un-reached and underserved population
  - *Identifying priority geographical areas (such as, districts with low literacy rate, island, coast and hill areas, indigenous populated areas, and urban slums)*
  - *Prioritizing un-reached target groups (such as, out-of school children including the dropouts, illiterate adolescents, youth, adults, hard core poor, women, girls, marginal income group, people in need of special education, people live in remote locations, disaster-prone areas and in conflict or post-conflict situation, climate change refugees) in the selected districts/locations*
  - Conducting survey to estimate accurate number of target people and level of literacy (e.g., literacy assessment survey, mapping)
  - Undertaking qualitative research to analyze the context and profile of target people
  - Assigning local government bodies to accurately identify the target people and their needs
4. Facilitating multi-stakeholder participation in achieving EFA goals, particularly reaching the un-reached through decentralized planning and management
  - Mapping of potential organizations/institutions/ government agencies, NGOs, private sector agencies and civil society organizations, analysis of capacities and specifying areas of collaboration, and recognizing their contributions
  - Identifying stakeholders and their roles in planning, implementation and monitoring
  - Identifying the areas of partnership, collaboration and networking among the EFA service providers – GO, NGO, private agencies and academic institutions in implementation of EFA programmes
  - Working out measures to assess effectiveness of the multi-stakeholder collaboration
5. Decentralization of education management to ensure flexible programme delivery for the un-reached/underserved
  - Developing mechanism through constitutional/legal provisions for local level planning and management
  - Gradual decentralization of the education management at the district

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- and sub-district levels to respond to the contextual programmatic needs and through gradual capacity enhancement of the actors at various level
- Institutionalization of the roles of local government bodies as facilitating and monitoring agencies
  - Making provision for flexible programme delivery (context and socio-culturally appropriate, with preference to mother-tongue based programmes)
6. Facilitating exchange of experience ensuring learning and replicating good practices in reaching the un-reached
- Capacity building of EFA providers in documentation of good practices and lessons from ongoing programmes/practices in reaching the un-reached
  - Increased investment and specific allocation for research and documentation of EFA interventions for the excluded groups of people
  - Institutionalization of the process of regular sharing of experience and lessons among the stakeholders
7. Institutional capacity enhancement and professional development of the EFA providers ensuring quality programme implementation
- Analyzing institutional strength of EFA providers in the context of emerging roles of education for sustainable development and emerging decentralized planning and management of EFA programmes
  - Exploring various options of institutional strengthening, including public-private partnership, decentralized planning and management
  - Preparing detailed human resource development plan for various EFA providers and making provision for additional human resource, logistics and financial allocation (with emphasis on teacher development)
  - Establishing and/or strengthening EFA focused academy with multi-stakeholder participation to provide technical support
8. Resource mobilization and allocation for the un-reached groups towards achieving EFA Goals
- Assessment of resource requirement, making budgetary provision and allocation based on the identified needs of the target population

in various locations or of various groups

- Allocating 6% of GNP for education, as committed in the CONFINTEA and other UN Declarations and targeting allocation of 6% of the education budget to adult education with around half of it earmarked funding for literacy initiatives and innovative programmes to reach the un-reached (the countries may opt to reallocate funds among the programmes as per need)
  - Sharing EFA programmes package to other development departments/partners to mobilize information, education, communication related human, material and/or financial resources from their budgets
  - Mobilizing Development Partners to allocate resources addressing the needs of the un-reached population
  - Allocation of available resources on priority basis for the un-reached population
  - Revenue measures (e.g., tax exemption) to encourage funding by corporate sector in education
9. Mobilizing media in support of reaching the un-reached towards achieving EFA Goals
- Establishing EFA media forum to mobilize opinion in favour of EFA programmes tuned for un-reached population
  - Organizing media campaign at regular intervals at national and regional levels

### **Strategies for Collaboration and Networking in South Asia**

10. Taking measures for establishing effective links between EFA Coordinators with education/EFA desk at SAARC Secretariat to ensure better coordination of education policies/programmes
11. Institutionalization of a system for regular communication among the EFA Coordinators (e.g., developing e-communication network) and gradually developing a ministerial level regional organization on education in South Asia (SAARC Regional Centre for Education like SEAMEO in South-East Asia)
12. Forming South Asia Taskforce for Education with participation of committed EFA stakeholders to facilitate exchange of expertise and experience as well as sharing good practices in the spirit of South-South cooperation

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13. Establishing mechanism for dialogue at regular intervals on EFA agenda and monitoring of achievements in EFA goals, setting regional level standards/indicators (EFA Coordinators may meet on annual basis, Ministerial Meeting on biannual basis)
14. Networking of civil society EFA networks to support, follow-up and reporting on regional and national EFA initiatives
15. Promoting collaborative research on various thematic and programmatic aspects to provide input and evidence for policy dialogue and programme planning

**Concluding Statement**

We, the participating South Asian countries, ensure wide dissemination of this Dhaka Declaration along with strategies (South Asian Strategies for Reaching the Unreached) formulated to reach the un-reached and play a proactive role for incorporating and reflecting the commitment of the declaration through review of the National Plans of Action for EFA as well as other working documents and activities.

We also acknowledge the contributions of Bangladesh in organizing the Second Ministerial Meeting of South Asia EFA Forum in Dhaka.

We announce that India has agreed to consider favourably organizing the Third Meeting of the South Asia EFA Forum in 2011.

The theme of the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Forum will remain unchanged, "Reaching the Un-reached" with the focus on implementation of Katmandu Joint Statement, Islamabad Declaration and Dhaka Declaration

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## Gender, Education and the Critical Pedagogy

Dr Samira Luitel\*

### The History of Women's Education

Until the middle of the 20th century, women's education was not considered as important as that of men even in the advanced societies of Europe and America, as education of women was thought to subvert societal norms and values. Women's sphere was limited to marriage and womanhood, and their education was limited for that purpose only. Until the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, education for girls was limited to religious and moral instructions, and training in domestic duties. It was only in 1868 that secondary schools for girls were recommended in England by the School Inquiry Commission, but access to higher degrees was still denied. Evidence show that in 1890, a female student achieved the highest rank in "Mathematical Tripos" (Honors examination in mathematics at Cambridge) but the title was conferred to the male student next to her, on the ground that women were not eligible to receive such an honour at Cambridge at that time. Until 1920, women were not allowed to study law or medicine. These studies were opened to them only by the Sex Disqualification Act of 1920, but higher education for women still remained questionable as the general public regarded such professional trainings going against the societal values that preferred making women fit for marriage and womanhood (Kelly & Nihlen, 1982).

With the advancement of industrial capitalism, women's sphere was broadened and education became a necessity for them. But some feminists trace women's oppression within the Marxist theories of the State. While acknowledging the sources of patriarchal relationships outside the state, these feminists believed that the capitalist state played a necessary role to reproduce patriarchal values indicating the connections between Patriarchy and Capitalism. McIntosh (1978) describes women's oppression within the capitalistic system as it produces a 'low-paid reserve army of labour', and thus makes women victims of wage exploitation. Even within job working women remained controversial due to male chauvinistic attitude. The report of a medical officer in Britain to the Board of Education in 1913 claimed that the carelessness of mothers was the cause of infant mortality and household health problems (Jenson, 1986). Such contentions contributed to the oppression of women within the private and the public arena. By 1900, most European countries (with the exception of France) had enacted legislation which prohibited women from working in the industry, and to improve the "mother role" through education (Tilly and Scott, 1978). Political thinkers such as Rousseau had argued that men were suited for politics, and that women were best suited to the household. By legal definition, women were not public actors, and therefore they were banished from contemporary politics in most parts of Europe (Thompson, 1976).

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A more radical stream of feminism was born after World War II, and the feminists began to trace oppression within the nexus of gender, race and class. The vitality and success of the movement was evident in women's engagement in the community welfare activities e.g. housing, voting, and education which drew the attention of young and old activists. In the last decade feminists began to reveal more currents of radical feminism which were developed and shaped by the civil rights movement, specifically that of Black women's rights. While early feminists concentrated on suffrage rights influenced by the national women leaders, the post-war feminists recognized the vision of racism and sexism as inextricably bound with race and gender due to their influence of anti-racist and anti-colonialist movements. (Evans, 1980; Giddings, 1984; Cantarow and Malley, 1980).

In the 1960s, women in Europe and America fought for equal rights within the social and political fields through organized activism e.g. protests, revolutions, political groups, legal processes which advanced a common agenda for all or a particular group of women. Furthermore, inquiry deepened into the relationship between the political and legal status of women and the form and organization, and purpose of the State. In the South, women felt oppressed in both the domestic field and the labour force. The dual oppression of capitalism and patriarchy reinforced gender and class subordination, and the working class men helped maintain women's subordination, so that they could benefit from women's domestic labour. (Beneria, 1982; Eisenstein, 1979; Hartman, 1976; Jagger, 1983).

The advancement of education and the constant efforts of women in the North for gender equality in all the spheres, whether public or private, have brought about parity in every fields whereas women in the South are still struggling for the right of equal access to education. Men have often exploited the potential of women for their own benefit. For example, women fought against the imperial power in the *Swadeshi* movement in India and in the Democratic Movement in Nepal, but they are still fighting against the discriminatory practices created by the patriarchal societal values that prevented girls from schooling. Feminists from both the North and South attack this point of discrimination in educational attainment of the girls and the rules that maintain such practices. Analysis of various aspects that influence the attainment of girls'/women's education from gender perspective is the purpose of this article.

### **The Cultural Context**

The concept and value of education for boys and girls are not same in most societies. In most of the societies, boys are the more privileged groups to attain the desired level of education as the emphasis on education is usually greater on boys than on girls. Since it is the parents or any responsible kinsfolk or neighbours who often make the final decision, they play the decisive role in the education of children. Often the school across the road can be inaccessible for the girls since the parents dread the "foreign" classroom where women's

education is not valued. Bowman and Anderson (1980) illustrate the reluctance of families to make use of available schools, such as the Masai in Kenya, certain districts in India, the people dwelling in the Appalachians. Most of the people in rural Nepal do hardly care to visit the adjoining schools because of illiteracy and their reluctance to understand the value of education. Furthermore, in most of the parts even as boys were reluctantly sent to schools, the compulsory line of schooling was denied to girls.

In many Muslim societies, the practice of sex segregation affected women's education, and even the opening of single sex schools had little impact on the increase of the girls' enrolment in schools. Distance was also a major cause of non-enrolment in schools, and in fact, location became a major issue affecting female access to education (Naik, 1982; CERID, 1997).

In many Third World nations, women's lives are governed by the structures and percepts of the family, if not the community. Smock (1980) describes that the significant sex difference in the traditional processes of socialization has generally shielded females far more than males from exposure to socio-cultural changes. According to her, the cumulative impact of formal education is greater for girls than boys, or at least more difficult to reconcile with traditional role behaviour. This threatens parents from educating their girls who are expected to follow the traditional socio-cultural norms and values in their adulthood in a patriarchal value system and education would create more tension than relief in their lives (CERID, 2004; Luitel, 1996).

The sex role division of labour in most Third World countries has placed women within the domestic spheres. Studies from India, Nepal and several African nations indicate that girls constitute an important domestic labour force as early as the age of six whereas the boys share in the household works only after puberty (Naik, 1982; RIDA, 1991; Mblinyi, 1969). The boys are regarded as future wage earners, and thus, are privileged over girls. In a society where economy is important and only men are valued for wage earnings outside the farm, their chances of schooling is always higher than that of women whose premises are limited within the four walls of household. In such environments availability of schools does not necessarily improve girls' participation in schools (Luitel, 1996).

The patriarchal societal norms posit men as superior and women as inferior beings on the basis of their biology. In the Hindu social system, women are regarded as weak and dependant upon men, deriving their social status as well as inheritance rights, ritual status, and property access from their fathers, husbands and sons. So, marriage and birth of a male offspring become a necessity for a Hindu woman for her survival in a patriarchal extended family network (Bennett, 1983; Luitel, 1996). A girl grows up with the notion of temporary membership in her parents' home and a liability than a real member of the household. In the process of socialization, there is considerable emphasis on submissiveness and obedience to feminine ideals holding her desires and

necessities (Dube, 1988; Bennett, 1983). She learns to accept that preference is always towards the male children, and regards that brothers are the privileged members in the family. In Nepal, for example, most women encounter more severe cultural, social, legal and economic obstacles more than a poor male would find in getting education.

The age-old cultural beliefs based on religious values are still strong and pervade the female educational scenario in many Third World countries. Many of the rituals condemned education of women as being inferior individuals. The Hindu sacraments put women and *Sudra* (low-caste, untouchable) in the same profile and prohibited women from learning. A proverb from the Middle East says, "Just as there is no donkey with horns, there is no woman with brains." Literature, folklore and religious texts abound with similar beliefs reiterating the basic inferiority of women, prohibited them from the educational opportunities (Naik, 1982; Luitel, 1992). The trend continues even today where little girls are denied from the educational opportunities.

This discriminatory practice has always been attacked by the feminists over the world with the demand of equality. The post-modern feminists believe that sex, race and class all determine the nature of any female's identity, status and circumstance. Thus, feminists demand for the creation of a location where she will not be dominated but rather, find the ability to dominate her own circumstances.

### **The Curriculum**

The formal curriculum is often found to purport sex differentiation, and the analyses of school textbooks show that women are ignored. Women do not exist, or when they do, their actions and roles are limited to the domestic spheres. Weitzman et al. (1972) pointed out that primary textbooks, more often than secondary or college level books, depict women as background or non-central figures. Twenty five percent of illustrations also relegated women to background status. They are also assigned the roles such as tenders of domestic chores, and never in public roles as wage earners (CERID, 1997).

The school texts, in the word of Kelly and Nihlen (1982) reinforce inequality between sexes through different messages transmitted from school staffing patterns and authority structures. The texts deny women's domestic roles and yet legitimate their secondary roles in public life and the school system. The message conveyed is that women's subordination in the society is because of their "unnatural" role in the public life. They depict the 'traits' of women as appropriate to certain occupational roles. Women are portrayed as nurturing, passive and dependent whereas elementary school teachers, nurses and secretaries are reputed workers.

The sex bias reflection is found in the language of the curriculum. The use of male pronouns and nouns convey the message that only "males" are important. The "he" is always in the central action while "she" is not. The point is made

cogently by the studies of mathematics where "he" always solves the problem (Jay & Schminke, 1975; Kepner & Koehn, 1977; CERID, 1997). Focusing on this issue, an article in the *Edmonton Journal* (1992) highlighted the fact that emphasis on boys in the sciences dissuades the equal participation of girls in the classroom. While girls did better than boys, their interest in the sciences was less enthusiastic than the boys.

The secondary schools' textbooks rarely mentioned the important roles of women. Treckler (1973) found that in history, women played the side-lives roles as the pioneer wives, social workers, nurses, presidential helpmates, flag sewers etc. The women's suffrage movement, women trade unionism were ignored or relegated to one line. Women, as Treckler points out, simply did not shape history, but their contributions were ancillary to men, and domestic in nature.

The important point for consideration is: Who designs the curriculum, and for whom? The concept of man-power production in designing the curriculum for the needs of the capitalist state becomes the decisive factor in producing gender discrimination. Kelly and Nihlen (1982) point out that the Vocational Awareness Programme for elementary schools channel men and women to the world of factories and business, setting specific roles, and merely expose students to patriarchal relations in the working world. The texts normalize separate and unequal relations between sexes by omissions and commissions of roles, regardless of reality. Women are denied admission to certain programmes in higher education, and are sometimes channeled to gendered careers (CERID, 1997). Math and Science are male domains while education, nursing, literature, arts and social studies are the female domains. This concept is replicated and sanctioned by school systems by creating a different work field for men and women outside school. Freeman (1988) points out that the principal actors in the classrooms are female while the principal actors outside the classroom are males. This arrangement has persisted since the early schooling movements, and a normality of the system.

### **The Hidden Curriculum**

The socio-cultural context that governs the system is a male prerogative which shapes social relations that eventually affect gender achievement in school system. The fact that education is a male 'thing' and that educated women are 'different' from women in general society has an effect on the educational attainment of girls. Wright (1979) argues that the difference in economic benefits received from education separates economic, racial and gender groups which are interconnected with the relations of domination and exploitation. In Hindu belief, a daughter's earnings is not acceptable, thus parents who do not see any return from their investment in their daughter's education are reluctant to girls' education. Furthermore, girls themselves feel that educational attainment has nothing to do with their future careers in the household, and thus are not serious in their studies. It is the often cited verse in the Nepalese community "why to educate a girl, a good husband will provide her needs." It is seen in most of the classrooms that girls are mostly the passive learners while boys often interact

with teachers, which follows the pattern of social values of domination and subordination in the teaching learning process also.

Girls often fall prey to sexual harassment whether in the school or outside. It is but customary to pass filthy comments on girls for the macho boys, making the school situation hard for girls. The Edmonton Journal (1992) indicates that the hidden curriculum teaches boys and girls who is in charge, what behaviour is sanctioned and what is a taboo. The culture and the school climate give permission to boys to harass girls in schools. The case of the Edmonton secondary school shows that no one was seen to reprimand or condemn the boys for their behaviour, and girls learned to accept it. Girls are often vulnerable to sexual abuse when away from home without guardianship. Study in Nepal showed that girls were prone to sexual abuse while appearing in the SLC examination in the headquarters even by the personnel responsible for conducting examinations (CERID, 1997). The labeling inflicted on little girls who are not of an age to understand it alienates them from the class and they learn to be different and demure. Though the school system does its best to provide the same education to boys and girls, the most powerful learning of social structure begins outside the classroom. The way it is acted and valued in society has the wholesome effect on the career and personality development of girls.

### **The Pedagogy**

Studies (Gaiter, 1977; Levy, 1982) show that regardless of their gender, teachers tend to interact less with girls which generally conveys that education is less important for females than for the male peers. The knowledge distribution by gender suggests that teachers do not take the education of females seriously, and that female academic performance is systematically devaluated. Research has indicated that there is racial and class difference regarding classroom interactions. A SUNY Buffalo study in the Sociology of Education, students found that teachers in an all Black secondary school tend to interact more with females. The reverse was a case with white, working class students. In a study of a working class primary school it was found that teachers did not emphasize girls' sociability, which led to deemphasizing girls' academic performance with low achievement (Nihlen, 1986).

The teacher student interaction in the classroom still seems to perpetuate the tradition even in the developed nations. The Edmonton Journal (1992) reported that girls felt that teacher gave more time to boys to mull over or ask difficult questions, thus turning off girls who normally did better in those particular classes. Citing the study of Robertson on gender, culture, science and schools, the Journal mentioned that the method of teaching also impacts on girls' career development. Girls preferred a more co-operative and conducive teaching atmosphere which is rare in Mathematics and Science classes. The case of a secondary school in Calgary, Canada where Mr. Blanchard taught physics, showed an exception by creating not only an all-female class but also reaching the high achievement levels at the same time, due to his friendly teaching style.

Considering the gender-biased attitudes of teachers, feminists suggest for an all female learning situation rather to pose the possibility of a counter-patriarchic pedagogy in mixed gender institutions where females are not treated equally. Lewis and Simon (1986) suggest several qualities required by a counter-patriarchic form of teaching and learning where both the teacher and the student must take the responsibility. They also warn against the embodied quality of discourse which suggests oppression is enacted not by theoretical concepts but by real people in concrete situations. Since people are differently placed socially, politically and economically, there can be no text that could display a rational and neutral form. In this way, the discourse appears objective and distanced, and becomes a vehicle for domination, and thus, devaluing alternative perspectives, understanding and the articulation of experience. It favours one set of values over others as they are generated by the multiplicity of human experiences. All these problems can be encountered with a pedagogy in which the teacher and the student participate as social equals.

Drawing upon the experiences of the prevailing gender segregation in teaching, feminists suggest a radical pedagogy where both the teacher and students find their place to articulate the experiences of their daily lives. Lewis and Simon (1986) mention that in practice, this type of pedagogy is a struggle over the assigned meaning and over interpretation of experience over the self. Even then, they find that this very struggle forms the basis of a pedagogy that liberates knowledge and practice, and helps the acquisition of new knowledge expand beyond the individual experience. It helps in redefining the identities and the real possibilities in the daily conditions of our lives. The feminists strongly demand a pedagogy that allows for polyphony of voices, a form which legitimates the expression of difference, and the practice that supports the quality, and possibilities of solidarity and freedom. To this end female teachers can play a transformative role in the gendered culture through their experiences as the social subordinate and the academic performer as well, engaging themselves in the production of gender equal ideologies and practices.

The Postmodern feminists, according to Giroux (1991), offer educators an opportunity to develop a political project that embraces human interest that move beyond the particularistic politics of class, ethnicity, race and gender. They emphasize on an attempt to develop a radical democratic politics that stresses difference within unity by developing a public language that can transform a politics of assertion into one of democratic struggle. A teacher in such a situation can play a role as a transformative agent for democratic politics, where individual freedom and solidarity of public life without the notion of differentiation attached with gender inequality is present.

## **Conclusion**

Education is believed to be a vehicle of social transformation and individual advancement. It is supposed to provide people with knowledge and skills on an equal basis. However, it has been observed that there are differences in access,

classroom participation, curriculum design etc. that mostly tend to affect women who are culturally constrained and domesticated. It is a widely accepted view that women are politically disempowered, economically disadvantaged and socially delegitimated in a man made world. They are legitimated only by appropriating the values bestowed upon them by the age-old practice of patriarchal domination. Women have been in constant struggle against these discriminatory practices, and the fight has been a never-ending process. Feminists blame the patriarchal system as an impediment in the advancement of women. They argue that patriarchy organizes political and economic structures that provide benefits to men and the boundaries of social relation set by the system privileges the male as superior which is deemed to be inappropriate to women, irrespective of their social class, ethnicity and race.

Women's cause was only recognized when UNESCO raised the voices of human rights, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UNESCO Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education, and the UN Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.

The main argument is how education be transformative in a discriminatory society where everyone as a citizen is constitutionally and socially unequal. From the feminist perspectives, it is essential to analyze first the criteria that pose the gender discriminatory practices. The Marxist feminists claim patriarchy and capitalism as the major factors in the subordinate role of women and consider the state as the link across both the systems. They suggest the end of patriarchal domination to eradicate exploitation and oppression within the family context and other intimate relationships. The Postmodern feminists go beyond this and claim that the construction of gender must be seen in the context of wider relations in which it is structured. There is a need to deepen the postmodern notion of difference and radicalizing the notion of gender through the refusal to isolate it as a social category while simultaneously engaging in a politics which aims at transforming the self, community and society. Within this context the postmodern feminism offers the possibility of going beyond the language of domination, anger and critique.

The education that is intended for a gender equal society needs to analyze first the patterns, contents, the curriculum and the pedagogical practices that emphasize on gender difference. Gender differences in educational participation and achievement can be used as indicators of changing attitudes and expectations about life patterns, a social transformation far from the indulgence into the sexual/gender politics.

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## **Management of Provident Fund and Pension System: Exploring the Possibilities to Address Resource Crisis in TU**

Oj Man Singh Shrestha\*

### **Background**

The emergence of Tribhuvan University in 1959 as the pioneer institution for imparting higher education and producing high level manpower is indeed a landmark in the history of higher education in Nepal. Within a time span of 50 years, the institution has earned the fame and sometimes the fury of the students and the state, and has faced many problems and solved them. Apart from all those hardships and obstacles, it has been dynamic and produced many educationists, planners, politicians, intellectuals and managers needed for the nation.

TU has been successful in producing the necessary manpower, who have proved that they can lead and are leading in different sectors. Apart from playing a role model in higher education, the TU personnel and the students have always proved to be the active agents to bring about political changes in the nation.

But it is quite embarrassing to mention here at this stage of the glorious days of 5 decades of the institution that it is in a state of severe financial crisis. It has not been able to win the co-operation from any sides – neither from the government nor the students, the guardians and the general public. The crux of the problem starts from the unavailability of even the committed budget from the government on one hand and the insufficient amount of money to run the institution smoothly on the other.

Strikes, lockouts, vandalism and arson within the campus have become a common practice, and the government has not shown any moral responsibility to protect TU from such activities.

The rules-regulations and the autonomous character of the organization have given full autonomy to make decisions in favour of the institution. But it is sad to mention here that it has never been able to enjoy the full privilege. Direct interference and intervention begins from the appointment of Vice-Chancellor, Rector, Registrar and TU Service Commission's Chairman. Taking for granted the government has always made TU a political arena to impose the party decisions, and exercise the power of political leaders.

The appointed executives have less commitment and dedication to improving the worsening situation. Furthermore, the change in government has a direct impact on the day to day administration of the institution and also the change in executives. There are instances that they have been compelled to resign from

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the post which has been one of the main reasons why the prestige of the institution is declining.

## **Management of Provident Fund**

### *The Present Scenario*

The Provident Fund Section under Fiscal Administration Division of Central Office, Tribhuvan University is almost like the *Karmachari Sanchaya Kosh* that deals with the management of PF money in the governmental sector. Therefore, this section, since its inception, has been functioning as the only custodian of all TU employees' provident fund money. The 10 percent PF money, which is deducted from the employees' salary, is indeed the amount that can nicely be called as a sort of "Forced Saving" for the retirement stage. Thus, in a country where there is a dearth of the governmental/social benefits and other social benefit schemes, the provident fund money can be considered a social benefit scheme.

The ever growing size of TU in terms of increase in the number of employees and the swelling amount of money in the Provident Fund every year is definitely an indicator of the University's progress at present and in the days to come.

As a state university, TU has its own Act, Rules and Regulations, and full autonomy. Likewise, the PF money is also handled by the PF Section according to the Financial Rules and Regulations 2050.

As envisaged in the TU Rule, the PF money has to be invested according to the decision of the TU Executive Council, comprised of seven members - the three TU executives and four other nominated members. The money has to be invested at the discretion of the Executive Council. At present, the four members are from the academic background of physics, chemistry, mathematics and law.

Although the PF money has to be invested in banks or other lucrative areas after several rounds of discussions and analytical deliberations between the members, the Executive Council at present has delegated its power and authority to the Registrar for necessary action. So Registrar alone decides where to invest the money. The PF money which comes from around 17,500 (seventeen thousand five hundred) employees including the teaching and administrative ones, is increasing day by day. About 155 units, which includes the Central Office, the Campuses, Central Departments, Research Centers, and the Dean Offices, are scattered all over the country. Because of the centralized administrative system, the provident fund management, its accounting, lending and refunding processes, all are carried out at the Central Office level only.

### *Action Research Project*

Some of the most challenging tasks that the PF Section has been facing for decades are the lack of proper management and book-keeping works, no

preparation of financial statements, and lack of auditing of the accounts internally and externally. The situation was so worse that it took days and weeks to trace out the total money of the fund members and there was an atmosphere of non-confidence with the PF section.

Therefore, to tackle the problem and give a new look to the PF, an effort was undertaken (during Fy Yr. 2062/2063) to make improvements in the managerial and administrative system of PF section.

Accordingly, a detailed work plan was envisaged and efforts and activities were undertaken and carried out accordingly.

Table 1

**Status of Provident Fund Back Logs before the Project**

S.N.	Tasks to perform	Fiscal Years		Remarks
1.	Auditing Internal	2046/047	2064/065	19 years
	Auditing External	2040/041	2064/065	24 years
2.	Bank Reconciliation	2040/041	2064/065	24 years
3.	Financial Statement preparation	2046/047	2064/065	19 years
4.	Provident Fund Loan			
	4.1 Data Entry	2054/055	2062/063	9 years
	4.2 Data Verification	2046/047	2062/063	17 years
	4.3 Data Management	2046/047	2062/063	17 years
	4.4 Account Adjustment	2046/047	2062/063	17 years
5.	Provident Fund			
	5.1 Data Entry	2057/058	2062/063	6 years
	5.2 Data Verification	2057/058	2062/063	6 years
	5.3 Data Management	2057/058	2062/063	8 years
	5.4 Account Adjustment	2057/058	2062/063	8 years

*Rationale and Objectives of the Project*

The data/information shown in Table 1 clearly indicates the actual state of PF and the urgent need for updating the accounts, and strengthening and smooth functioning of the whole system. Thus, in view of the existing situation, the project-outlined the following objectives:

1. Updating the PF records;

2. Develop a software and computerize the daily operating system;
3. Build up the capacity of the operating system and the PF personnel;
4. Explore the possibilities of fund mobilization; and
5. Prepare an Action Plan for the effective and regular updating of the PF and the mobilization of PF.

One very important point that needs special mention is that this Action Research Project, unlike other projects, is not a rich project; or to put it in simple words, monetary benefit to the working staff is very negligible in it. Therefore, one of the major objectives aimed by the project is to strengthen and equip the section with necessary but minimum equipments. This is but a special mission of some very dedicated employees of PF section to accomplish the tasks faithfully and sincerely at very meager amount of allowances. The ultimate objective is to equip the PF Section with necessary furniture, computers, laptops etc. The employees working in this mission do not get even a 20 percent salary benefit for their commitment and dedicated works.

### *Achievements*

After launching the project, definitely some achievements have been made and the reports of them have already been submitted to the executives and the higher authorities. But one of the most embarrassing things is that there has been negligible attention, supervision and monitoring of the work progress and process of the PF on a regular basis.

Targeted goals were not achieved due to following reasons.

1. Since the inception of the project activities, the political situation in the nation and its impact in TU and its offices is a known fact, and this undoubtedly has been a great hurdle;
2. As the project office is in the premise of the Central Office, which has been a hotspot for strikes and frequent lockouts, closedowns and disturbances, the regular PF activities have come to a halt.
3. The software needed for the calculation of the interest rates was proved to be very complicated and painstaking; and it took many efforts and long time for the preparation.
4. The effort to collect information from the campuses, indeed, the old and worn out records took painstaking efforts; and on the other hand most of the papers and documents are found missing.
5. There is a dearth of the trained manpower to work with the computer system and it was really very challenging to correct the data entered and make the correct and accurate postings.

6. The office rooms and the office layout are inconvenient to carry out the works smoothly, so time has to be spent in making the necessary arrangements to make the work place more comfortable, easily accessible and so on.
7. The books of accounts prepared before had many mistakes and that took more time for corrections.
8. The total number of staffs available in this section comes to 32; and most of the staffs do not show any interest to work in the system because of the very low remuneration rates. As a matter of fact, there is no system of carrot and stick. But in view of the need to update the accounts and the urgency felt in this area to accomplish the job, the expectation of the staff to get an allowance of fifty percent is deemed indispensable and justifiable.
9. One of the most challenging problems faced by the team of the project work is the lack of monitoring system. So far there has been no such system that has motivated the employees. Therefore, there is an urgent need of a strong monitoring system to be developed and executed, and work performances evaluated.
10. There has always been a lack of trained manpower on one hand, and on the other hand some of those working in the section and already trained have been transferred. There have been no replacements for those transferred.
11. In the process of getting the accounts audited, most of the staff members have to be involved in clarifying the issues raised by the internal audit and this too has delayed the project activities.
12. Indeed, an unavoidable load shedding has totally disturbed the works in process; and it has proved a hurdle in the progress of the activities.
13. There is a lack of co-ordination and co-operation between Divisions such as the Inspection Division and Fiscal Administration Division, resulting into the non audit of the books of accounts even internally.

### **Investment of PF Money and Resource Mobilization**

Regarding the investment of PF money, the TU regulation, 2050 (Financial Management and P.F. rules) chapter 30, clause 115, has mentioned that the TU Executive Council can invest the PF money in Banks, (Fixed Accounts), or invest in some industry or any organized association under specific conditions or in any feasible area. TU so far has neither been able to invest the PF money in any lucrative investment sector nor mobilize them in more productive areas. The money has simply been preserved as fixed deposits in the banks. Although resource mobilization is often a risky affair, a wise plan and timely and good decision can bring in more benefits which PF has not been able to do.

## The Pension System

### *Background*

TU regulation has clearly defined pension system and it is definitely a privilege for the TU employees. Pension meant for social benefit scheme is undoubtedly a great help, a life support for those who are in service, retiring and have retired. Granting pension facility is indeed a matter of pride and a prestige issue for the institution; and the pensioners feel gratified and obliged to the institution who have been in long service.

### *The Pension Fund*

At present this fund has a total sum of Rs.19 crores, 39 lakhs 61 thousand and 150 rupees in the Fixed Deposit account. TU has this money in the form of fixed deposits in different commercial banks. The fixed deposit at Nepal Bank Ltd. Kirtipur has a sum of 2 crores and the term of this deposit has expired on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Jestha 2066. Whether to continue the deposit with the same bank or transfer it to somewhere else was still undecided by the date of 2066/2/8 because the matter has to be decided by the Registrar and he was on trip outside the country at that time. A situation like this can have a direct impact in the interest earnings.

### *Sources of Money*

- One of the perennial sources of income for pension fund comes from the office of the Controller of Examinations. Out of the total examination fee a student pays, the OCE office sets aside a sum of Rs 25/- from each student to the pension fund. And the Central Office, Pension Section so far has already received a sum of Rs. 2 crores and 50 lakhs (in the period of 2 years).
- Another source of income is the World Trade Centre, Tripureshwor from which it gets Rs.3 lakh 50 thousand per month; so it contributes an amount of 42 lakh rupees per year. As the office land has been leased for 32 years, including the 2 years' period of construction phase, TU is supposed to get a total sum of Rs.18 crores within the time span of 30 years.
- The Pension Account earns an interest of Rs. 96 lakh 98 thousand 57 and paisa 50 only from the fund money whereas the monthly need for pension distribution is 2 crores at present.

### *Retirement in Number Every Year*

According to the information made available by the *Karmachari Prasasan Mahasakha* (Personnel Administration Division), on average about 2 hundred staff members get retired every year. And it is supposed that this year the number will increase.



One important thing that needs mention here is as the institution gets older, the number of retiring people also increases in the same ratio, which in turn necessitates more money for pension distribution. The present number of TU pensioners is near about 2220.

### *Monthly Payable Money*

According to the information available, the monthly need to pay pension is near about 2 crores. This sum of payable money has always a tendency to increase in ratio and in consonance with the change in the salary scale or salary revisions. Anyway, to consider the present rate, assuming other things remaining the same, there is an annual need of 26 crore rupees.

### **Other Benefits**

Every employee, during retirement, is entitled to get the following monetary benefits:

- [a] The medical benefit
- [b] Sick leave money
- [c] Home leave money

The amount of money payable to the staff depends upon the position and the total number of leave days that one has in deposit. The rates of all three facilities mentioned above differ in amount and is calculated on an annual basis.

### **The Present Scenario**

Although TU Rule has clearly promised to pay the retired persons the above mentioned facilities during retirement, the prevailing reality clearly indicates that "the retired persons, the respected senior citizens are the most neglected ones and an unnecessary economic and social burden" for the institution. There are reasons behind this bitter truth; and they are:

1. The pension money is sent to the bank only at the end/of the month. i.e., only after settling the regular salary payments and other payments. As there is an acute shortage of money for the distribution of pension, the Finance Division is always in crisis and financial crunch every month.
2. The person who retires can get the provident fund money, sick leave money, medical expenses etc. only after several months of round up at the Central Office. At present the minimum time required to get the payments is 6 months.
3. Pensioners are normally found to have been offended, as many of them have complained that they are unable to get the money on regular monthly basis. The old age, the physical disability, increasing medical expenses

and queuing up for money at this stage of life in front of the bank counters, and when the turn comes - the bank refuses to pay. This is the reality and the present state of pension payments. The question now arises: Is pension a reward or punishment?

## **Possibilities to Increase Income**

### *The Present Scenario*

TU undoubtedly has its glorious history of 50 years. We now have a number of universities instead of one and still more are in the pipeline to emerge. But in terms of the prestige and many other issues, this university is becoming a centre loaded with many problems and is growingly recognized as a sick one.

Some of the major problems TU has been facing can be summed up as follows:

- The Financial Crisis - insufficient money to run smoothly;
- Despite being a state owned university, there is always a problem in receiving the budgeted sum. The government since many years back has seldom provided the money even committed earlier;
- Growing politicization, political groupism, strong political feelings, political backings and even unpopular decisions which are not in favour of the institution - as for example, approval of resignation in back-dates,
- Growing indiscipline among the administrative staff, students and the teachers;
- Educational anarchism - TU campus versus private campus - in terms of the fee between the two categories of campuses.

### *Sources of Fund*

Before discussing about the possible sources and areas of generating income, special mention in brief about the report of *Tertiary Education in Nepal* seems to be more relevant. In 1995 this study was conducted for 3 years and 4 and half months. It recommended the measures to improve in these areas:

- [i] The organizational structure
- [ii] Management
- [iii] Finance
- [iv] Quality in Education, and
- [v] Physical Facilities

Although the study was conducted some 10 years ago, the recommendations made were hardly discussed for implementation. The very painstaking study had

suggested that unless special attention is paid to those aspects, the university in a short period of time will prove to become an unsuccessful one. Out of the 5 above areas an effort has been made here to analyze the specific areas - *Physical Facilities, Finance and Management*.

### *Physical Facilities*

TU under its ownership has 1210 hectares or 23,595 ropanis of land, out of which 227 hectares/4426.5 ropanis of land is based in Kathmandu valley alone.

Although the location of some campuses was good enough many years back, they are now in the midst of the madding crowds and do not seem to be favourable for teaching learning purposes. Some of these campuses are:

1. Saraswoti Campus
2. Amrit Science Campus
3. Tri-chandra Campus
4. Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus
5. Viswo Bhasa Campus
6. Nepal Law Campus
7. Padma Kanya Campus
8. Lalitkala Campus

The buildings occupied by these campuses are in such busy commercial hubs, that these campuses can be displaced to some other peaceful place and the university can use these areas as the income generation centres.

### *Finance*

One of the biggest challenges that the university has been facing is the problem of budgetary deficits and acute shortage of funds. The provident fund money at its disposal, the availability of land at very busy commercial hubs - are lying unused and unproductive. A wise plan to utilize them and generate income has become an urgent necessity if TU is to survive in the coming days.

For this specific purpose, the university administration can form a Governing Body or the Board of Directors in which representatives from Nepal Rastra Bank, the *Karmachari Sanchaya Kosh*, *Nagarik Lagani Kosh*, Tribhuvan University Teachers' Association (TUTA), Nepal University Teachers' Association (NUTA), and employees' association should be made members so that the responsibility and accountability is assured and the service will be guaranteed. The Board will work independently; but it will be accountable to the TU administration.

### *Fees from Students*

As most of the university campuses are housed in their own buildings, there is no need of paying rental charges. The present situation indicates that the salary component of staff comes from the Government and rest of the things TU has to manage. One of the sources of income in the educational institutions is the fee from the students. And in view of the prevailing rates the university students are paying, it is below the school fee rates.

The students are reluctant to pay if the university fees are hiked. In such a situation, if the university is to survive, there should be a tripartite agreement and conversation among the students, university and the government to make decisions regarding whether to get full support from the government and students, or to worsen the situation. The urgency of the situation has raised many questions regarding the survival and smooth running of the university. It is time now to decide on the part of the government whether to make the institution left crippled or to make it a prestigious one.

### *Research Centres as Income Generation Centres*

The four research centres, all equipped with adequate and trained manpower in different fields, must be activated to work as the income generation centres so that they can provide consultancy and other services needed for various organizations.

### *The Affiliated Campuses*

It is a hard fact that most of the TU teachers are associated with the private campuses in one way or the other. Many senior professors have been found patronizing these campuses. At present the number of campuses is 561 and this year alone 51 additional campuses have been approved for affiliation which will total the number of affiliated campuses to 612. Although we have the record of total number of affiliated campuses, TU administration has not been able to trace out the exact number of students with each campus and the rate of the tuition fee each one is levying. These campuses at the beginning have to pay:

- [1] For registration form: NRs 10,000/-
- [2] Feasibility study fee from Rs. 15,000/- to 50,000/- depending upon the faculty, and
- [3] Royalty to TU from 70,000/- (outside the Kathmandu valley) to Rs. 320,000/- in the Kathmandu valley.

Apart from these fees, a perennial source of income for TU is the Service Charge to be paid by these campuses. The present rule has made the provision that each campus must pay one month tuition fee of each student once a year. Let us say a campus has 30 students at Masters Level; and students are charged Rs. 2400/- as tuition fee per month.

Now the total amount of money payable by the campus to TU will be -

$$\begin{aligned} 2400 \times 30 \times 1^{\text{st}} \text{ year} &= 72,000/- \\ 2400 \times 30 \times 2^{\text{nd}} \text{ year} &= \underline{72,000/-} \\ &1, 44,000/= \end{aligned}$$

Although TU has framed this policy and rule, it is quite embarrassing to state here that very few private campuses are following this. On the other hand, a strong and effective system of supervision and monitoring to find out the exact situation is not in practice. There is no monitoring system and supervision system to check into the matters.

Therefore, I would like to suggest here that the Central Office must form a special team of staff that will look into the matters very strictly and the amount raised from this sector can very easily be diverted into the Pension Fund. A detailed study and workout is necessary to find out the estimated total amount of income from this sector but this surely can be a perennial source of income for the Pension Fund.

#### *Centre for International Relations (CIR)*

Although this Centre started functioning from April 1998, the Centre has proved its credibility and shown strong potentiality to become one of the perennial sources of income. It is estimated that the Centre earns near about 50 lakh rupees a year which can be injected into the pension fund.

According to this centre, the number of foreign students affiliated with TU for research is as follows:

Table 2

<b>Year</b>	<b>Post Doctoral</b>	<b>Ph.D.</b>	<b>Masters</b>	<b>#Non degree</b>
2004	2	14	12	74
2005	1	14	2	52
2006	2	12	1	83
2007	2	13	X	101
2008	3	18	2	75
Total	70	71	17	385

For non-degree researcher 9% of the proposed research budget overhead charge is also taken by Centre for International Relations.

This Centre charges a sum ranging from \$ 140.00 to 210.00 depending upon the level of the Degree as Registration fee from the students who get registered with TU.

### **Recommendations**

1. Indeed the Central Office, where all the power is centralized, is undoubtedly the central power house. The very powerful and influential executives and 13 special class Administrators must take the lead and set an example that the central office is the Centre of Excellence.
2. The university rules and regulations have given unlimited powers to Vice-Chancellor, Rector, Registrar and TU Service Commission Chairman. Of course, VC is the final authority of TU to make any sort of favourable decision.
3. TUTA, NUTA, Employees' Association and Student Unions must develop an attitude and be willing to work with management system; and Central Administration must develop an amicable atmosphere for the same.
4. The Central Office must make strategic plans to mobilize university students while bargaining with the government. Student unions and students must work as the strength of TU and demonstrate their abilities and capabilities through constructive works. It is time now to show their credibility, accountability and responsibility instead of showing the strength by burning the tyres and obstructing the roads which has become a public nuisance and an action of contempt.
5. The Central Office needs to develop an accountable and responsive management and administrative system to deliver the services. Very simple and little things of management can make a lot of difference and impress and benefit the people.
6. The TU management system must develop a mechanism of payment system to the retiring staffs on the last day of his/her office.
7. Setting up a PR (public relations) section supports in the smooth functioning of the daily activities and perform specific works in times of crisis. Obviously, this section can handle a host of issues and become a great help to the institution, the employees and the general public.

# Educational Reform and School Governance in Nepal

Hari Prasad Upadhyaya\*

## Context

Innovation in education and school is not new phenomenon in Nepal. Several efforts have been made in this direction for a long time; however, the basic features of schooling process have not changed substantially. The reform process could not transform the basic value and power relationship within the institution, and the changes were rather superficial and transitory. For instance, though the reform changed the school's instructional process to some extent, organization and culture remained remarkably intact. In other words, the efforts have failed to alter the basic organizational structure and cultural belief upon which the system is based. Therefore, schools were not transformed considerably.

In fact, the issue of governance relates with the power relation. Traditionally, the government has ultimate authority over the schools; and it determines curriculum, sets the standards for graduation, and establishes criteria for credentialing various professions. The more the government exercises this prerogative, the greater will be the centralization of power at the top of the educational hierarchy and the more remote becomes the decision-making from the local school sites and the community it serves. Benett and Le Compte viewed that the ability of an agency or a group to influence schools depends upon their distance from the school site. As it moves further from the school site, influence and control tend to be increasingly regulatory and indirect (Kinsler and Gamble, 2001). In such a situation, the accountability of school authorities and others may not function as desired. This explains why the governance reform is required.

With the change in the social, political and economic ideology and organizations, change in educational system is necessary; and this change occurs through systematic reform in education. Educational reform normally refers to a substantial and systematic attempt to change the content, structure and power relations in the educational system to achieve the improvements in education. However, reform is usually based on a set of values such as what is desirable in education and how it may be attained. Thus, reform not only contains technical and economic elements; it also concerns power relations in the system. Therefore, changes in structure of the system and power relation receive prime importance in educational reform in addition to technical or resource-led innovation. Technical elements are concerned with change in the contents and process of education through reform in curriculum, testing, teaching methods and teacher training, etc. On the other hand, economic elements relate with the manipulation of resources. The persistent view is that education system is

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inadequately resourced, either in general or in specific areas, so additional resource is required to attain the goal of education. However, it is also viewed that educational change can be engendered through changes in resource mechanism rather than increasing resource base for education.

Apart from technical and economic aspects, the reform also relates with political element and insists changes in power relation. In the system, some parties are strong while others are too weak; so that the overall pattern of control and incentives is inappropriate to encourage behaviour that ensure improvement in school and educational quality. Technical or resource-led innovation could be implemented through administrative means, and it may not require legislation. But technical and economic dimensions of reform have tended to be placed within, and often designed to reinforce, more fundamental change in the structure of educational system that lead to change the existing power relation within them; which, of course, implies that educational reform strategies depend upon legislation.

In fact, power relation in an organization or society is expressed through the governance. Governance is a mechanism, process, relationship and institution through which stakeholders articulate their interests, exercise rights and mediate their differences. Governance also includes values, rules, institutions and process through which people and organization work together to exercise authority, make decisions and achieve the common goal. At present, governance is regarded as a broad umbrella, covering almost any non-hierarchical mode of policy formation exercised by formal governmental bodies interacting with each other and with organizations in civil society. Today, governance theory is closer to the theories of new institutionalism, since they emphasize how decision-making is embedded in many types and levels of influences which lie behind the organizational culture and experiences that shape how organizations deal with public policies.

### **Objective**

Since the issue of governance relates with the structure and power relation, this article attempts to answer the basic research question: Who controls the school in Nepal?

### **Research procedure**

Attempt was made in exploring and uncovering the issues and factors that tend to create gaps in the implementation and in relation to the dimensions of school governance in a context specific manner. Related literatures were reviewed and empirical data were gathered from different sources. The attempt focused more on school governance practices, identification of issues and analysis of their policy provisions. As it has enquired into the complexities of governance, power, participation and implementation, it has also explored the factors playing role to create the gaps. The effort aimed to cover contextual conditions with the use of



multiple sources of evidence.

Data were collected from Chitwan, Kailali, Ilam, Syangja and Jumla districts and 15 schools were selected from them. Data were collected through discussions with District Education Office (DEO) staff members, interview with Head Teacher (HT), chairpersons of School Management Committee (SMC) and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), and group discussion with SMC and PTA members, teachers and local parents. School minutes, supervision diary, administrative report, letters, etc. were reviewed; and school and school environment were observed. Finally, a one-day experience sharing session was organized at the headquarters of the districts to verify the data for assuring reliability. Semi-structured and open-ended interview schedules and discussion protocols, observation sheet, and school survey forms were developed and used for data collection. Data were reviewed and assessed for the analysis.

## **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

### *Formation of School Governing Bodies*

There are two bodies that govern school. They are SMC and PTA. After the seventh amendment in the Education Act, local parents' involvement in school management was made necessary and, of course, mandatory. It was expected that local parents have stake and they would manage school better. So, SMC was given high importance, and parents' representation was ensured in SMC. This was a major reform that encouraged local stakeholders to get involved in the school's management. In addition, PTA was created while the seventh amendment in the Act was made.

Though SMC was formed in every school mostly by parents' meeting where parents discussed and selected the SMC chairperson and members, most SMCs were dominated by the upper caste males. Representation of women, Dalits and ethnic groups and other marginalized groups was meager. SMC was not found precisely inclusive. Moreover some of the members were not really parents since their children did not admit in the school; some admitted children working in their homes. Some members and even the chairpersons in some SMCs were the political activists rather than parents. There are many reasons behind the situation. In one of the schools, non-parent became the SMC chairperson under the influence of political party. Similarly, parents requested one social activist to work as the SMC chairperson though he was not a real parent. Knowingly, he remained absent in the meeting on that day, but parents requested him to be the chairperson. He was not only a social activist but also a dedicated personality for the betterment of school. In one school, there was three months long debate and disagreement over selecting the SMC chairperson. Finally the chairperson was chosen through political pressure. In a school, parents nominated a person as chairman in his absence, even though he was not a parent and he did not live in the school's service area. In another school, conflicting situation emerged when both father and mother wanted to be the members of SMC, with the claim that

both were the guardians of children.

It seems women were included in SMC just to maintain the formality provisioned in the Act, whereby there must be at least a woman in SMC. Consequently, there was only one woman in most SMCs. Since the role of women in traditional society like Nepal is determined by the traditional values and beliefs, which confines them in limited public gatherings, their presence in public organizations like school is not much tolerated. But it is fortunate that a woman had led the SMC and majority of members were women in a school, which is a clear indication that women no longer want to stick with their traditional roles. However, the Act remained silent in case of ethnic and marginalized groups' participation in SMC. Since the society is hierarchical one, people from such groups do not want to compete with the so-called upper castes. These people are not proactive, and they generally do not take initiation to be selected as SMC members. However, they can be the SMC members; but this might have happened due to the prevalence of social demand that SMC should be made inclusive. Consequently, there is at least a member from Dalits and a member from ethnic groups in various schools.

It was also observed that intent of the Act and policy was not strictly followed during the formation of SMC and PTA. Therefore, non-parents can also be included in SMC and PTA. In some PTAs, there was no teacher as member whereas in some, SMC chairperson was the chair of PTA and HT was the member-secretary. Political manoeuvring during SMC and PTA formation was another factor that compels selecting political activists in SMC, especially SMC Chairperson. Local politicians and political activists have the tendency to control the school and its resources so that they could influence the community. Moreover, getting the position of chairperson in a resourceful school was also a status symbol. So, there was competition and political hassle among local politicians, and influential parents as well to become the chairperson in such schools. In case of schools which suffer from resource constraints, parents seem reluctant to be members in SMC, since they have to devote their efforts and time for resource-generation.

Review of the provisions and the actual practice in the field show that there is a gap between intents of the Act and real practice. This is a kind of rationality-reality gap. Since the individual normally could not distinguish or differentiate the dominant and rational paradigms, this kind of gap occurred. Moreover, the logic, objectivity and formality set by the legal provisions did not match with the social or behavioural reality such as stakeholders' limitations, social objectives and subjectivity, etc. This situation further contributed to widen the gap.

#### *Dynamics of Power Exercise*

Regarding school operation, SMC was empowered by the Act, Regulations and Directives to take overall responsibility of school such as planning, school operation, teacher management, resource mobilization, facility development, and

so forth. The reform intends to bring community members in school operation and management. Such a move naturally addresses the concerns of educational reform and, of course, the very principle of decentralization. Nevertheless, most of the roles entrusted to SMC were managerial rather than being related to governance in nature. SMC should do everything that school requires. However, they confined their roles in developing physical facilities, and making financial resources available. Since most SMC members were not much aware of the provisions of the Act and Regulations as they did not have reading habits, they simply followed what the former SMC did. In fact, SMC played significant roles in facility development since past, so SMC naturally concentrated their efforts in these areas. Moreover, local stakeholders such as parents, community members, students, HT and teachers also viewed that facility development was the prime responsibility of SMC, besides other things. In reality, discourses are constructive phenomena that shape the identity and practice of human subject. The prevalent discourse is that SMC works for physical development of school. Thus, SMC develops its identity as the body to support the management of school facilities. Moreover, most schools have limited facility, so SMC needed to be engaged in developing these facilities at first, ignoring other important aspects of school. Besides, school faced the problems of enrolment pressures due to population growth, and enrolment campaigns during the admission period that also ask for expanding physical facility for school. In spite of these, some SMC chairpersons were also interested to either upgrade the level of school from primary to lower secondary and secondary, or add new classes within their tenure so as to give some new things to the community. Such initiatives of SMC naturally demand additional teachers, addition of facility and consequently the financial resources. Therefore, SMC members are grossly engaged in such activities.

Moreover, the SMC exercises governing role very little. SMC cannot reallocate budget provided by the government, even if it prepares budget and programs of the school. Though SMC has authority to recruit teachers; the Regulation does not empower SMC for teacher promotion, transfer and determination of salary and facilities. SMC can employ teacher on temporary basis, but it has to inform DEO– the central agency for the fulfillment of vacant position. In fact, SMC depends upon DEO and system for their permission and approval for teacher appointment. In a district, DEO staff members dictated their desires to a school while giving permission for teacher recruitment. DEO may not approve the appointment, if SMC does not honour the desires. Sometimes, teachers' organizations give pressure to the DEO for allotting teacher from relief grants in a school. A school resolved the problem of teacher appointment in 7 months due to such kind of hassle.

Even though SMCs are entrusted with various roles, authority and power, they do not think that they can exercise the authority and power vested in them. For them, teacher recruitment has been the major role, but exercising this role is very much painstaking. SMC cannot determine the teacher's quota in school, and

exercise authority to punish a teacher doing wrong. SMC has to share power in recruiting teachers and they cannot reward a teacher for promotion. Further, SMC cannot determine the scholarship quota, and reallocate funds or budget allotted to schools except for SIP funds and some incentive grants. They believe that these are the major roles, and all these roles are performed by the system with its de-concentrated arm- DEO. As their involvement in facility development was very high, they think that they have more functions rather than authority. They viewed that SMCs are entrusted with minor roles- support school that asks for more efforts, time and resources.

Mostly, SMC does not obstruct HT in quality-related issues and other aspects of school. Since the success of SMC also depends on HT's initiatives, SMC often leaves HT to carry out SMC's functions too. During field work, it was observed that HT carried out the functions of SMC in one school of Ilam and two schools of Kailali district. SMC either ignored or permitted HT to do what HT was doing. This situation emerged due to the confusion in SMC's roles on one hand, and lack of skills of SMC on the other. Since most SMC members were unaware of the matters and their roles as well, they could not take initiatives. Moreover, they have limited knowledge and skills to tackle the quality-related issues. However, the case is a little different in the school where management has been transferred to the community. In these schools, most SMCs were aware of their roles and they developed skills to some extent to deal with these matters. In these schools, SMC chairperson started to monitor the attendance of teachers and children, and invited parents for discussion on their children's progress. In some schools, the chairperson mobilized HT and other members to do so.

In schools, mostly SMC chairperson exercised more authority compared to other members. It seems that the chairperson was responsible person instead of other members of SMC. Even these members think that the chairperson bears the sole responsibility of school, not them. Members thought that it is the responsibility of chairperson to accomplish work. Since the chairperson has legal authority and he/she performs the tasks assigned by the Act, every decision is finalized after the consensus of SMC chairperson. In most schools, the chairperson administers the school account jointly with HT. So, the chairperson is assumed as more liable to handle legal and social responsibility, and also accountable for rights and wrongs of the school. Moreover, SMC does not have the tradition to divide its responsibility among its members. Division of responsibility was found almost non-existent at all. Besides, DEO and other agencies recognized the chairperson, not other members. Naturally, the chairperson became more active than other members. However, the role of HT is significant in all aspects of school affairs. SMC observed that support of HT is very crucial to manage school, teachers and facilities. In almost all schools, HT prepared agenda for SMC meeting. Very few SMC chairpersons are consulted during the preparation of agenda. In most cases, HT clarifies the issues in meeting. It indicates that HT influences the meeting and their decisions. Since it is the HT's responsibility to run schools and perform routine works, HT better understands the problems of

school. In addition, HT also possesses some legal-rational authority. Therefore, HT is influential in deciding school's affairs.

The analysis above reveals that SMC could not influence significantly on school decisions. Current practices confined SMC to engage in limited activities which are supportive in nature rather than being the governing ones. The intent of educational reform is to involve SMC meaningfully in the operation and governance of local school. But the roles performed by SMC reveal that its participation in school governance is not to the level expected. This is, of course, the conception–reality gap. In fact, success of implementation depends on the gap between design conceptions and social or organizational realities. If there is mismatch between the conception and worldview of stakeholders involved in the system and public sector, implementation will not give expected results. In our particular case, implementation efforts did not tend to match with the prevailing social and organizational realities, so the conception-reality gap occurred.

Like the SMC, PTA has also been entrusted with the roles to carry out necessary functions for maintaining quality of teacher, monitor school fees, give suggestion to the school in this matter, have updated information on academic activities, and interact on the matters. In addition, the block grant disbursement directives prescribed PTA responsibility to carry out social audit of school activities. However, the roles entrusted to PTA are not very encouraging. Except for social auditing, other functions are ritual in nature and these functions do not motivate parents and teachers for enhancing their participation in school affairs. In fact, the potentials of PTA in getting teachers' and parents' support, fund raising, conducting school events, creating awareness, etc. are not recognized, so PTA's roles are confined merely on limited areas. In fact, PTA is narrowly recognized, since it has got limited and ritual roles. When the policy provisions regarding local involvement in decision-making are considered, the roles assigned to PTA do not prove that the education codes translate the vision of policy.

Moreover, PTA members do not have proper knowledge about their roles and responsibilities. In most schools, PTAs were found idle while in some others SMC assigned them the tasks such as looking after the construction works, getting in the delegation as member to visit DEO and other organizations, etc. They took part in household visits during admission. During field work, it was observed that PTA dealt with the same matters that SMC did. Moreover, PTA did not meet; rather it jointly met with SMC even if PTA is an independent body. PTA looks like a school committee constituted for helping SMC to carry out SMC's responsibilities. In some schools, conflicting situation also aroused since PTA did not want to merely stamp on the decisions of SMC, and asked for the executive power. As PTA was assumed to be a body which accommodates the people who could not get any position in SMC, naturally the PTA members struggle for power. This is also a conception-reality gap.

In schools, HT is more influential than SMC and PTA. HT raises agenda in the SMC meeting and takes part to decide over the problems. In the absence of HT,

SMC may not come to any conclusions. In most schools, it is the HT who takes the lead role in implementing decisions, raising fund, mobilizing community people and resources, and so forth. By profession, HT has to perform various kinds of activities. School maintains relationships with DEO and several organizations through HT, even if SMC chairs also make effort in this context. But such chairpersons are very few, almost negligible. HT visits the DEO to get information about scholarship, School Improvement Plan (SIP), training, budget, teacher support schemes, etc. Since HT is experienced in school's matters, he/she also contacts with different kinds of persons. This kind of activity creates harmonious relation between the school and other organizations including DEO. Besides, HT has also been invited and has taken part in various kinds of meetings, trainings, seminars etc., which obviously make HT a school leader. Thus, HT can substantially influence the school's decisions and school affairs. But SMC chairperson and members hardly visit DEO and these organizations for these purposes. Moreover, some SMC chairpersons find themselves weak and feeble. Thus HT, though normally assumed as the individual working in the lower strata of educational bureaucracy, can manipulate and influence school's decision.

### *Capacity Development*

Capacity development of educational service providers at the grassroots level is assumed as an important aspect since competency and capacity of human resources improve system's quality. So capacity development is equally important as restructuring power and authority. In fact, capacity refers to the ability of an organization or an individual to carry out a range of functions effectively on a sustainable manner. It is a process by which individual, organization, and society as a whole create, advance, and unleash their abilities and manage the affairs successfully.

The government has made provisions to enhance the organizational capacity of schools. These provisions include funds for different purposes (scholarships, SIP, incentive grants, etc.) including teacher salary and management cost, classroom construction; and capacity development opportunity for school authorities, management transfer to the community, and provision for social auditing besides many other things. In addition to this, Education Act and Regulations are revised so that school authorities become accountable, and they can provide educational services efficiently. No doubt, schools have made some changes and yielded expected outcomes. In spite of these efforts, many schools have limitations to achieve the desired results, because these efforts could not make substantial contributions in enhancing the capacity of school authorities.

In fact, National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) is established to increase and improve the competencies and professional capacity of the persons working in the field of education. NCED develops educational human resource development policies, plans, and implements training programs. NCED has countrywide network for these purposes. The efforts of NCED cluster around the

capacity development of educational personnel and HT. However, NCED could not cover substantial number of HTs for training. Training program was also not run for one month full – sometimes limited to 12 days and sometimes 15 days.

However, little attention was paid to address the needs of SMC and PTA and most of these members received very few opportunities for developing their capacity since no systematic effort has so far been made to enhance the capacity of these grassroots level individuals and organizations. In fact, there is no policy as such laid out for the capacity development of SMC and PTA, nor there was structural provision in Department of Education and DEO to deal with the matters of SMC and PTA. While looking at the role of educational authorities, none of them was made responsible to address the needs and concerns of SMC and PTA. To foster democracy at the grassroots levels and the social capital required for the effective implementation of service delivery, capacity development by all means is necessary. When we see the policy provisions for capacity development of SMC and PTA - the grassroots organizations whose roles are considered significant in educational reform agenda, obvious gap will be seen between policy and practice. Since the capacity development policy for SMC and PTA does not receive any value in the major policy documents of Ministry of Education; nor the structural provisions are there in the system; the system seems reluctant to empower these grassroots level organizations, or to promote community-centred governance practices at least in the education sector.

Normally, training programs are assumed to be the way for capacity development. But technical support and professional guidance are equally important for enhancing the capacity. For example, SMC, HT and PTA should have knowledge on Act, Regulations and Directives, etc. Govinda and Diwan (2003) observed that changed rules and regulations often remained only on the books, and the central authority becomes aware of these changes. People have to adopt changed roles and functions, but they continue to follow the instructions from above instead of using the powers vested in them on account of their ignorance. Proper dissemination of the changed framework and its implications for people at different level is a basic requirement for involving these grassroots people in decision-making. Besides, school authorities and the local community have to acquire skills in human relation. HT and teachers have to care for building relations with parents to imbibe a sense of active participation in managing school affairs. Therefore, technical and academic capabilities may be necessary. Capacity for maintaining human relation is also important.

## **Conclusion**

After the restoration of democracy, educational reform remained major agenda in government's priorities. Since the country has the traditional hierarchical society, the major players are social upper groups. In fact, schools were managed and controlled by these groups; as involvement of disadvantaged and marginalized groups in school governing bodies was negligible.

## Educational Reform and School Governance in Nepal

In Nepal, reform begins as a top-down move, and is carried out under broader administrative reform endeavors. Since the reform is centrally engineered, technical-bureaucratic perspectives have influenced much in its design. Naturally, educational bureaucracy controls and influences much in decision making.

Since bureaucracy is a powerful factor in determining public policy and procedures, transformation process normally becomes a technical exercise. Under this framework, intensity of reform in terms of sharing power, restructuring, etc. depends upon the system and will of bureaucracy. But the reform in socio-political perspective asks for the empowerment of community people, SMC, and PTA, etc. Taking into account these two perspectives, it becomes obvious that legal reform alone does not provide base for educational reform. In addition, it also asks for empowering individuals and organization at the grassroots level.

Nevertheless, transforming a system from centralized decision-making to locally functioning one is normally bound to be a slow process; and external inputs and guidance may not help to achieve the goal of reform in expected manner. Therefore, changing the system requires promoting the habit of participatory decision-making, which certainly disturb the existing power relation among different stakeholders. So the following aspects need to be considered in reforming school governance:

- Restructuring power relation among different stakeholders, and orienting them to the new relation;
- Devising national policy and structure for capacity development of SMC, PTA, and grassroots level individuals and organizations;
- Empowering grassroots level individual and organizations.

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# Task in the Context of Language Pedagogy: Theoretical Understanding

Dr Binod Luitel\*

## Introduction

In pedagogy, how we teach and how our learners get involved in learning are as important as the contents they learn. Obviously, learners' involvement is made possible through various kinds of tasks in the instructional process. When we emphasize learning process, learners' task naturally deserves our attention. For this reason, task has been the topic of interest for language pedagogists in the recent years – particularly in the context of second and foreign language education; and it has “served as both a research instrument for investigating L2 acquisition and also as a construct that has been investigated in its own right.” (Ellis 2003a: ix)

Initially piloted, documented and theorized in the 1980s under the leadership of Prabhu (1987) in South India in the context of teaching English as a second language, task-based instruction has been accepted and implemented worldwide these days, with notable achievements in the teaching of other languages as well. Long and Richards (2006: ix) have highlighted its successful implementation in Belgium in various settings including the adult vocational training, classes for immigrant children, and primary and secondary mainstream education. To quote further from them, “....Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has now been employed for roughly a decade in approximately 1,200 state schools and other educational settings throughout the Flemish-speaking region of Belgium” (ibid.) – for the teaching of Flemish/Dutch as a second language, as well as Dutch as a foreign language.

Having understood the influence of task-based teaching as such, we may be tempted to study, first and foremost, about task in a bit detail – with some basic concerns including: its meaning, importance, types, ingredients of task, ways of task categorization, its classroom operation, etc. These and other related matters are discussed here in the sections that follow.

## Meaning and Definitions

A layman's meaning of 'task' refers to a work to be performed by some person. As Long (1985, quoted by Ellis 2003a: 4) has put it, 'task' is meant for '...the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between; so 'tasks' are the things people will tell you they do if you ask them ...' – including, for example, painting a fence, dressing a child, filling out a form, buying a pair of shoes, making an airline reservation, borrowing a library book,

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taking a driving test, typing a letter, weighing a patient, sorting letters, taking a hotel reservation, writing a cheque, finding a street destination, helping someone across a road, and so on.

In pedagogical context, 'task' particularly signifies the acts that take place in the course of teaching-learning. Various scholars have tried to define this term in several ways; and based on the focus of the definitions, we can categorize them under different headings. Some of the definitions available in the contemporary literature on language pedagogy are presented under three categories below.

- i) Outcome-oriented definitions: Some experts have tried to define task keeping in mind the purpose of learning and the outcome that results after the completion of task performance. The definitions given by Willis and Carless are presented here:
1. Willis (quoted by Seedhouse 1999) has stated: "By task I mean an activity which involves the use of language but in which the focus is on the outcome of the activity rather than on the language used to achieve that outcome."
  2. To quote the words of Carless (1998: 356), "Tasks are purposeful and contextualised learning activities through which pupils progress towards the targets."

As we see, these definitions have shown key concern on 'outcome' or 'target' of the acts to be performed. To follow them, an activity implemented for language teaching-learning will be considered a 'task', if it has some target – irrespective of whatever component of language it involves for the learners' practice.

- ii) Meaning-focused definitions: Such kinds of definitions, even if they agree to focus on outcome or target, seem a bit narrower than those mentioned above regarding what should be the outcome. In giving the definition, experts tend to emphasize the importance of meaning rather than form practice in language. The following definitions have exhibited this tendency:
1. In the words of Skehan (1998), an activity having these criteria will be capable of being defined as a 'task' in language pedagogy: i) meaning should be primary rather than form, ii) there should be a goal to which the work is directed, iii) the activity is outcome-evaluated, and iv) the activity should be related to the real-world.
  2. Nunan (1989: 10) states that task is "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form."
  3. Bygate et. al. (2001, quoted by Ellis 2003a) have stressed that task is 'an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective'.

- iii) Process-oriented definitions: A definition of this kind usually emphasizes the interaction between learners, or between a learner and language substance, form or meaning, etc. We can consider the following definitions that have emphasized the process of language learning rather than the product.
1. According to Richards and his associates, task is meant for: “an activity or action which is carried out as the result of processing or understanding language (i.e. as a response). For example, drawing a map while listening to a tape, and listening to an instruction and performing a command, may be referred to as tasks. Tasks may or may not involve the production of language. A task usually requires the teacher to specify what will be regarded as successful completion of the task. The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in language teaching is said to make teaching more communicative.....” (Richards et. al. 1985: 289)
  2. Ellis (2003a) has quoted Lee (2000) as saying that task is ‘(1) a classroom activity or exercise that has: (a) an objective obtainable only by the interaction among participants, (b) a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and (c) a focus on meaning exchange; (2) a language learning endeavor that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and/or produce the target language as they perform some set of workplans’.
- iv) Broader definitions: Some pedagogists have tried to define task with a view to incorporate rather a broader range of acts associated with learning. Following these definitions, tasks are not limited to person-to-person communication, or just on the understanding of meaning alone. Let us see a few instances cited below:
1. Cameron (1997: 346) says: “In order to have an operationalizable definition for classroom practice, ...‘task’ is taken in a fairly broad sense as being a classroom event that has coherence and unity, with a clear beginning and an end, in which learners take an active role.”  
  
Following this definition, we are in a position to say that any systematic teaching event that makes learners actively engage in the learning process is called the task – irrespective of whatever aspect of language it focuses on.
  2. Crookes (1986, quoted by Ellis 2003a) has stressed that task is ‘a piece of work or an activity, usually with a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, at work, or used to elicit data for research’.  
  
This definition is still broader in scope, since it covers even a wider range of activities including those applicable in educational

processes, workplaces, and research.

3. To follow Breen (quoted by Ellis, *ibid.*), task is 'a structured plan for the provision of opportunities for the refinement of knowledge and capabilities entailed in a new language and its use in communication'. As Ellis has mentioned, Breen specifically states further that a 'task' can range from a 'brief practice exercise' to 'a more complex workplan that requires spontaneous communication of meaning'.
4. In the context of language pedagogy, Branden (2006: 4) has defined task in these words: "A task is an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language."

### **Importance**

The value of learning tasks has been recognized in language pedagogy in various ways. In the contemporary world of 'task-based' language learning and teaching, task has a key role in most of the issues of pedagogy – whereby it is considered "as the basic unit of analysis at the level of goals ('syllabus'), educational activities ('methodology') and assessment." (*ibid.*: 12)

From the perspective of communicative language teaching, the use of task is often stressed in contemporary literature. The advocacy of communicative task can be noticed in the statement of Rubdy (1998: 264), who states: "Because tasks promote naturalistic learning and catalyse acquisitional processes, particularly when combined with group work, they provide a close fit with communicative language teaching." This statement implies that, if we follow communicative mode of teaching-learning, use of task will be the better teaching strategy. In similar vein, Ellis (2003a) opines that, when we feel the need for developing learners' competence in using language effectively outside the classroom, it will be essential to engage them in learning through the tasks that are used in the actual situations; so such situations need to be created; and accordingly, suitable tasks are to be used for teaching in the classroom itself. Towards this end, tasks can serve "as the most obvious means for organizing teaching" along the line of developing the learners' communicative competence. (*ibid.*: ix).

It is often suggested that the importance of task should not be underestimated in course designing – whatever the type of task we incorporate for teaching. Jane Willis (1996, mentioned by Tomlinson 1998), for example, has emphasized the need for placing tasks at the centre of language teaching course, since they serve not only as a means of using the language already acquired, but also as an opportunity for the learners to learn new language. Since tasks function as "a bridge" between particular ends of language learning and the learners' existing situation (Breen 1989: 193), the importance of tasks cannot and should not be denied in the development of learners' language competence.

### **Task Types: Real-World Versus Pedagogic**

After studying the broader definitions of task in language teaching context (see: 'Meaning and Definitions' above), we will be in a position to distinguish two sorts of tasks: (1) real-world, and (2) pedagogic. While a task of the former kind involves the simulation of an activity that is actually done for the accomplishment of some real-life goal outside the classroom, pedagogic tasks are just limited to the learners' course materials and classroom. Some pedagogists (e.g. Breen 2001) have also suggested the terms 'communicative task' and 'metacommunicative' or 'learning' task in place of the 'real world', and 'pedagogic' task respectively. To quote from Nunan (1989: 40), distinction between the two task types can be noticed in the following words:

“Tasks with a real-world rationale require learners to approximate, in class, the sorts of behaviours required of them in the world beyond the classroom... Tasks with a pedagogic rationale, on the other hand, require learners to do things which it is extremely unlikely they would be called upon to do outside the classroom.”

These two categories ('real world' and 'pedagogic'), fundamentally, differ in objectives: While a real world task has 'real world objectives', a pedagogic one has 'pedagogic objectives' (Nunan 1988: 70). Moreover, the two types involve different designs. In designing the real world tasks, one will take into account how s/he can ensure they can resemble, replicate or simulate the actual instances of communication through the target language. But pedagogic tasks are designed on the basis of "metacommunicative criteria", which are related to the question as to how the learning and development of the specific components of language system take place (Breen 1987: 161). In this way, pedagogic tasks can be designed after closely examining the component of language to be focused in teaching and the process of its acquisition; rather than by simulating the setting of communication that takes place in the target language community.

Pedagogic tasks can further be categorized into two types: a) 'focused' task; and b) 'unfocused' task (Ellis 2003b: 65). Distinguishing these two, Ellis (ibid.) has written: "In the case of unfocused tasks, no attempt is made to design the task to 'trap' learners into using a specific linguistic feature. In contrast, focused tasks aim to induce learners to process, receptively or productively, a predetermined linguistic feature..." As such, we can exemplify these two types of tasks by showing the instances of sentence making exercise for learners on one hand (focused task), and writing an essay or paragraph on some topic of their interest (unfocused task) on the other. As we know, both sorts of pedagogic tasks have their own importance in language teaching and learning.

However, there are some arguments and counter-arguments among language pedagogists regarding the preference to be given to one task type over the other in the context of second or foreign language teaching. Some have suggested to design the learning tasks in such a way that they will reflect the "complexities of the real world" (Willis and Willis 2001). In Hitotuzi's (2008) words, "...an

educational task should resemble an outside-world task insofar as it requires interaction among participants and the application of all abilities and cognitive processes involved in actual language use.” Similarly, stressing the importance of engaging language learners in real world tasks, Branden (2006: 6) has emphasized the need to establish “a close link between the tasks performed by learners in the language classroom and in the outside world.” To follow this line of thought, there is the need for analyzing what learners should be able to do outside classroom (in the future), before deciding upon the pedagogic tasks to be included in language teaching-learning. This approach is often adopted in the conventional task-based language teaching and syllabus designing.

Despite the importance given to real world tasks in the task-based pedagogy, we should always remember the fact that such tasks may not be directly applicable among learners in many circumstances. Consequently, in such cases, they need to be adapted in the classroom learning situation where the tasks are implemented (Nunan 1989; White 1995), since the learning conditions can be different from the real world situations of language use applicable outside the learners’ classroom. Accordingly, we can suggest that, in order to make our tasks suitable to the learning conditions, it would be a better option to proceed from purely classroom pedagogic tasks towards real world tasks in the context of second language or foreign language instruction.

For this reason, particularly while teaching language to young learners, it is often suggested that tasks should always be considered from classroom perspective. In this connection, as Cameron (2001) has pointed out, we can say that tasks should be considered in terms of a purely classroom-specific activity, rather than in the context of the learners’ language needs elsewhere. This point of view will, definitely, be applicable in the context of foreign language learning, like the case of English in Nepalese society – whether we talk about young learners or adults – particularly among the students having a poor level of language competence, since the outside classroom needs in the target language are obviously less relevant for them. For such learners, classroom needs make sense the most, and learning purpose is of great importance rather than the purpose of language use. It is only after the learners develop their language competence up to a reasonable level that they can be led gradually towards the communicative and real world tasks as per their need.

In the context of task-based language teaching, van Lier (1988: 229) has preferred the classroom pedagogic tasks to the real world tasks in the following words:

“A task-based approach must avoid the temptation to attempt to force the ‘outside world’ into the classroom by hook or by crook, since this will not be possible. Worse, it is likely to be counterproductive in the long run. The validity of L2 classroom tasks is determined by the meaningful interaction they allow learners to engage in *in the classroom...*”

In this way, there seems to be no point in rejecting the role of pedagogic tasks in language learning situation; since the learners’ involvement in these tasks will provide them with the skills needed for “those real-world tasks which are difficult



to predict in advance, or which are not feasible to practise in class” (Nunan 1989: 41). In many cases, it would be difficult to predict what will be the exact real world task that the learner will have to perform in his/her life on one hand; and practicing such tasks becomes more complicated in foreign language situation on the other. In such circumstances, pedagogic tasks can contribute a lot for the development of learners’ language, so that the language repertoire developed as such will come in their real-life use later on. For instance, if a learner is taught with the task of sentence making practice, his/her learning achievement can be the asset for the development of writing skill later on. Consequently, s/he can make use of this linguistic knowledge in other relevant real-life tasks - e.g., giving instructions, writing letters, narrating incidents, etc.

### **Internal Ingredients**

In our attempt to examine the inherent properties of a language learning task, we need to identify a couple of essential attributes thereby, which are significant from pedagogic perspective – including, for instance: what the task essentially makes the learner do or perform, and whether there is any sort of assistance provided to the learner within the resources supplied together with the task in order to help him/her complete the task. This consideration leads us to discuss the concepts of ‘task demand’, ‘task support’ and the balance between the two; as outlined below.

- i) Task demand: By ‘task demand’, we mean the requirement that learners need to fulfil in order to complete the task after they confront with it. Obviously, task completion is concerned with the fulfillment of the demand/s. In course designing, one of the crucial assignments is related to task selection, whereby the analysis of task demand/s becomes essential. In the process of analyzing the demands that a task requires from learners, we have to “assess its suitability and its learning potential”. (Cameron 2001: 25)

Task demands can be of various kinds; and they differ from one task to another depending on the level of complexity. Cameron (ibid.) has mentioned the following three types of demands:

- 1) ‘Cognitive demand’, which is related to the difficulty level of concept/s that learners should understand to carry out the task. Writing a paragraph on cremation, for example, demands the learner’s understanding of the cultural rituals, beliefs and values associated with it. Usually, cognitive demand determines the complexity of tasks. According to Cognition Hypothesis (Robinson 2005, as stated by Robinson et al. 2009), if learners are expected to perform a series of pedagogic tasks, it is suggested to sequence them in an order of increasing cognitive complexity.
- 2) ‘Language demand’, which is concerned with the issues such as whether the task requires spoken or written language, receptive or productive skill, the type of vocabulary/grammar needed for task completion, etc.

- 3) 'Interactional demand', which seeks answer to questions like: whether the task requires interaction or not; and if it requires, the type of interaction needed in the course of task performance, etc. For example, the demands required by a conversation between two friends can be different from those required in a formal dialogue that takes place between strangers.
- ii) Task support: Along with the demand/s, a task can also have the supporting clue/s (or some information) – that will assist the learner in completing the task. The learner can make use of the supporting information in order to fulfill the demands. Supports can be given in a task in the form of resource that the learner can use or consult for the purpose of successfully completing the task. Suppose we assign a task for learners, giving an example sentence, to make nine different sentences from a substitution table. In this case, the example along with the words/phrases provided in the table can be considered the supportive resources for task completion.

In Cameron's (2001: 27) terms, cognitive, linguistic as well as interactional supports are possible to supply for assisting the learners in completing the tasks. Supports of the first kind can be provided by giving already familiar concepts, or the content/topic that is well known to the learners, etc. In the same way, language support can be maintained in a task by re-using the language that is already familiar to the learners – e.g., using the already known vocabulary/grammar to help the acquisition of new meanings, words or structures. Further, use of the learners' native language to help their second language development is also a kind of language support. Similarly, interactional support can be maintained in the form of pair work by involving the learners who are helpful co-participants, instead of those who are alien, unfamiliar, or dislike each other in some way, etc.

- iii) Balance between demand and support: Sometimes, there can be problems in the organization of learning if proper balance is lacking between the task demand and task support. For this reason, adequate balance between the two is desired for assisting language learning in a proper way – according to the learners' level of cognitive, linguistic and sociolinguistic competence. Too much demand in the task naturally increases the level of difficulty, as a result of which learners can either 'switch off' the task and escape without completing it, or they just 'appear' to be completing it without any understanding (ibid.: 26). On contrary, if too much support is provided, there can be nothing left for learners to work on their own – which, in turn, can hamper their creativity.

Therefore, only the appropriate gap or space between demand and support can create genuine learning opportunities. In this connection, it would be relevant to quote a statement given by Ur (1996: 15) in the

context of tasks to be performed in the group. Ur says: “The task must be hard enough to demand an effort on the part of the group members, but easy enough for it to be clear that success is within their grasp.”

### Task Hierarchy: Communicative Perspective

After the discussion on various headings above, we come to know that language learning tasks can be of several types; and they vary from a brief piecemeal exercise to very complex and comprehensive works of problem solving and communication. This being the case, we can talk about the hierarchy of language learning tasks based on their complexity; and accordingly, they can be categorized from the point of view of communicative demands they require. From this perspective, there have been attempts of establishing the hierarchy along the line of ‘non-communicative to communicative’ dimension. Bruton (2007) has presented the hierarchy with the five layers of task complexity – by labeling them ‘non-communicative learning’, ‘pre-communicative language practice’, ‘communicative language practice’, ‘structured communication’, and ‘authentic communication’ – as given in the table below. Examples for each of the categories are mentioned here as given by Bruton.

(1) Non-communicative learning	(2) Pre-communicative language practice	(3) Communicative language practice	(4) Structured communication	(5) Authentic communication
Focusing on the structures of language, how they are formed and what they mean, e.g. substitution exercises	Practicing language with some attention to meaning but not communicating new message to other people, e.g. ‘question-and-answer’ practice based on text	Practicing pre-taught language in a context where it communicates new information, e.g. information-gap activities or ‘personalized’ questions	Using language to communicate in situations which elicit pre-taught language, but with some unpredictability, e.g. structured role-play and simple problem-solving	Using language to communicate in situations, where the meanings are unpredictable, e.g. creative role-play, more complex problem-solving, and discussion
<b>Exercise</b> ←		→ <b>Task</b> (Ellis)		
<b>Focus on forms</b> ←		→ <b>Focus on meaning</b> (Littlewood)		
<b>Enabling tasks</b> ←		→ <b>Communicative tasks</b> (Estaire and Zanon)		

To compare the five categories of tasks presented by Bruton, we will notice the hierarchical relationship among them – whereby each of the categories at a particular layer can be characterized as more complex and more communicative than the one at lower layer, and less complex as well as less communicative than one at the upper layer. In addition, a lower layer task is, in general, less meaning-focused than the upper layer one. The task labeled as ‘non-communicative learning’ tends to be the least complex one – which is particularly limited to the practice of some selected linguistic point/feature.

As presented in the table above, Bruton (ibid.) has also reported that there are some differences regarding the preference of writers in labeling the task categories along the ‘non-communicative to communicative’ dimension. Accordingly, Ellis prefers to use the term ‘exercise’ for an activity that tends to

have non-communicative character, while the activity characterized as communicative is recognized as 'task'. Littlewood has given the terms 'focus on forms' and 'focus on meaning' to refer to non-communicative and communicative learning respectively. In the same way, Estaire and Zanon have distinguished the two types of activities with the labels of 'enabling tasks' and 'communicative tasks' respectively.

Despite this difference in the terminological preference among experts, the essence seems to be the same here. So, whether we call an 'exercise', 'enabling task' or 'focus on forms', the category we are talking about appears to be less demanding or less complicated in nature – compared to a 'task' (distinguished from 'exercise'), 'communicative task' or 'focus on meaning'.

At this point, it seems relevant to point out the opinion of Widdowson (1998, mentioned by Ellis 2003a) regarding the difference between 'task' and 'exercise' – that, while task is concerned with pragmatic meaning (that concentrates on the use of language in context); an exercise is concerned with semantic meaning (which has the focus on systemic meanings conveyed by the utterances/sentences of language irrespective of context). In Ellis's (ibid.) explanation also, 'task' in the sense of pragmatic meaning has the implication of language in use; whereas if we use it with reference to semantic meaning or formal practice, it implies language learning rather than use.

### **A Comprehensive Framework for Task Description**

How to recognize and describe a task? After being introduced with the various issues related to tasks in the context of language pedagogy, we might be tempted towards looking for a more comprehensive framework that can be useful in the description or analysis of language learning tasks. In this connection, a framework given by Avermaet and Gysen (2006: 32) can be employed for the analytical study of pedagogic tasks. This framework includes a range of parameters, which, taken together, provide us with a more solid and broader understanding of language learning tasks. It can be a useful tool to understand the character of tasks, which is essential while making various micro-level pedagogic decisions that we have to confess in association with curriculum designing. Moreover, the framework can also be used as an instrument for task analysis in connection with our research on course materials implemented at various levels of second and foreign language pedagogy – including the case of ELT curricula in Nepalese context.

The parameters of task included in the framework of Avermaet and Gysen are listed below - with the specific question to ask for seeking the answer, so that each parameter will highlight at least one significant character of the task we are going to examine in pedagogical context.

- i. Skill involved: Does the language learner have to speak, listen, read or write, or all of them (in the language use situation)?

- ii. Text genre: What kind of message has to be conveyed or understood? – whether it is instruction, story, question, answer to the question, description, or account (e.g. personal experience, etc.)
- iii. Level of information processing: At what level of cognitive depth should the linguistic information be processed (i.e. analyzed for understanding)? – e.g. copying level, descriptive level, restructuring level, or evaluative level of information processing.
- iv. Interlocutor: Who are the language learner's interlocutors (i.e. people to interact with)? – Oneself, familiar peer/s, unfamiliar peer/s, familiar adult, or unfamiliar adult, etc.
- v. Topic: What is the topic of language text/discourse? – e.g. physical action, mental action, concrete object, personal experience, experience of others, opinions, feeling, .....etc.
- vi. Contextual support: To what extent is the message embedded in a supporting context? – i.e. the 'here and now' or 'there and then' context.
- vii. Linguistic features of the text/discourse: What are the linguistic features inherent in the text or conversation (discourse)? – i.e. frequent or infrequent words, complexity of phrasal/ grammatical features, or level of meaning complication, etc.

### **Operational Stages of Task in Pedagogy**

Since task is a matter of concern not only for the course designer but also for classroom teachers and learners, its presence is considered important in several stages of pedagogical process. Basically, any pedagogic task can be approached from three perspectives: i) from the point of view of its design in the pedagogic plan, ii) its implementation in classroom, and iii) its contribution/ impacts in the learner's achievement. From this standpoint, as Breen (1989) has pointed out, we can conceptualize the following three distinct stages of a task.

- i) Task as workplan: When a task is designed as a workplan, it is usually 'predictive' in nature, whereby it delineates the learning opportunities to be provided to the learners by determining the objectives of task, contents to be practiced, and the procedure to be followed for its completion. Through the workplan, task organizes these three elements together. Usually, it is the work of the designer to plan tasks in accordance with the objective of teaching-learning.
- ii) Task in process: Through its implementation in the classroom, task enters into the 'process' stage. At this point, task comes in touch with the teacher and learners; and thereby it interacts with the teacher's as well as learner's understanding. Consequently, even if the task is intended for implementation in various situations in a uniform manner, this may not be possible in all cases. So, in most cases, "...teacher and learners redraw the plan in terms of their own 'frames' and their own knowledge and

experience of past workplans” (ibid.: 188). As such, during the implementation of tasks, teacher and learners can readjust the pre-determined workplan to make learning comfortable. As a result, the task can be implemented as per the plan, or in a modified form.

- iii) **Task outcomes:** After the completion of task performance, learners are expected to achieve its outcomes; and the content focused by the task is accumulated on the part of learners in the form of knowledge or skill in language.

Obviously, outcome is the result of the earlier two operational stages. ‘Task in process’ is more complicated than the designer might think of, since this step involves not only the factors within the task itself but also some external influences that are not considered during the planning – e.g. the learning conditions, learner’s situation and contribution for task completion, etc. More importantly, as indicated above, instead of causing the single or uniform product, the stage of ‘task in process’ can “generate a range of diverse changes in knowledge and capability” of learners (ibid.: 189). While task planning can simply provide opportunities for change in the learner’s knowledge in “relatively unpredictable and broad measure” (ibid.); ‘task in process’ (in the course of teaching-learning) will intervene between the task designed earlier and the product or actual learning outcome. Consequently, it can affect task outcomes in a way different from the designer’s expectations. For these reasons, it seems reasonable to examine very closely not only the ‘task as workplan’ but also ‘task in process’, while evaluating tasks. Gourlay (2005) has reported some examples of task adaptation by learners in the classroom, stressing the point that a task cannot be considered as a static entity but should be evaluated taking into account the learners’ contribution towards it in the classroom pedagogical process.

### **Concluding Remark**

This paper is an attempt to give a precise snapshot of the various facets of task with special reference to language pedagogy - including the discussion on its meaning, how it is defined in the relevant literature, in what ways task is considered important, the various categories of tasks and their roles, the internal ingredients in a task and maintaining balance between them, framework for task analysis, etc. Moreover, task has also been considered here in relation to the three basic stages of language pedagogy: plan for teaching, implementation of the plan, and its impacts upon learning achievement. It is expected that the insights gained from the study of materials served for readers hereby will be useful to develop a sound theoretical understanding of the phenomenon, as well as to establish the agenda for analytical study of tasks and exercises given in the language teaching materials found in the learners’ course books used at various levels of education in the country – which should be one of the areas of interest for pedagogic researchers including language curriculum analysts.

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## **Influence of Teacher Related Variables on District Level Examination**

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### **Background of the Study**

Mathematics has played important role in the development of human civilization. Nothing can be done without taking consideration of mathematical figures. It constitutes the numerical and calculative parts of human activities, and knowledge acquired by them. So, human society and mathematics are related to each other. While discussing the importance of mathematics, Krishnamurty (1990) says that mathematics has more and more new applications for day-to-day life. Its rapid growth and desired application help to develop new fields of mathematical knowledge. Similarly, mathematics is often called the backbone of primary education and fundamental component of literacy. It is also a gateway to many areas of further study, and a "critical filter" in employment (Sells, 1976 cited in Neupane, 2001). Mathematics has been a gatekeeper for students in education especially in science and technology (Sharma, 2001). Considering the fact in mind, due attention is given to teach mathematics. It is made one of the core subjects, which is introduced from grade one to ten in the present school curriculum in Nepal. The weightage assigned to mathematics in present curriculum is 14.5% in grades six, seven and eight (CTSDC, 1992). The quality of education is, in fact, determined by a good education system. So, mathematics as a subject of learning deserves due attention in the course of national development in order to improve the quality of education.

Several studies on student achievement in mathematics have revealed the fact that achievement level of primary school students in Nepal is relatively low, and thereby unsatisfactory. A study conducted in 1985 among the grade V students has revealed that majority of student secured less than 45% marks in mathematics (CERID, 1985). Another study concluded that the mean score of grade I and II student is less than 42% (CERID, 1989). Similarly, the study conducted by New Era shows that the mean score of grade III students is less than 50 % (BPEP, 1995). Another study regarding the achievement of grade IV students pertaining to the effects of new curriculum revealed that mathematics achievement is 28% (BPEP, 1997). Similarly, a Basic Primary Education Project research on the effects of new curriculum in achievement among the grade V students shows that average mathematics achievement score is 26.58% (BPEP, 1998). An evaluative study of primary school students conducted by the Primary Education Development Project (PEDP) reported that mean score of grade V students in mathematics is 33.68. A national achievement study, which was

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conducted by EDSC, reported that the mean score of grade III students is found to be 43.81 (EDSC, 1997). The same type of study concluded that the mean score of grade V students is 27.25 (EDSC, 1999). The other national achievement study of grade III students revealed that the mean score of grade III students is 47 (EDSC, 2001). A study conducted by Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID, 1988) shows that mean achievement in secondary level is less than 50%. A study of achievement of students in lower secondary schools at the national level, which was jointly conducted by CERID and Secondary Educational Developmental Project (CERID, 1999) reveals that mean score of mathematics achievement score is 28.87%.

The findings of aforementioned studies conducted in different times indicate varied levels of achievement of school students in mathematics. However, scores secured by students in mathematics did not exceed 50%. This situation has been influenced by several related variables and situations. All the variables determine the level of achievement in mathematics in one way or another.

The mean achievement score of mathematics is quite unsatisfactory revealed from different achievement studies (EDSC, 1997, 1999 and 2001). There are many variables that affect the achievement of students such as school related variables, student related variables, teacher related variables and home related variables. Each category has several sub-variables. Among them, one of the important variables, which is directly related to student achievement is the teacher related variable. This variable is found more influenced in developing countries (Lockeed et.al 1988).

Most of the studies pursued on student achievement in Nepal focused on the primary level. The achievement status of mathematics at primary level is less than 50%, which is less than the score in other subjects.

Grade VIII is the main base of secondary level education. Math achievement in high schools is influenced by the achievement level of Grade VIII. So, it is very important and timely to study the level of achievement of Grade VIII students. Besides, studies (EDSC, 1997, 1998 and 2001) show that teacher related variable influence mathematics achievement of students at this grade. But no comprehensive study has been undertaken yet regarding the achievement level of lower secondary students. Comparative data on students' performance and teacher related variable in this grade is always lacking. Thus, for better understanding of students' achievement in mathematics, the knowledge of what and how teacher variable can affect students' achievement requires analysis and study.

### **Study Procedure**

This study was limited to the Kathmandu valley. Schools were selected only from three districts: Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur. Prior to the selection of schools in each selected district, the schools were categorized into two strata

according to their location - those in urban area and the ones in rural area. The schools located in municipality areas in each sample district were considered as urban schools, whereas those located in Village Development Committees (VDCs) were considered as rural schools. Altogether 31 Schools were selected using random sampling method, which would be proportional to the total number of schools of Kathmandu valley. Consequently, 15 schools (6 urban and 9 rural) in Kathmandu, 9 schools (2 urban and 7 rural) in Lalitpur and 7 schools (3 urban and 4 rural) in Bhaktapur district were selected as sample schools. From each schools, all the grade VIII students who had attempted the district level examination of the academic session of the year 2058/2059 B.S. (2002/2003 A.D) were selected as samples. Altogether 2349 students, 440, 553, and 356 students were selected as samples from the sample schools in Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts respectively. Regarding the genders, 1079 students were boys and 1270 were girls.

Teacher samples were selected using purposive sampling method. It is purposive in the sense that one teacher involved in teaching mathematics in grade VIII in each sample school was chosen for collecting the relevant data on teacher variables. If there were two teachers teaching mathematics, one of them – usually the one interested to participate in study was chosen. Altogether, 31 mathematics teachers - 15 from Kathmandu, 9 from Lalitpur and 7 from Bhaktapur were -selected for the purpose of this research.

The researcher herself visited each of the sample schools to collect data. All the collected data were entered on computer using SPSS software programs in order to accomplish the objective of the present research.

### *Results of the Study*

In order to collect the data required for accomplishing the objective, students' scores in mathematics were collected from district examination result sheet. In order to accomplish the objective of the present research, mean and standard deviation of scores were calculated for each district. Similarly, achievement scores were classified into two groups (i) achievement score of boys and (ii) achievement score of girls. The mean and standard deviation of scores were calculated for each group. In order to test the significance of difference between the scores of the two groups of students, independent t-test was calculated.

Again, top twelve students' achievement scores were classified into two groups: (i) achievement score of boys and (ii) achievement score of girls. The mean and standard deviation of scores of each group was calculated. In order to test significance of difference between the scores of two groups of the students, independent t-test was calculated.

Similarly, from another point of views top twelve students' achievement scores were classified into two groups (i) achievement score of urban students, and (ii) achievement score of rural students. In order to test the significance of difference between the scores of two groups of the students, independent t-test

was calculated.

Another objective of the study was to find out effectiveness of teacher related variables that influence students' achievement in mathematics among the eight grade students in community schools. Data related to the teachers were also collected. The entire data were collected from the respondents using interview method. Data collected through interview were qualitative in nature. The data were coded numerically. The student, and teacher related variables are independent variables whereas mathematics achievement score was dependent variable. The relation between all the independent and dependent variables were analysed by correlation. It helped to find out the relation between different variables and achievement in mathematics.

### **Achievement Level of Grade VIII Students in Mathematics**

The descriptive statistics of mathematics test scores (mean, median, mode and standard deviation) are given in the following table.

Table 1  
Descriptive Statistics of Achievement Test

Valid	2349
Mean	32.25
Median	32.00
Mode	32
Standard Deviation	15.57
Minimum	0
Maximum	97

As depicted in the above table (1), samples consisted of 31 schools located both in the urban and rural areas of Kathmandu valley. Students' overall mean score in mathematics was calculated 32.25 and standard deviation 15.57. Minimum and maximum marks scored by the students in the test were 0 and 97 respectively. However, the mean achievement score in mathematics in the district level examinations is less than 50%, which is not satisfactory.

### **District Wise Achievement Level of Grade VIII Students**

The obtained score in mathematics in the District Level Examination is given in the following table.

Table 2

Achievement Score by Districts Name of the districts	No. of No. of students	Mean	Standard deviation
Kathmandu	1440	33.50	14.79
Lalitpur	553	34.80	17.13
Bhaktapur	356	23.25	12.74

As depicted in the above table, the highest mean score of students of Lalitpur was found 34.80, followed by the students of Kathmandu and Bhaktapur. Students in Kathmandu scored 33.50, while those in Bhaktapur scored the lowest which is 23.50. Similarly, standard deviation is 17.13 in Lalitpur, 14.79 in Kathmandu and 12.74 in Bhaktapur. Mean score is highest in Lalitpur and lowest in Bhaktapur district.

### Gender Based Comparison of Achievement Score

Mean, standard deviation, mean differences and t-value of the related mathematics score is given in the following table.

Table 3  
Comparison of Mathematics Score of Boys and Girls

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t	Significance (2-tailed)	95 % confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Boys	1080	34.16	15.93	3.56	5.55	0.00	2.30	4.81
Girls	1267	30.61	15.01					

As shown in this table, number of girl students is higher in community schools. An independent t-test was performed to compare the mean score and achievement scores for 1080 boys and 1267 girls selected from the sample schools. The mean score of boys was 34.16 and standard deviation of the scores was 15.93. Similarly, mean score of girls was calculated 30.61 and standard deviation of scores was 15.01. The variability of scores of boys and girls were compared. The variability score is different. The variability score of boys have more variation than the girls and the t<sub>-value</sub> is 5.55. The lower and upper limits of the score were positive. It indicates that boys' achievement score in mathematics is higher than the girls' score in the district level examination.

### Location Based Comparison of Achievement Score

Mean, standard deviation, mean differences and resulting t-value related to mathematics achievement for urban and rural students are given in table 4.

Table 4

Comparison of Mathematics Score of Urban and Rural Students

Location	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t	Significance (2-tailed)	95 % confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Urban	1146	32.90	16.52	1.26	1.97	0.04	.004	2.52
Rural	1203	31.63	14.58					

The above table shows that the mean scores obtained by urban and rural students were 32.90 and 31.63 respectively. The mean score of urban students is higher by 1.26 than that of the rural students. While comparing the variability of score, the variability of urban students obtained higher than rural students with the t-value of 1.97 at  $p < 0.04$ . The difference is significant. In other words, it can be concluded that the mean score of urban students was higher than that of rural students in the district level examination. The lower and upper limit value was positive. It indicates that the achievement score of urban students was higher than that of the rural students.

### Gender Based Comparison of Achievement Scores

For the comparison of top 12 grade IX boys and girls who have recently passed district level grade VIII examination, the mean, standard deviation, mean difference, and corresponding t-value of the score was calculated. The result is presented in the following table.

Table 5

Comparison of Mathematics Score of Top Boys and Girls

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	t	Significance (2-tailed)	95 % confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Boys	155	52.77	17.30	4.46	2.55	0.01	1.01	7.91
Girls	217	48.31	15.75					

The mean scores obtained by top boys and girls were 52.77 and 48.31 respectively. The top boys obtained highest mean score, which is higher by 4.46 than the top girl students. While comparing the variability of scores, the variability of top boys obtained higher than the top girls with the t-value of 2.55 at  $p < 0.01$ . The difference is significant. In other words, it can be concluded that mean score of top boys was higher than that of the top girls in this district level test. The lower

and upper limit value was positive. It indicates that the achievement score of top boys was higher than that of top girls.

### **Teacher Related Variable and Mathematics Score**

Six teacher related variables considered for the study were teachers' qualification, teaching experience, math back ground, language used, migration and schooling. The teacher related variable is an independent variable and mathematics score obtained by students in the district level examination is used as the dependent variable. Data on six teacher related variables and mathematics score obtained by students were entered in the **Pearson Product Moment Correlation Model** for analysis. The following table shows the relations between teacher related variables and mathematics score.

Table 6  
Relation Between Teacher Related Variable and Achievement in Mathematics

<b>Teacher Related Variable</b>	<b>Math Score</b>
Qualification	.066** .002 (2290)
Experience	-.135** .000 (2348)
Math background	.074** .002 (1686)
Language used in Nepali	.110** .000 (2349)
Migrant	.006** .001 (2349)
Schooling	.006** .001 (2349)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The relation between teacher related variables and students achievement was explored by means of correlation analysis. From the correlation matrix, it was revealed that five teacher related independent variables - qualification of the teacher, math background, language (used in classroom teaching), migration and

schooling background are positively correlated to students' mathematics achievement. However, other teacher related variable such as the experience is negatively correlated to the student achievement. The description of variables is given below-

According to table 6, correlation between achievement score and teachers' qualification is 0.066, which is significant at  $p < 0.002$ . Therefore, the results conclude that teachers' qualification and student achievement is positively correlated which is highly significant. Students taught by the teachers who have higher score in their studies obtained higher average score.

Similarly, the correlation between achievement score and teacher experience is -0.135, which is significant  $p < 0.000$ . It means that teacher experience and student achievement is negatively correlated, but it is highly significant. Therefore, results conclude that the students taught by more experienced teachers scored less than those taught by less experienced ones.

Again, teachers' math background and students' achievement score are positively correlated, which is also highly significant. The value of correlation is 0.074 at  $p < 0.002$ . The result concludes that teachers with math background in their degrees contributed the students' higher math score.

In the same way, another variable – use of the Nepali language in classroom instruction has positive correlation with students' achievement which is highly significant. The value of correlation is 0.110 at  $p < 0.000$ . Therefore, we can conclude that teachers who used Nepali in classroom teaching have positive impacts in student achievement in community schools.

Similarly, another variable, migration, is positively correlated to achievement in mathematics. It is also significant. The value of correlation is 0.006 at  $p < 0.001$ . The result concludes that migration of teachers to the place around schools is highly correlated to students' achievement.

In the same way, teachers' school background and achievement score are also positively correlated. It is also highly significant. The value of correlation is 0.006 at  $p < 0.001$ . Thus, the students taught by teachers with private school background have secured high scores in mathematics.

### **Conclusion and Implication of the Study**

On the basis of the findings of study, the following conclusions and implications are made for further research and analysis.

1. The present study is based on the field research conducted in Kathmandu Valley. It is found that location of school such as rural - urban category and sex difference has significant impacts on achievement. Achievement status in general is not satisfactory. No doubt, the data presented in this research are valid which have been derived from extensive field research. However, further research on the theme is suggested.



2. Gender difference exists in grade VIII students' achievement in mathematics. In both groups (top and other students), mean score of the boys were higher than that of the girls.
3. Previous study of math as a major subject or math background of the teachers, use of Nepali as medium of instruction, migration of the teacher, their school background, teaching experience are significant teacher related variables that have impact on the students' mathematics achievement. Positive aspects of these variables help to ensure effective mathematics achievement among students.
4. Math as a major subject of teacher has positive impact on students' mean score. This helps to conclude that candidate's sound score is essential to be a teacher.
5. Nepali language spoken by teacher has positive impact on the students' mean score. This helps to conclude that language is one of the important variables that can contribute to improve students' mean score.
6. Teachers' migration is another variable having positive impact on students' mean score. Teachers' schooling background is another important variable having positive impact on students' mean score. This helps to conclude that teachers' schooling background should also be considered for teacher's recruitment.
7. This study has revealed that the variable of teachers' experience is negatively significant on students' mean score, while the factor of their specialization in mathematics has contributed positively on students' scores. This helps to conclude that further refreshment courses are needed for the Math teachers as they spend years in teaching needs to further refreshment. Math teachers require the content as well as pedagogical knowledge to ensure the students' higher score.
8. Rural schools should take notice of qualification, experience and training of mathematics teachers. Regularity of students and teachers is very much required. Government should provide extra grants to needy rural schools and arrange trainings, workshops, seminars and refresher courses for the subject teachers from time to time.

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# **An Analysis of Students' Achievement Level in English in SLC Examination**

Renu Thapa\*

## **Context**

English is an international language widely spoken all over the world for communication. But for many people it is a second language whereas it may be third or fourth language for others. In Nepalese context, it is rare to find people having English as the mother tongue. There are even many ethnic groups whose mother tongue is other than Nepali. Although less Nepalese people have expertise in English it has been necessary to learn English. Its importance is high as knowledge of English promises good jobs, higher social mobility and admission to elite structure (CERID, 1989). Moreover, private business establishments demand more knowledge of English than the government administrative jobs. It opens avenues for social mobility. Since it is an international language, it has been used in the transmission of knowledge. It also makes communication easier.

However, if we go through the history of education in Nepal, we do not find that much of emphasis given to English at the beginning of democracy (1951). It was only in 1959 that the English language entered the formal education curriculum (Amtzis & Thapa, 2001). The Nepal National Education Commission (1956) suggested to implement the policy of teaching English as compulsory subject from grade 6 to 10 (Pandey, 1956 as cited in Luitel, 2008). In 1961, on the basis of the recommendation given by the Supreme National Education Committee, a weightage of 100 full marks for grades 6, 7 and 8, and 200 full marks for grades 9 and 10 were offered (His Majesty's Government, 1961-62 as cited in Luitel, 2008). Although schools were mushrooming, quality education was lacking that also affected in the learning and teaching of English. But English was a subject in schools from grade 1. The National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971) by attempting to nationalize education gave emphasis to Nepali language and less priority was given to English subject (CERID, 1989; Parajuli, 2002). So English, which was compulsory subject in schools earlier was started to be taught only from grade 4 (CERID, 1989). Later, the importance of beginning the English language instruction from the start of schooling was felt; and the government followed the policy to introduce English in the course right from grade 1. This policy was decided in 2001, and came into implementation from the academic year 2002-03 (Luitel, 2008). In the case of private schools, they have introduced English in teaching and learning from the initial stage of schooling. Still, priority is given to English in boarding schools and parents are much attracted towards such schools. The Teaching English

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Volunteer Program is also enabling students who are eager to improve their conversational English skills. The volunteers work primarily as instructors of English either in Nepali public or private schools (Alliance in Nepal, n.d.). English language institutions are flourishing in the country. Youths, especially students after the SLC examination, join English classes with expectation of their bright future.

### **English as a subject in SLC Examination**

English has become a tough subject for students especially in SLC examination. One of the main reasons for students' failure in SLC examination is due to failure in English subject, and their failure has a direct impact on the pass percentage of SLC examination. This is one of the main reasons that the pass percentage in SLC examination is low. If we see the record of past three years (2007-2009) we find that there is improvement in pass percentage. The results published by the Office of the Controller of Examinations show that there is improvement in pass percentage mainly due to increase in the pass rate in English subject. The pass percentages in SLC examinations in the years 2007, 2008 and 2009 were 58.64%, 63.73% and 68.47% respectively. Out of the 274210 students appeared for the SLC examination in 2007, 188473 (58.69%) passed the subject. In 2008, out of 307078 students appeared in SLC examination 226723 (63.73%) got success in the subject. Similarly, out of 342632 students appeared for SLC examination in 2009, 277408 (68.47%) were successful in English. There is increase in the number of examinees as well as in the pass rate in later years. It was until 2008 that out of the core four subjects (English, Nepali, Mathematics and Social Studies) the least number of students passed in English. But in 2009 English stood second (after Mathematics) in having less number of students being successful. It has been mentioned above that the increase in pass rate in English helped in increasing the pass rate in SLC examination. The following table shows progress in the pass rate in English during the three year period:

Table 1  
Pass rate in English in SLC Examination

Year	Appeared			Pass in English		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2007	148420	125790	274210	167094 (63.29)	81379 (53.16)	188473 (58.69)
2008	166370	140708	307078	130365 (67.91)	96358 (58.78)	226723 (63.73)
2009	184182	158450	342632	152749 (72.03)	124659 (64.34)	277408 (68.47)

Source: Office of the Controller of Examinations, Sanothimi  
Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

The gender analysis of above three years' data (2007-2009) shows that the pass percentage of both boys and girls is improving in the successive years. The subjectwise analysis shows that boys' as well as girls' success rate in all the core subjects (except for boys' success rate in Nepali subject in 2008, which has declined) is increasing.

The main reason for the improvement in the achievement in English especially by the community schools is that since last year the questions in SLC examination are asked only from grade 10 whereas the examination used to include questions also from grade 9 earlier. According to the English subject teachers, such system has helped to reduce the workload of students and they can devote on the course of grade 10 only, which contributes in securing high marks in English. Introducing English from the lower grade in community schools has also helped students to secure good marks in English in SLC examination. The Office of the Controller of Examinations has also made revisions in the question format. The head teachers are of the view that the use of short-answer type of question in SLC examination has facilitated students in examination. The head teachers are also of the view that the Ministry of Education's policy of not making students failed in listening and speaking has further helped students to secure more marks in English. The marks allocated (20 marks) for listening and speaking until last year has been increased to 25 marks from this year. One of the reasons for students' securing higher marks in English is also related to their exposure to media such as television, radio and newspaper reading.

Increasing in the pass rate of students in SLC examination has also been related to the high pass rate of institutional schools. Institutional schools are considered good for providing English medium education. So parents are attracted towards such schools. The establishment of boarding schools which lay special emphasis on English teaching is taken as an indication of people's attraction and aspirations. This is one of the main reasons that those who can afford financially send their children to the institutional school. Priority is given to boys while enrolling children to the institutional school. On the other hand, parents have less attraction towards community schools. The main reason of this is attached with the English not given preference in such schools. In contrast to the institutional schools, all subjects except for English are taught in Nepali medium. As mentioned above, in many community schools of the country even the English subject is taught with the help of Nepali language in making students understand. Such picture shows that institutional schools have played a significant role in increasing the pass rate in SLC examination. Although the number of students appearing in SLC examination is high in community schools, the pass rate of such school is low compared to the pass rate of institutional schools. The 2009 data published by the Office of the Controller of Examinations shows that out of 275751 students appeared in SLC examination in community schools, 173851(63.05%) were passed. In the case of institutional schools, the pass rate is very high (90.83%). The gender analysis of pass rate of these two types of school also shows that the pass rate of both boys and girls of institutional schools

is found higher than that of community schools.

English has been a difficult subject for students especially for community school children. Until last year, this situation had a great impact on the SLC pass rate. However, SLC result of 2009 has a different picture. There is improvement in pass rate in English. English has been able to secure the third position (which is above Mathematics) among the four core subjects in both the community and institutional schools. Such improvement could be taken as a positive step in increasing the pass rate in SLC examination. The subjectwise analysis of SLC pass result shows that both the community and institutional schools' pass rate is good in Nepali subject. Both boys and girls were found good in Nepali subject. It means that institutional schools that are considered weak in Nepali were also making improvement in this subject. But in the case of subject-wise success rates variation is found between the community and institutional schools. In the SLC examination of 2009, less number of students from community schools passed in Social Studies. In the case of institutional school less number of students passed in Mathematics. The following table gives a picture of community and institutional school' status in SLC examination:

Table 2

Pass rate of Community and Institutional Schools in Core Subjects, 2009

Appeared in Examination	Type of School	
	Community	Institutional
Boys	145221	38961
Girls	130530	27920
Total	275751	66881
<b>Pass</b>		
Boys	96673 (66.57)	35989 (92.37)
Girls	77178 (59.13)	24762 (88.69)
Total	173851 (63.05)	60751 (90.83)
<b>Pass in Individual Subject</b>		
<b>English</b>		
Boys	114741 (79.01)	38008 (97.55)
Girls	97733 (74.87)	26926 (96.43)
Total	212474 (77.05)	64934 (97.08)
<b>Nepali</b>		
Boys	138314 (95.24)	38619 (99.12)
Girls	123923 (94.93)	27639 (98.99)

An Analysis of Students' Achievement Level in English in SLC Examination

Total	262237 (95.09)	66258 (99.06)
<b>Maths</b>		
Boys	116215 (80.02)	37448 (93.26)
Girls	95516 (73.17)	26040 (93.26)
Total	211731 (76.78)	63488 (94.92)
<b>Social</b>		
Boys	139030 (95.74)	38560 (98.97)
Girls	122865 (94.12)	27387 (98.09)
Total	161904 (94.97)	65947 (98.60)

Source: Office of the Controller of Examinations, Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

### **Causes of Failure in English**

English has been a compulsory subject from grade 1 to 10. Along with the compulsory English, institutional schools have also included extra textbooks in English subject. Despite the efforts of introducing English from the foundation of formal education the number of failure in this subject especially in SLC is high. As mentioned above, it was only this year (2009) that there is a high rate of students (68.47%) passed in the SLC examination. Most of the students fail in English in the SLC examination. The number of such students is very large, though it varies from year to year

The history of SLC result shows that a high number of children fail in the examination and there are many causes behind this failure. One of the reasons is that the curriculum and textbooks are defective (CERID, 1989). Students' (especially community school children's) knowledge of English does not match the requirement of that level. Another reason is that children's foundation is extremely weak. The practice of promoting students to higher grades even when they fail in English in lower classes has brought the result of failure in English in SLC (ibid). The promotion to upper grades without quality proves harmful in the long-run, resulting into failure in the SLC examination. Such a practice of promotion has degraded the quality of students. So even in secondary level of community schools, there is the practice of teaching and learning English in a mixed language. The teachers and students make use of the Nepali language in teaching and learning English. One research has shown that in community secondary schools outside Kathmandu teachers were using Nepali medium in English class to make the students understand the subject matter clearly. The students were also doing the same (CERID, 2009). The English curriculum of secondary level focuses on all the four skills of learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Under the speaking skill emphasis is given to develop an understanding of and competence in spoken English (PABSON, 2066 BS). But it seems such as objective is not met in schools. So

the main purpose of English curriculum that is to enable students to exchange ideas with people of any nationality who speak or write English and to expose them to the vast treasure of knowledge and pleasure available in written and spoken English is not being fulfilled.

Teachers are also not so competent in teaching English. They lack the required competence in the English language. One of the main reasons for their lack of competence in teaching English is related to training. Teachers do not get the training opportunity. Although the Education Training Centre (ETC) provides training to the secondary level teachers only a least number of teachers, such a training so far, has been focused on pedagogy but not on teachers' language competence.

### **Measures for improvement**

There are various measures that could be applied in improving the students' achievement level in English. In order to increase the achievement in English, certain measures should be followed in its teaching-learning. As a strong foundation is needed for success in the future, there should be improvement in teaching English from the lower level of school. More periods need to be allocated for teaching English. Since English is required for pursuing higher education and jobs, it should not be converted into an optional subject. Training for teachers is required in order to make them efficient in fulfilling their teaching responsibility. The government should pay special attention towards the community schools in improving the quality of English teaching and learning. At present, the government has paid attention in bringing qualitative change in education. Since failure in English is caused by several factors, improvement is needed in all those areas to ameliorate the present plight of English teaching-learning.

### **Conclusion**

Success in English subject influences the achievement of students in SLC examination. There is a huge gap between the pass rate of community and institutional schools especially in the achievement in English. But community schools are making improvement in achievement in English subject as there is change in the examination system from last, and English has been introduced from the lower level of schooling. Since several factors affect the learners' achievement in English in SLC examination, attention should be paid to focus on all those aspects in order to improve the present situation of students' achievement in English.

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## **Community Mobilization Activities for the Government's Flexible Schooling Program**

Kashi Lal Chaudhary\*

### **Introduction**

This article is based on the Community-Based Alternative Schooling Project (CASP) conducted in the Kathmandu Municipality in Shantinagar, Jagriti Tole by a partner NGO named Resource Centre for Child and Women Development (RCCWD) with the technical support of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as a pilot project to help to improve Alternative Schooling Program (ASP). The contents included hereby are based on the field experience gained from the CASP pilot project. The experience shared hereby can be helpful for successful implementation of Flexible Schooling Program of ASP in the community.

Despite the efforts made by the government towards universal primary education, there are still considerable numbers of school-aged children who have been unable to go to school. Currently, about 280000 do not attend school (CASP/JICA 2009). Retaining some children in the school system has proved to be difficult; these children are sometimes referred to as the 'hardest to reach group' (ibid.). There are two major obstacles which prevent school-aged children from attending school. The first is the geographical isolation of children who live in remote villages in the hills and mountainous areas of Nepal. In such areas, children have to walk many hours or even days to reach the nearest school. The second reason is the socio-economic situation of some families. For many households, the families' livelihood is dependent on their children's assistance in farming and household chores, caring the younger siblings or working outside home to earn money. These children need alternative to receiving education through the formal schooling system. Alternative schooling programs have been developed so that all children can have access to a basic education. The School Outreach Programme (SOP) and the Flexible Schooling Programme (FSP) are being conducted under Alternative Schooling Programme (ASP) since 2056-57 through Non-Formal Education centre.

The Flexible Schooling Programme was implemented in urban and suburban communities where many children cannot attend school because they are required to do domestic labour and some children have work commitment to make a living. FSP classes were run in a flexible time table that was convenient for children, typically in the morning and evening.

Flexible Schooling Program (FSP) has the provision of admitting the children between 8-14 years – those who are unable to admit in school. After the completion of this program, the children are eligible to be admitted at grade 6. In

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this way, this program has been recognized equivalent to the 5 years' primary education, though the children enrolled in the program complete their learning in 3 years.

The target group of FSP consists of the children of 8-14 years who are living in urban, sub urban and industrial areas; and have maintained their living by doing hard labour and helping their families in the domestic occupation – including the farm work. Most of these children belong to the poor community and backward ethnic groups suffering from financial, social and other various sorts of problems, and have been unable to attend formal schooling at the right age due to the reasons just mentioned. Besides, the target group also consists of those children who have once enrolled in the primary school but left the primary education incomplete.

### **Community Mobilization and Participation**

FSP has realized the need for community mobilization for the purpose of effective and efficient implementation of the program and its sustainability. The program also aims to establish the commitment of the community towards ensuring the people's participation in identifying and utilizing resources. The program includes the activities of orientation meetings with the community people in order to ensure their better participation, commitment and program's sustainability.

Such events of orientation and trainings are organized on the roles and responsibilities of the community – so as to make them able to identify, mobilize and utilize the local resources for programme effectiveness. The main objectives of community mobilization in the context of Flexible Schooling Program are to promote:

- children's participation in extracurricular activities,
- parent's participation in activities related to child education,
- community people's participation in activities related to child education,
- CMC's (Class Management Committee) mobilization and participation in activities related to child education,
- EV's (Education Volunteers) participation in activities related to child education,
- capacity development of all stakeholders,
- coordination and linkage with relevant organizations/groups

The implementation of community mobilization activities intends to give more focus on the following aspects:

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- identifying the role of community people in planning ,implementation and monitoring of FSP class,
- making all concerned stakeholders aware on their roles and responsibilities in effective implementation of FSP,
- increasing the rate of school enrollment and minimize children from being dropout,
- strengthening networking among stakeholders to ensure better coordination at different levels,
- developing coordination and cooperation with various organizations and other concerned stakeholders,
- activating community people to develop their responsibility for community ownership and program sustainability,
- encouraging and informing community people in understanding education as one of the fundamental human rights,
- making community people aware on the fact that human development is possible only through education. (ICDC 2063)

#### **Activities of Community Mobilization for FSP**

The main activities of community mobilization for FSP program are mentioned below.

1. Promotion of children's participation in extra curricular activities: For the promotion of child participation in extra curricular activities, the following activities are organized:
  - i. *Child Club formation and orientation*: Child clubs are formed and orientation is given to its members for their activation and effective mobilization with the objectives of making them aware of the fact that education is the right of every child, encouraging the parents in realizing the need for compulsory education to all children, and informing all child club members about their roles and responsibilities for actively operating the club activities.
  - ii. *Orientation for preparation of an action plan of child club*: Orientation is given to the children which cover the topics such as frequency of child club meeting, the preparation of action plan for child club, and utilization of child club fund. The action plan includes competition in painting, quiz, essay, poem, song, dance, sports, picnic, plantation, cleanliness, door to door visits, making wall newspaper, child to child interaction program, child to parent interaction program, child to community interaction program, and so on.

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- iii. *Child club meeting:* The child club meeting is organized to discuss not only the extra curricular activities but also the problems faced by children in the class and feasible solutions for effective implementation of FSP in these meetings with the support of a facilitator. The child club is expected to discuss the issues like: how to ensure their regular attendance at the FSP classes, how to keep themselves clean and tidy, and how to improve their learning achievements.
  - iv. *Orientation on formal school and life skill:* The main objective of the orientation is to prepare FSP children for formal school to make them ready for school. The topics cover basic life skills such as self awareness, empathy towards others, self discipline, critical and creative thinking, effective communication, and interpersonal skills. It is important and necessary for FSP children to acquire and cultivate these life skills.
  - v. *Interactive program between children and students of mother school:* As part of formal school readiness, it is needed to conduct the interactive program with the students of mother school. Under the interaction program, the children of FSP observe the class, get information and share ideas with the students of mother school. This program helps FSP children to be familiar with the formal school to which they are going to be admitted after the completion of FSP, develop a familiar environment among the children of FSP and mother school, exchange of students to develop a cordial relationship between the students of formal and non formal study and create a favorable environment to conduct child to child program between mother school and FSP class.
2. Promotion of parent's participation in activities related to child education:  
The most important events organized for the promotion of parent's participation to improve their children's education include the following:
- i. *Orientation meeting on community mobilization and review/sharing meeting:* It is needed to organize the orientation meeting to explain to the parents ,CMC members, EVs and community people regarding the community activities to be planned. It is also needed to organize the sharing /review meetings among the stakeholders to confirm the progress of community mobilization activities and discuss the concerned issues of FSP.
  - ii. *Parents visiting day to observe FSP class:* It is important to stimulate the parents' interest and involvement in children's education and learning. In this regards, it is needed to conduct parents' visiting day program to encourage them to observe FSP classes. This program helps to make parents aware of the fact that education is the right of their children. This helps to create the feeling of responsibility among

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the community people so that they will take FSP class as community property. In this program, discussions and interactions are held on regularity of children, doing home work .children's education, personal cleanliness of children, etc.

- iii. *Parents' education and awareness raising orientation on formal education:* It is necessary for parents to create an enabling environment for child education. Particularly, support from parent is essential for children to continue to study after the completion of FSP. It is needed to conduct education and awareness raising orientation on formal education for parents and community people including such topics as good communication with children, praise and encouragement, positive thinking, health education, self discipline, system of formal education and so on.
3. Promotion of CMC mobilization and participation in activities related to child education: For the mobilization and participation of CMC in child education, FSP aims to organize the following activities:
    - i. Formation of CMC: Community participation in class management is the key to effective implementation of FSP.CMC is formed with two major objectives: a) to encourage the community people be involve in FSP, and b) to enhance the sense of ownership activities to be undertaken under FSP among community people. Parent, facilitator, representative of mother school, community leader, active women, ethnic/marginalized group and community person who has positive attitude towards FSP, etc. are involved in the CMC. Some of the important roles and responsibilities of CMC include: Management of space for the class, monitoring class, holding monthly meeting to discuss the problems and solutions, conducting home visits to convince parents who do not send their children, and managing the CMC fund to assist FSP.
    - ii. Orientation for action plan preparation and CMC fund mobilization: The CMC is oriented to make action plan which includes the use of CMC fund, and other activities such as meeting, door to door visit program, and interactive program. The CMC utilizes the CMC fund effectively for the purpose of supporting class management such as purchasing furniture, renovation of classroom, drinking water, room rent, photocopy for exam, purchase of first aid box and expenses for CMC meeting, etc.
    - iii. CMC monthly meeting: CMC conducts monthly meeting and minute of each meeting is recorded. CMC discusses on several agendas regarding the management of FSP class.
    - iv. Capacity development training for CMC members: This training is organized for CMC members with the objectives of developing their

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capacity to take the lead in support of the FSP after the completion of program, and orienting them about the system of formal school so that they can assist children for their continuation in formal schooling. The contents of the training includes:

- Encourage FSP children to go to school as transfer student,
  - Facilitate parents to provide continue education opportunities to FSP children.
- i. *Door to door visit program:* It is important for CMC to conduct this program to encourage parents to send their children to school and FSP class. Not only CMC but also children, facilitator, as well as community people are involved in such activities to ensure good and regular attendance among FSP children. It helps to activate parents to send their children to FSP class regularly.
- ii. *Interactive program among CMC, SMC and Community people:* Strengthening the linkage with mother school will enable the FSP children to join the formal school system at an appropriate level. In this regard, it is needed to organize the interaction program among CMC, SMC and community people. The participants discuss about the current situation of class and mother school including activities of CMC, SMC, and then exchange ideas about community support for child education. Through this program, CMC members and community people understand their roles and responsibilities and continue to be involved in child education even after the children complete their class.
4. Promotion of EVs and participation in activities related to child education: EVs assist the facilitator for effective implementation of FSP class and thus can work as the supporting agents of facilitator. EVs are selected with these objectives: a) To assist facilitator and CMC members to manage FSP class, b) To enhance a sense of ownership for activities to be undertaken under FSP among community people, c) To utilize human resources at the local community level effectively. The criteria of selection of EVs include the following:
- In habitant of the same ward or in the peripheries of the class so that they can assist in running the class when necessary,
  - Having commitment on volunteerism,
  - At least one women if possible,
  - Experienced person,
  - Having keen interest in educational activities,

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- If possible at least one person who has passed SLC

The roles and responsibilities of EVs are specified as given below:

- Manage the FSP class in the absence of facilitator,
- Coordinate with facilitator, CMC, institution/organization representatives,
- Assist the illiterate CMC members,
- Facilitate children to attend class and enroll in formal school,
- Facilitate community people to participate in various activities related to FSP.

The main activities related to EVs promotion are briefly described below:

- i) *Orientation of EVs*: The orientation mainly concerns the following topics:
    - To inform EVs about their roles and responsibilities in the conduction of class in the absence of facilitator,
    - To make EVs familiar with child club activities,
    - To facilitate EVs to get coordination with CMC and community people
  - ii) *Mobilize EVs to be involved in various community mobilization activities*: EVs are needed to be mobilized continually not only in the FSP class in the absence of facilitator, but also for the purpose of carrying out various community mobilization activities.
5. Capacity development of all stakeholders: For the purpose of the stakeholders' capacity development, study tours are arranged for CMC members, parents, community people, EVs, FSP children in other FSP classes. This becomes effective in terms of sharing experiences of each class. This is organized with the objective of encouraging more learning from each other's experience.
  6. Strengthening of coordination and linkage with relevant organizations/group: Coordination and collaboration is established with the relevant organizations such as Village Development Committee, mother school, mother group, NGO, INGO, government offices and other agencies to mobilize community and implement FSP effectively.
  7. Monitoring and follow up: To ensure the progress of the ongoing activities and to minimize problems for the implementation of other activities in



coming days, regular monitoring and follow up of class activities are done by the CMC, parents, community people, and EVs. Feedback is provided to the facilitator and concerned persons regarding FSP class management and teaching-learning.

### **Advantages of Community Mobilization Activities**

From the experience of implementing the community mobilization activities, it has been experienced that the programme can be effective for the children enrolled in the FSP class, their parents, EVs, CMC members and the community people. The benefits of this programme for them are briefly discussed below.

- i. *Children:* It helps the children to develop the feeling of competition among them, maintain regularity in class, improve their hand writing, increase the reading and writing abilities, create cooperative feeling, increase to speak in mass people without any hesitation, be aware of personal cleanliness, and be disciplined.
- ii. *Parents:* It helps to make aware about child education ,motivate parents to send their children in class , to participate in various community mobilization activities, helps to children in reading and writing, know about the education is the right of each child and so on.
- iii. *EVs:* It helps the EVs so that they can support the children and their guardians. They are assisted in monitoring and follow up of class. They also get help to participate in community mobilization activities and to develop their carrier etc.
- iv. *CMC Members:* It helps the CMC members in FSP class management, monitoring and supervision – so that the members can motivate children and their parents to send their children to the class regularly. CMC members can also be ready to improve the class by purchasing educational materials as needed in the class. They can also mobilize the community people regarding FSP support etc.
- v. *Community people:* It helps to create awareness among community people on their children's education. Besides, it can support FSP class by convincing the parents to send their children to the class. Community can also assist in monitoring and supervision of class – to see whether the class is running or not. Community people participate in various meetings organized to appraise the existing situation of the FSP class and then discuss the potentials of improvement, etc.

### **Activities for regularity of children in FSP class**

FSP has several activities meant for maintaining regularity of the children in the class. For this purpose, the following activities are organized, which motivate the children for attending the classes regularly:

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- Mass communication/gathering meeting with stakeholders,
- Individual consultation with parents/guardians of children,
- Home visit program by CMC, EVs, facilitator, children, parents, mother group and other concerned personnel,
- Provision of school uniform, bag, shoe, tie, belt, sweater, Tiffin etc.
- Extra curricular activities such as singing and dancing, hand writing competition, story writing, drawing competition, quiz context etc.
- Provision of award to the best performing children in FSP class,
- Prize distribution for various competitions,
- Educational tour and picnic,
- Parents' class observation,
- Child club meeting, etc.

#### **Conclusion**

FSP has been designed for out of school children to help them complete their basic education in non-formal setting. After the completion of its three years' cycle, this programme aims to mainstream the graduates for enrollment in the formal schools nearby, so that they can continue their upper level education. Community mobilization is needed for the purpose of effective and efficient implementation and sustained FSP in community. It helps the community people in order to ensure their better participation in the FSP. It promotes FSP children, their parents, and community people's participation in activities concerned with child education. Community mobilization activities have given focus on the roles and responsibilities of community people, concerned stakeholders, planning, implementation of FSP, developing coordination and cooperation with concerned organizations which help to the successful implementation of FSP.

Promotion of children's participation in extra curricular activities, promotion of parents, class management committee mobilization and education volunteers' participation in activities related to child education, capacity development of stakeholders, strengthening of coordination and linkage with relevant organizations and groups, etc. are the main community mobilization activities which help to conduct FSP effectively and also improve the children's education.

Community mobilization activities help the children to develop their personal ability related to education. It helps parents to be aware about child education. It also helps EVs to support the children and their guardians, so that EVs can develop their own career. CMC members are also supported by this program, who can motivate children and their parents to send the children to the class

regularly. Through this programme, FSP Class Management Committee can help to create awareness among community people regarding child education. People also participate in several meetings organized to appraise the existing situation and potentials of improvement of the FSP. In this way, people have the opportunity to come forward in society, and they develop their management skills simultaneously.

Mass communication with stakeholders, contact with the parents of children, door to door visit, extracurricular activities, provision of award for FSP children, prize distribution, educational tour/picnic, child club meeting, etc. are the main activities which help to motivate the FSP children for attending class regularly.

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## Phenomenology, Case Study and Grounded Theory in Educational Research

Megh Raj Dangal\*

Phenomenology, grounded theory and case study are different approaches that provide methodological base in social science research. As these approaches are developed on different philosophical bases, it is necessary to understand these bases in order to understand these approaches in a proper way. For the better understanding of these approaches, it is necessary to know about the research philosophy in social science.

The word 'Paradigm' has its origin from the ancient history of education and philosophical thought, initially used by Plato to mean 'model' and then by Aristotle to mean 'example' (Corbetta, 2003). In educational research, paradigms deal with different principles constructed by human beings through "the world view of the researcher-as-bicoleur" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 185). But when we conduct research in our own perspective, not solidified or properly unified like paradigms; perspective may share many elements with a paradigm. So philosopher's paradigms reflect the reality in research (Creswell, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

A paradigm provides a conceptual framework for seeing and making sense of the social world through visionary perception. To be located in a particular paradigm implies to view the world in a particular way. A paradigm is a precondition to perception itself. So, it stands for the entire collection of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a community for their betterment.

To what extent can we speak of paradigms in educational and social sciences? When we think about educational research with basic paradigms a paradigm encompasses three elements: ontology, epistemology and methodology (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) have noted the following:

Epistemology asks, how do we know the world? What is the relationship between the inquirer and the known? Ontology raises basic questions about the nature of reality. Methodology focuses on how we gain knowledge about the world..... Alongside these paradigms are the perspectives of feminism, ethnic models of inquiry and cultural studies. Each of these perspectives adopts its own criteria, assumptions and methodological practices that are applied to disciplined inquiry within framework. (pp. 185-186)

Paradigms may view a set of basic beliefs/metaphysics by dealing ultimate

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thoughts with three basic questions (Creswell, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, 2006), which include:

1. The ontological questions: What are the form and the nature of reality? What is there that can be known about it? 'How things really are?' 'How things really work?'. All these questions are related to the matter of naive realism.
2. The epistemological question: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would be knower and what can be known? Here, the theory of knowledge is rooted in the theoretical part of research and informs the research knowledge through objectivism and subjectivism.
3. The methodological question: How can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known? Strategy of the working plan links methods to outcomes through experimental research, survey research and ethnography study and so on with use of the tools techniques, and procedures.

Research is a knowledge creating process. The questions regarding how knowledge is viewed, how to gain knowledge etc are essential in research. Simply, research is based on two thoughts, one is positivism and the other is neo- positivism. Both thoughts seek the proper research methods in knowledge creating process.

For the exploration of knowledge through research philosophy, educational researcher conducts research on the above mentioned questions in spite of the fact that the use of educational research has been inflated and confused by multiple and different meanings (Corbetta, 2003; Sikula, Buttery and Guyton, 1996) . Therefore, it is very difficult to make the linkage and determine the scope of paradigms in educational research and what constitutes knowledge claims (Creswell, 2003) as like "new kids on the block" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998, p. 197).

In research, we think about the validity and reliability of conducting a particular investigation. If research is conducted by using appropriate tools in appropriate manner, it can generate new knowledge. So, for new knowledge, the main role is played by the selection of research method, tools and techniques and their applicability in real field. A right selection of research paradigm leads us successfully to explore the source of knowledge for the reform of society.

This article aims to explore the importance of phenomenology, grounded theory and case study approach for educational research study through qualitative manner. So, it attempts to find the importance and applicability of phenomenology, grounded theory and case study approaches in educational research to validate the significance of human experience and ideas. To determine the scope and make linkage is as difficult as to answer the epistemological questions like what constitutes knowledge, and the ontological question of "new kids on the block".

## **Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is the study of phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing the observable fact of real world in which researcher identifies the 'essence of human experiences' concerning a phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). It is a form of qualitative research in which the researcher attempts to understand how one or more individuals experience a phenomenon, and emphasizes the subjective aspects of the behavior (Johnson and Christensen, n.d; Wiersma, and Jurs, 2005). For example, researcher might interview 50 widows and ask them to describe their experiences of the death of their husbands, difficulty, family support and status in society after the death of their husbands. In this case, how people perceive the problem of widows and how people interpret it in their mind with their eye lenses.

Phenomenology is the understanding of the meaning which we give to our every day life practices. The questions relevant to phenomenology include: What is the main essence of a phenomenon to a particular group, or how this group views the phenomenon, how people describe things and experience them in their senses. Wiersma and Jurs (2005) argue that the phenomenological approach emphasizes that the meaning of reality is the essential part of the study with the "eyes and minds of the beholders"(p. 243), the way the individuals being studied perceive of their experiences from real ground. For example, the study of the understanding of the instruments used in grade ten mathematics. The important focus for the phenomenological approach is to understand about the instruments applied in mathematics teaching and study in that class and what it means, how it is perceived by the tenth grade students and their real experience about it.

Krathwohl (1993) focuses to carry the analogy a step further. Those who take some form of qualitative point of view do not take the stance of the outside observer who is watching the "clocklike gears or the cloudlike swarm" (p. 322). In this approach, researcher tries to perceive the existing situation of real world.

Commonly, phenomenology focuses these questions: How to look? How do people interpret the action of other? And how do they understand the behaviour? It always deals more with what than the how of method in educational research for examine, and gathers the data from particular emphasis or orientation. When researcher conducts the research, it helps to understand the meaning of existing objects (Krathwohl, 1993). In order to emphasize symbolic interaction; researcher follows this method for the reality of socially constructed units. Therefore, the eyes of the actor need to reach a full understanding of the purpose of that person's acts (Barbour, 2008). Individual perception is valuable in this approach for live experiences through philosophical base in bracketing (Bavon, 2007).

Phenomenology is an influential and complex philosophic tradition that has given rise to various related philosophical movements such as existentialism, post-structuralism, post-modernism, feminism, culture critique, and various forms of analytical and new theory (Manen, 2002, p.2).

According to Manen (2002, p.3) phenomenology as a research perspective can be studied in terms of several domains of inquiry such as:

1. We may distinguish various traditions or orientations such as transcendental, existential, hermeneutic, historical, ethical, and language phenomenology;
2. Phenomenological inquiry probes and draws from various sources of meaning;
3. Phenomenological inquiry can be understood in terms of the philosophical or methodological attitudes associated with the reduction and the vocation;
4. The procedural dimensions of phenomenological inquiry can be explored in terms of empirical and reflective methods;
5. Ultimately phenomenological inquiry cannot be separated from the practice of writing.
6. Phenomenological inquiry can be studied in terms of the practical consequences of human living.

When we conduct research by adopting this method researcher should think about its difficulties. It does not make any difference whether you and I see a supervisor as hostile and concentrate on the process of interaction and active construction of meaning which creates difficulties in research process. It studies a small number of subjects through extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Moustakes, 1994 as cited in Creswell, 2003). It will affect the way that they react to that person's supervision and cannot make distinction between "properness" and "improperness" of something in real field like justice, peace, equity, freedom, truth, and progress (Alberto, n.d).

### **Case Study**

A case study is a mystery that has to be solved the problem in qualitative research by taking limited case. The first thing to remember about writing a case study is that the case should have a problem for the research to solve. The case should have enough information in it that readers can understand what the problem is and, after thinking about it and analyzing the information; the readers should be able to come up with a planned solution. Writing an interesting case study is a bit like writing a detective story.

A good case is more than just a description of existing activities. In it, information is arranged in such a way that the reader is put in the same position as the case writer was at the beginning when he or she had faced a new situation and asked to figure out what was going on in real life. A description, on the other hand, arranges all the information, comes to conclusions, tells the reader everything, and the reader really doesn't have to work very hard to identify problems.

The method of exploring and analyzing the life of a social unit/ entity, be it a role incumbent (person), a family, an institution or a community, is customarily known as case study approach (Wilkinson and Bhandarkar, 1994, p. 257). Case study is a form of research method in education in which researcher explores in depth a program, an event, different activities. The process is focused on providing a detailed account of one or more cases bounded by time and activity; and researchers collect the detailed information by using a variety of data collection process over certain period of time (Stake 1995, as cited in Creswell, 2003). For example, researcher might study a classroom that was given a new curriculum, technique, process for the use of new or high technology for the betterment of teaching learning process. It requires the use of a wide range of research methods and may combine qualitative or quantitative techniques (Wilkinson and Bhandarkar, 1994; Desai and Potter, 2006). Prominent in recent educational research, it is not clearly defined as a mode of inquiry. Three approaches to case study research are used in educational research (Sikula, 1996).

The first approach is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. A case is selected by the theoretical or conceptual framework to be examined in the research (Sikula, 1996; Wiersma, and Jurs, 2005)

Second approach to case study research comes from the cognitive science tradition. This approach utilizes varieties of qualitative methods within cognitive science frameworks. In this approach, the most commonly used part is organizational and management studies (Sikula, 1996; Wiersma, and Jurs, 2005).

The third approach emerges from the narrative inquiry tradition which explore knowledge by systematic way of knowing, and it involves personal and subjective experiences (Sikula, 1996; Wiersma, and Jurs, 2005).

Case study approach involves a portfolio of methods, interactive and potentially empowering research tools by practical and ethical considerations (Wilkinson and Bhandarkar, 1994; Desai and Potter, 2006). It helps to locate or identify the factors that account for the behavior patterns of a given unit and tracing the natural history of social unit by maintaining the relation with the social factors.

It helps to conduct research by integrated totality for understanding the complex factors that are working within social units and affords a deeper and rounded understanding of the phenomenon for presenting a word picture of characters. It receives the necessary impetus and recognition as a systematic field research technique in education for generalization and theory building (Barbour, 2008) for remarkable uniformity among independently conducted studies of a large grouping in different socio-cultural and temporal contexts.

Case study approach does not warrant the conclusion in research and it gives more emphasis on the element of uniformity for gathering data. In this approach,



it is difficult to cover all dimensions of social unit, and it cannot measure some experiences of human beings. It is the outcome of common sense and imagination of the person doing so. In many cases, it is very difficult to collect information within short time maintaining the ethical considerations.

### **Grounded Theory**

Qualitative research methods reproduce an inductive mode of analysis or a process of moving from specific observations to a general theory. This mode of analysis is always distinguished from quantitative research methods, which rely on deductive thinking or a practice of moving from a general theory to specific observations. Grounded theory, a mode of inductive analysis, can be thought of as a theory that is derived from everyday experiences for the generation of new knowledge.

The phrase 'grounded theory' refers to theory that is developed inductively from the available data. If done well, this means the resulting theory at least fits with one of the basic of dataset completely. This contrasts with the theory derived deductively without the help of data, and which can therefore turn out to fit with no data at all.

The basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read and re-read the collected textual database which discovers or labels variables and their interrelationships. The ability to perceive variables and relationships is termed "theoretical sensitivity" (Creswell, 2003), and is affected by a number of things including one's reading of the literature and one's use of techniques designed to enhance sensitivity of knowledge generating system.

Grounded theory is a qualitative approach to generating and developing a theory form the collected data in which the researcher attempts to derive a general, abstract theory of a process (Creswell, 2003). For an example, the researcher might collect data from parents who have pulled their children out of private schools and develop a theory to explain how and why this phenomenon occurs, ultimately developing a theory of school pull-out under the test of validity and reliability of the produced theory.

Grounded Theory may appear a reasonably simple approach in education for conducting research according to core doctrine, expressed in maxims such as 'all is data' and 'trust to emergence'; however, this methodology also provides a coherent framework to implement the general ideas in research method (Catherall, 2006). It always assumes a relativist approach and acknowledges multiple standpoints and realities when we conduct qualitative research. It takes a reflexive stance towards our actions, situations, and participants in the field.

The most important part of this approach is to refraining from bringing a preconceived theory, ideology or concept to the substantive area rather than research problem. This approach is to be able to gather inductive data without getting lost in it and follows the systematic strategies for collecting data that aid in

creating an original analysis. So, we get lived experiences from this approach (Charmaz, n.d.).

Grounded theory gives new approach in research field for the generation of new knowledge; but it is a very long process to develop new approach. So it consumes more time; and without micro observation it will be very difficult to use this approach. When grounded theory is applied, both qualitative and quantitative information required but within the same field both paradigms may or may not be applicable.

When we talk about research methodology, all approaches stand on the same feet but the nature and technique may differ among them. Basically, all approaches are related to the thought of non-positivism; and all explore the knowledge through qualitative measurement. But grounded theory was developed first to challenge positivism by non-positivist. But later, positivist also started to use it for the exploration of knowledge through qualitative paradigm.

### **Conclusion**

In social science research, we can use all three approaches as per the requirement; but when we use grounded theory, phenomenology and case study in a single research, we should clearly define the purpose of the applicability of all approaches in research. Mainly, in qualitative research, we use phenomenology for studying the live experience of objects and researcher perception about given object; while case study is used for the exploration of knowledge from in-depth study of a particular case. Likewise, grounded theory generates the new theory from inductive approach in research.

Mainly, research procedure is bounded within the objective/s of research in social science. When researcher conducts research, they are morally bounded with research ethics and certain framework. So, research approach is only the thing which is demanded by the nature of the study. Hence, all these research approaches are contextual; and we can apply all in a single research or use separately in research.

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## Education as a Strategy for Development: Learning from Japanese History

Saraswoti Bharati \*

### Context

History reflects the past images as a mirror. The effect of Japanese educational development on economic growth in the last century is the true example of this mirror. Japan has proved how practical education can build a country in the long run. The country has succeeded in becoming modern Japan; with a powerful competitive economy, a broadly literate population, and reliable government, civilized society with relatively less crime or violence, and a functional society wherein the basic technological infrastructure is sound and truly reliable. Appreciating the facts, it helps to explain Japan's precious catch up, compared to the situation of other countries. At the time, same time provided a key to understand why many countries, despite financial and technical assistance, still cannot free themselves from poverty trap. One may not attribute those accomplishments entirely to the education system, but it would be folly to deny that the education system has strongly reinforced them. This paper believes in the value of universal education that the Japanese have so successfully put into practice before a century and resolved the problem of equity, class hierarchy, and settled the problem of human resource development from local to national level bridging the livelihood of its people. The experience proved that proper emphasis on policies and its implementation considering local needs would solve the problems – that the developing countries are seeking now, especially Nepal and South Asia. Thus, the objectives of this paper are (i) to see the efforts made to settle the problem of illiteracy within a short period; and (ii) to explain the literacy links to the economic development of Japan.

The domestic and external conditions of Meiji Era<sup>2</sup>, when viewed from today's standard, are distinctive and extreme. The history showed that government has been accompanied by the revision of selected aspects of capitalist thoughts; and reform of the government took place in all areas, including education. The 1872 Decision on Educational Reforms marked a new age of modern education, gave all its people an equal opportunity for education and officially abolished the class divisions of samurai, farmers, artisans, and tradesmen (Tang, ; Wilkie, 1991; Wilson, 1987; Appelbaum,1989). The introduction of new concepts of "Civilization" "Enlightenment" and "Industrialization" provided Japan with the theoretical justifications of human resource development, for the capacity development of the country. Ideas such as investment on education, implementation of the modern universally accepted primary education within the

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<sup>2</sup> The "Meiji Era/ period" refers to the period from 1868 to the death of Emperor Meiji in 1912.

country and imported educational policies modified suitably for own social and cultural context for national development. They came into play more in urban areas and slowly got pace in rural areas subsequently. These facilitated the import of foreign technology and management procedure. Moreover, the idea of accepting universal primary education policies and its emphasis by the government with the Imperial decree concerning education came in 1872. It has described in this way: "There shall, hereafter, be no illiterate family among the people of any community, nor shall there be an illiterate member in any family.....Learning is the basis for all human endeavours..." (Smith, 1959). Thus, the two principles that defined the new educational system were centralization and standardization. These principles served as counterweights to the backwards, narrow-minded influences of old, evil schooling practices entrenched in the village<sup>3</sup> ( Passin, 1965). The central focus into education leads the country to the present state. In other word, the rapid development after World War II is the "legacy" of Meiji Education.

### **Major Implications**

1. ***Education for all approach:*** After Meiji Oligarchs ousted Tokugawa Shogunate in 1868 taking control of Japan, it became clear to develop nationally unifying forces in order to meet the challenges of the West. That force was the *literate mass* population with competitive ideas, thus elementary education for every Japanese child was compulsory. At that time, children were powerful economic resources of households. Establishment of schools was considered necessary to inculcate future generation with the knowledge and values that were important in modernizing nation, and to integrate children and families on a daily basis into the institution of the state (Platt, 2000; Kuroda, 2004). They realized that education has major role to play in nation building and modernization (Norman, 1940). Thus, the most essential radical reform of the government's nationalizing project was the creation of a centralized, compulsory educational system. Associated with the introduction of *Education for All* policy is to fight with ongoing situation of underdeveloped country and to protect them from foreign traits.
2. Schools before that period were mostly for rich people and were not regulated by the government. However, the educational tradition was there of the Tokugawa period, "the leaders of the new Meiji government had no difficulty in comprehending the key role of education in acquiring the technology of the West and the necessity of a modern school system if Japan were to catch up to the leading Western powers" (Reischauer,1977, p.168). Mass number of Primary, secondary schools and universities were

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<sup>3</sup> One can find such rhetoric in most official pronouncements on education during the early Meiji years, but the most influential example is the prologue to the 1872 Fundamental Code of Education (*Gakusei*).

established in 1872<sup>4</sup>. It was open to girls as well as boys and to lower as well as upper classes. Same year, the authorities declared nationwide 4 years of compulsory elementary education to all. It was a time when “every qualified or semi-qualified person went about setting up a school” (Lehmann, 1982, p.261). In 1905, school attendance for school-age children had reached more than 97.7%( within 30 years). About 10% of the eligible population continued to middle school and only a small minority made it as far as high school since the primary education was major emphasis. In 1907, Ministry of Education extended compulsory education to 6 years instead of 4. The data confirms that within a very short period of time, primary and secondary education has been popularized, various higher institutions have been set up, adult education has developed rapidly, and methods of teaching have gradually been modernized. Moreover, the new school system played central role to stigmatize the local.

3. Similarly, since the first goal of the government was universal literacy, this was enforced to common people. They realized the importance of education; the connotation used as such - “to rise in the world, make one’s fortune and successfully manage business, one must pursue learning. For everything that men do, men must pursue learning.” In this way, people were taught that *learning is the capital* with which one has to rise in the world. It also describes. “He who *does not learn* can become nothing but a social failure”. “The nature of learning must be of practical or realistic in day to day life, meaningful,” “an empty theory is of no use” (Munakata, 1958, page 2)<sup>1</sup>. This not only forced people towards education; it made people realize the need for acquiring education in their daily life, as the small enterprise was under implementation at local level. Enterprises and necessity of education for its growth made people drive towards education. Thus, all aged people were forced on one hand, and on other they accepted education as a major way out to get rid of poverty though it was often seen as the creation of political and technologically sophisticated elite (White, 1987). A slow change in livelihood was taking place as the product of education in people’s daily life. Choosing compulsory primary education as a backbone for social reform, the drive of the government and its people towards education transferred Japan to the modernized developed country. Unless there is the use of learning in daily life (reading,

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<sup>4</sup>According to the plan, 8 universities, 256 middle schools, 53,760 elementary schools have been established. Needless to say, it was hard to establish such a plan at a time. The 1870’s and most of the 1880’s were characterized by the rapid growth in the number of schools, especially in the private sector. By 1873, there were over thirteen thousand primary schools in operation in Japan. The enrollment rate of school age children was 28.1 % in 1873, this increase to 97.4 % in 1907 (White Paper, Meiji Restoration). In 1900s, elementary school fees were abolished and a system of automatic progression was adopted. As a result of these changes, school enrollment increased rapidly. Then in 1907, compulsory education was extended from 4 years to 6 years. By that time adult illiteracy had virtually disappeared.

writing and calculation), people could have very less drive towards education. Thus, there should emphasis not only on education, but its link to livelihood is also necessary for the developing country like ours.

4. **Access to opportunities by double track educational system approach:** Double track pattern in primary education was seen from the beginning. Structurally, it has gone through four basic reforms during the time span. The first three structures offered primary education of varying length; the student followed either of two routes – one leading to general secondary and higher education, the other providing terminal training. Albeit various conflicts and problems at the beginning from primary to higher education, from its continuous development, we can indeed learn a great deal from its experience and success. For example, the data shows that only about 10 percent of its people continue till mid level schooling. It showed Japan focused on sustainable knowledge for livelihood rather than developing a well - educated society. This found a significant sign of social development, providing equal opportunities to its people despite the variations. On one hand, the culture of respecting knowledge and talents has been developed. On the other, this system of education (i.e. state running school) provides facilities for the alternatives relevant to their own needs of livelihood (table 1). Providing alternative access and making compulsion with focused objective were found to be the major characteristics of the period.

Table 1  
Overview of Elementary Schools Specified in the Education Ordinance

Kind of Elementary school	Targeted children	Characteristics
Ordinary school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boys and girls of 6 – 9 years ( Lower division)</li> <li>- Boys and girls of 10 – 13 years ( upper division)</li> </ul>	Elementary school consisted of upper and lower division. Boys and girls were expected to attend within the specified age range without fail until graduation. The curriculum consisted of 14 subjects in the lower division and 18 in the upper, with additional subjects added as per necessary.
Girls' school	Girls	In addition to the above mentioned standard curriculum, handicrafts were added.
Village school	Children of the farmers who lived in the distant villages or people outside the standard age range	Rules were more relaxed than in the standard schools. Evening classes which harmonized with working patterns were permitted.
School for poor	Children from poor families	Institutions were supported by donations from rich families, as also known as 'Charity School.'
Elementary private academics	Unclear	Lessons were given in private houses by teachers who held a teacher's license.
Infant schools	Infant children below the age of 6	Pre-school education

Source: The History of Japan's Educational Development, page 96.

Nevertheless, less financial expenses and higher achievement tactics were the wise decisions of the government. Thus the double track system is supposed to provide necessary education for layman to top professionals in smoothly running society. On above, formulation of education policies is trying to solve all kinds of problem, concerning the problem of those who cannot continue even primary education. The connection built up a close link between higher education, social and economic development. Another system found in double track system was related to boosting up the link by managing the available human resources who cannot continue for higher education. This double track pattern continued till 1945. Developing the pre-requisites of various levels of human resources for national development was an objective of this double track pattern. Later this was changed to the single track 6-3-3-4 pattern, established only after World War II, with the first nine years constituting compulsory education.

Through the double track principle we can realize the country's unified thoughts and practice for modernization. These principles can help us to compare objectively, analyze and study Japan's experience of education, and this will help us to promote and solve our prevailing issues like access to equal opportunities; and use of such opportunities by the society needs to maximize the benefit provided by the education system. This needs to reach the whole society by managing such resourceful human resource which is eventually going to support the nation in the long run. Thus, it is evident that there is no guarantee of educational benefits to livelihood only by single track pattern where varieties of issues exist in society. We should have alternative for those left out and left behind.

5. **Human resource development approach:** Meiji's regime lasted from 1868 to 1912. During the period, the nation itself tried to transform from semi - feudal to a modern society. Human resource development was a primarily focused area, to stimulate necessary high level manpower for the economic development during the period. The government programs to send students abroad for advanced study of *the education systems* of leading western countries was another major mission those days. For fair selection, the regulation was established (1874), it strictly stated "Such a person must show excellent academic achievement and be a man of good conduct". The government paid students' school expenses on a loan basis and the period of overseas study was set for five years. In the early part of 70's there were about 400 such students sent away. Later in the 1880s about 1900 such students were studying in England, The United States, France, Germany, Russia, and China (JICA, 2004, page 40). In this way, a bunch of elite society was developed of practical knowledge. At the same time, once they received top class education and they could easily replace foreigners after coming back. They mostly worked in the government. By 1880s import of substitution was replaced by 80 Japanese engineers who give to educating top class talents in necessary fields. The indigenous industry was modernized with such



resource mobilization. These huge human resources proved to be the major resource to lead, and pioneered the country for a long run. In due course, western advisors from developed countries were invited to Japan. They were to help with new approaches. Japanese education system was reviewed by the visiting experts and they also shared the knowledge with local elites to grow up the human resource in mass, meet at local level required for the local needs. Thus, building human resource at local level and well trained elite at policy level made easy to handle the issues raised during the transitional period.

Education system was based on the dual goods of skills and morals, and this was practically enforced at all levels of education including industrial training (Senyo, 1998, p. 38). Thus, the era also has been a dignified period for the whole nation by accepting the Confucian heritage as well as imitating the pre-tested success story of some successful countries for human resource development. It is my contention that the government regulations would not have been established successfully in Japan, without the foundation of such solid human factors. This is a major characteristic of Japan, rather making in paper they were more practice based and strict in moral, which is a surely lacking aspect even in most of the parts of today's Nepal. From this, we can learn that own human resource is an ultimate need for development of the country and policies are needed to be implemented strictly for the betterment of all but not for a few.

#### **System management approach:**

- i. **Re-boundaries of area:** During the first half of the Meiji, numerous reforms were instituted to achieve domestic stability which was supposed to promote the concept of mass industrialization with improved and reality based education system. The state intervened the education for ordinary children by issuing the education ordinance<sup>5</sup>. Many more attempts were made to get grips with the issues of encouraging school enrollment and attendance. The government re-aligned the boundaries of local people's life (with school districts, new units of political administration, Shinto shrine's registration at district and so on) in order to heighten the sense of discontinuity with pre-existing local identities and pattern of life (Platt,2000; Umegaki,1988). The purpose of new boundaries was to carry out the function of local government effectively with a minimum size of town or village capable in maintaining its offices, especially in order to achieve the compulsory primary education and other official functions (Ogura, 1990,

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<sup>5</sup> It was also known as the Education System Order. It was concerned with the whole of the national school system and issued by the Ministry of Education as a booklet No.13. On the basis of this Ordinance, establishing elementary schools, the encouragement in school attendance, construction of universities and many more aspects of education were taken forward.

page 15). On above, it helped to build new identities of the people and new government to create a non-segregated new society<sup>6</sup>. The re-boundary provided each individual with a citizenship and national identity. So it also made easy for tracking children in described areas. It was not only done through strong central government's direction, but also by the active efforts made at prefecture and local community level (Maciamo, 2004, p.100).

- ii. **Emphasis on public school:** Motoda Eifu was a Confucian scholar and tutor of the emperor who believed "the primary goal of education should be the moral education of the young..." (Lehmann, 1982, p.262). However, patriotism and moral principles were encouraged, though a purely Confucian education was not the intent. Education at that time was primarily focused on moral education, calculations and writings in the initial stage; however, later it was changed to more advanced form. In such philosophy, private schools were running in private houses by the license holding teachers. In 1885, with the appointment of Mori Arinori as the Minister of Education, centralization and more traditional, nationalistic values became the features of the system. Guided by the idea that national interests and education were inseparable, the government proceeded to close most of the private schools. From then, there is very less value of private elementary school in Japanese culture. We can hardly find private elementary school in some urban areas. People believe that private school means a waste of money; and sending children to such school is a matter of creating social hierarchy. The policy and morale of common people was to build an acceptable schooling culture without hierarchy in the society. The Ministry of Education has sincerely under taken the responsibility of training the teachers and school inspectors, appointing qualified and professional school principals, controlled curricula and textbooks even today.
- iii. **Available infrastructural resource management** - The Meiji leader's original plan of a large, centralized and standardized system of elementary, middle and technical schools and universities, had proved to be too big burden for the new government in terms of cost and administration. Part of the plan had included closing all the old Tokugawa schools as the new system was planned, but it was soon discovered that the new system would be better served by adjusting on the old system (Roger and Kirsten, 1992). This made easy for the government and people to use local resources nearby and focus on major agenda 'literacy' at the initial stage. All available resources (Shinto and Shrine temples, private houses, community hall, and open public spaces etc.) were taken under formal education system; so there was no confusion for government and people. At the same time, it reduced the chances of doublification. Later, once the problem of illiteracy rate was resolved, infrastructure and quality

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<sup>6</sup> There are 19 cities, 12,194 towns and 71,497 villages until 1883. These numbers decreased to 15,820 villages in 1889.

of education was enforced. Here, it would be relevant to stress that such a wise lesson needs to be learned by the underdeveloped / developing countries like Nepal. These underdeveloped / developing countries still have illiteracy as one of the main obstacles for their development. Since, there are varieties of projects (formal and informal), religious schools are lacking national objectives on one hand, and on other, it has created social hierarchy. There is no guarantee of continuation, and it is more difficult to bring them on national agenda. Thus, there is the need for well managed centralization with decentralized local government for illiteracy eradication. Once people are educated, they will start receiving various opportunities, and they will also be capable of upgrading their own life and start thinking of their future generations being a part of well managed society.

- iv. **Generation of economic resources at local level:** Japan at the time did not receive any direct investment from other countries, like today's underdeveloped countries. It enthusiastically adopted technology from abroad, but funding for the most part was self-generated. School construction in the early Meiji period was made possible entirely through public participation; and it was financed from domestic savings, private capital or joint work with local government. At that time, apart from donation, each household was required to manage the fixed *sum money* to meet the objectives specified in the order. By pursuing it, the basket money was generated at the local level for investment in education. Since, parents had to bear the burden; people were forced to work to raise money. Education became the duty of each parent including community rather than the right of them, which is quite different from the present perspective of human rights. Such policies make each family and community stronger in self-help, independent and economically strong for their livelihood as well along with pride. This process not only raised income at individual and community level, but also proved to be a dynamic force of change and continuous process for social transformation in the country.

The way of generating economic resources is very important for making the community stronger and creative for sustainable development. It made earnest efforts to mobilize its civil service and people to catch up; some examples can be seen as a part of a lesson (Table 2). Such fund raising activities at local and household level could be seen throughout Japan from the time. The absence of direct investment from abroad is characteristic not only of this period; it is in fact a salient feature of Japan's whole educational and economic development including industrialization process till the present day. As mentioned above, it strengthens unity among the people which is found declining day by day even in Asian culture, which was the major identity of an active society before. Above all, parental responsibility is degrading day by day with easy economic support from NGOs and INGOs. This makes people poor in mentality as well as in

economy, which are realities of today's underdeveloped country. The supports not only widen the feelings of mental poverty, it also makes people more dependent on others. The result of such dependency is not supporting to develop the society in the long run. Thus, the way of making the community bond stronger and develop a self sustained, self-help society could be the lesson, even today for the developing countries seeking for social and economic development.

Table 2  
Local level attempts to grip with the encouragement of school enrollment and attendance

Objectives	Locality, year : Project name	Contents
Source identification for establishing and maintaining elementary school and manage educational expenses	Ehime,1873: "Three Principles"	1. Abolish the customs of alms at each village along the route of '88 temple pilgrims' and put this money for education cost; 2. Economize tobacco cost and divert the money towards educational cost; 3. Abolish the seasonal festivals - money gift (with the adoption of new calendar 1873) and divert the money towards education cost.
	Kanagawa,1874: "Turning crops into money"; "Stopping theater performance"	1. Encourage parents to cultivate crops for cash when a child is born; 2. End the puppet drama and add the money saved towards education, which served as recreation for farmers; 3. Make timbers available for school building construction dismantling the stages.
	Aomori,1877 to 1880s : "Land cultivation"	1. Lend unproductive land owned by prefecture to school district or school administrator at no cost for cultivation, and use the money to defray education cost.
	Fukushima,1885: "Rising poultry farming"	1. Getting the children of poor families to raise chickens on village land, use the money raised by selling eggs to pay tuition costs.

Source: The History of Japan's Educational Development, page 102

- v. **Human resource management:** About 15% population was literate in the beginning of Meiji. Once the new government tried to establish universal education, the emphasis was on primary education, where the social costs were lowest and the payoffs were highest (Henry, 1998). In addition, available human resources were effectively utilized from the very beginning. Every day when the schools were running from 8:00a.m. to 3:00p.m.; local policeman used to patrol the school area. If a policeman found a child, not attending school, he would urge the child to attend the school. The policemen were empowered to use their necessary power for

sending children to the schools, and parents were also made accountable for that. If the child refused to go to school for a long time despite repeated urging, it was stipulated that the police should note down the child's name and address, and report to the child's parents and to the school. The details were submitted for that individual student's the attendance desk. It is even stated in regulations that the police would perform the duties as equivalent to *education inspectors*, so the police were considered to play a very important role in terms of enforcing children for regular school attendance and encouraging them for enrollment. This policy helped to lessen the economic burden for local and national government and made it easy to trace the child in given school boundaries.

Apart from this, the constant desire of the government and the continued support of its people is the main reason for success. Some of the elites at that time like Fukuzawa Yukichi, Okuma Sigenobu tried to translate their instinct knowledge on one's model of Japanese culture rather copying as it they had learnt at overseas. The social and cultural perspective has considerable effect on national development from the beginning. The society placed a high value on harmony in interpersonal relations and the ability to co-operate with others. The group culture is distinct to Japanese society from individual to national development. School reflects this cultural priority. Classroom activities are basically focused to encourage for participating in group activities, to emphasize and realize the responsibility of individual students to the class they belong. This group activity eventually helps the individuals to increase loyalty towards their group member, group and the school. Thus, education in Japan enhances the individual's academic knowledge, thought process and basic vocational skills for their life. According to report of Robert et.al (1987), the origination of Japanese commitment to education lies in the Confucian and Buddhist heritage. There is a strong consensus that schools have the obligation and authority to impart fundamental Japanese values as the foundation of proper moral attitudes and personal habits. Moral development and character development is also the central concern.

Even today, there is a clear consensus that education is essential for both individual and national development. This requires active and regular commitment of energy and resources at all levels of society. Parents and children need to accept education seriously because success in school is a crucial determinant of economic and social status in adult life. Tangs added that the crucial factor for change is its social and institutional reform, which makes compulsion to accept the responsibilities in each sector without class division. Finally, Japan had a high target to be equal to other developed country. The strong will and wish of the government and the people's drive and their continuous supportive efforts are pivotal for the development of a country in a short span.

## Conclusion

The study suggests that the Meiji Educational Reform policy was effective, not only in the educational sector, but also to its economic structure. The adoption of education for all (compulsory education) policy from the beginning was a wise decision for necessary basement formation to overall development of the country in the long run. The rapid development and the modernization of Japan along with espoused implementation of technology are having a major influence on the developing country like Nepal. Among the implications are: Compulsory primary education, maximum use of local resources – human, infrastructure, cultural and economy, redraw the boundaries to create new local identities and pattern of life and tracking children, and double tracking system of education to upgrade the basic livelihood i.e. agriculture. These are the most important points which can be implemented even in the present context. The concept of education needs to be changed as a duty of its people instead of rights for any individual citizen. Education is the most essential means towards national development. In this aspect, primary education in Nepal can enlighten each citizen with their own resources by making the citizens themselves capable and resourceful. Economic poverty is not the major matter for development. Instead, emotional and will poverty is the major hindrance to development. My university professor back home used to repeat a sentence: 'People in Nepal are not poor by wealth; they are poor by willingness.'

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## The Emerging Need of Inclusive Education in Nepal

Sheela Bhandari\*

### The Context

Education is the right of all children. Children have the right to receive that kind of education which does not discriminate on the basis of disability, ethnicity, religion, language, gender and so on. The fundamental principle of inclusive education (IE) is that every child has a right to education and the education system needs to be flexible to accommodate the learning needs of all children. IE system demands to focus the children and give priority as per every individual needs. Therefore, the education system should give emphasis on making schools child friendly, mainstreaming children with disability in general schools, and make schools a center to implement non-discriminatory practices where all children will get an equal learning opportunity regardless of gender, caste, culture, race and their ability.

Our country Nepal is rich in various languages, cultures and diverse religions. On the basis of socio-cultural diversity of the country, it is rather impossible to establish different schools. Therefore, inclusive education is the emerging need in our country and would be a great example in a multilingual and multicultural state. Basically, IE aims to ensure that all children have access to an appropriate, relevant, affordable and effective education within the community. The objective is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and non-formal educational settings. It is an approach that looks into how to transform the system to respond the diversity of learners. To meet the diverse needs of all children, it is the nation's obligation to establish more inclusive schools.

Inclusive education should be viewed in terms of including traditionally excluded or marginalized groups. The most marginalized groups are often invisible in society: disabled children, girls, children in remote villages, and the very poor. These invisible groups are excluded from governmental policy and access to education. Education has been considered as the basic human right by many International human rights treaties since Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948. The principle of inclusive education was adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (Salamanca Spain, 1994) and was restated at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000) that reaffirmed education as the fundamental human right and underlined the importance of right-based government actions in implementing Education for All (EFA) in nation-wide. UNESCO other UN agencies, and a number of international and national non-governmental organizations, have been working towards achieving this goal- adding to the efforts made at the country level. For

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this, governments have taken a right-based approach to education in planning and programming process. Nepal too follows the same to develop right based education system by promoting inclusive education in schools. IE thus offers children the right to receive quality education that is child friendly, bias-free, multicultural and equitable considering their diverse needs regardless of caste, gender, language, culture, geographical variation, poverty, difference in ability and other needs. In addition, it has also become an important strategy to meet the sixth goal of Dakar Framework of Action to meet Millennium Development Goal (MDG). In order to provide quality education, IE is provided to the most vulnerable children through the schooling system around the world.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion**

The term “exclusion” is covering wide range of social and economic problems (Sen, 2001). Inclusion has been enshrined as segregation and discrimination have been rejected and outlawed. Articulations of the new developments in ways of thinking, in policy and in law mainly include: i) The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which sets out children’s rights in respect of freedom from discrimination and in respect of the representation of their wishes and views; and ii) The UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994) which calls on all governments to give the highest priority to inclusive education. In other words, IE should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. It incorporates those who are not excluded from any reasons and the term “inclusive education” is coined as an approach to secure the right of children towards relevant education by promoting the educational system that celebrates multicultural differences of the country perpetuating non-discriminatory environment. Equity theory is the underlying principle of IE which believes that all children have the potent to learn if appropriate environment and support is given.

Inclusive education is concerned with rethinking and restructuring policies, curricula, cultures and practices in schools and learning environments so that diverse learning needs can be met, whatever the origin or nature of those needs. This kind of educational practice should reflect on the changing culture of contemporary schools with emphasis on active learning, applied curriculum, multi-level instructional approaches, and increased attention on diverse student needs and individualization. The claim is that educational system in schools must change so that they become caring, nurturing, and supportive to educational communities where the needs of all students and teachers are truly met. In this respect, inclusive education is defined as a strategic approach designed to facilitate learning success for all children that addresses the common goals of decreasing and overcoming all exclusion from the human right to education, at least at the elementary level, and enhancing access, participation and learning success in quality basic education for all (UNESCO,1994). Most people are misinformed about the inclusive education in line with Special Education that focuses on children with disabilities. Rather, it is an approach or a strategy which

incorporates learning needs of socially marginalized groups, children with disabilities, indigenous children and children living in difficult circumstances with special needs (MOES, 2004). It identifies children who for any reason are excluded or who are at risk of dropping out from schooling in particular context. In this context, inclusive education does not seek separate schooling or curricula for those children having learning difficulties. Rather, school education system, teachers and the environment facilitates the need and interest of varying students. We can say that IE is a liberal education system that believes in child-centered pedagogy, respects multicultural and multilingual orientations to ensure right to education. Thus, the concept of exclusion also makes easy to define the meaning of inclusion. Inclusion is a strategy of pulling children in schooling that identifies children who for any reason remain out of schooling or are excluded due to some particular reasons.

In a broad term inclusion can be defined as:

An equity approach which avoids classification/categorization of people by their background, discards categorization, includes values, recognizes and accepts individual difference and needs, minimizes barriers to learning and participation through their identification and maximizes utilization of resources for the attainment of goal of full participation and learning (Afesky, 1995 ; as cited in Kafle 2009, p. 66).

Nepal's Education for All National Plan of Action (EFA, NPA) 2001-2015 is designed under the overall concept of inclusive education approach with the purpose of promoting inclusion and non-discrimination among various social groups. In this regard, Ministry of Education and Sports, Department of Education has taken up the challenges of initiating inclusive education in Nepal. The government has been involved in various activities such as analyzing the educational needs of all children, implementation and monitoring of IE programs and extending quality education opportunities for the minorities and excluded children with the support of UNESCO Kathmandu. Basically, poverty, ill-health, gender, lack of education etc. are the main reasons for exclusion (Pant, 2008). Department of Education (DOE) has identified thirteen groups excluded from right to education or from schooling system. These excluded groups are (DOE, 2007):

- Women and children
- Children with disabilities,
- Dalits
- Ethnic minorities
- Street children
- Children affected by conflict
- Children trafficked for sexual and other purpose

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- Children in poverty
- Kamiya children
- Children in prison
- Diseased children( HIV/AIDS, Leprosy)
- Child laborers
- Children without parenting/guardians

### **Need of Inclusive Education in Nepal**

IE is a strategy contributing towards the ultimate goal of promoting an inclusive society in which differences are respected and valued. Discrimination and prejudice will be actively combated in policies, institutions and behavior that enable all children/adults, whatever their gender, age, ability, ethnicity, impairment or HIV infection etc., to participate in and contribute to that society. As a catalyst for change, IE provides not only school improvement but also an increased awareness of human rights which leads to a reduction of discrimination. By finding local answers to complex problems, it empowers communities and can lead to wider community development. IE addresses a real need, is a readily comprehensible concept and requires no new major resources. It primarily involves changes of attitude and behavior that have the potential to be a very effective starting point for addressing the rights of the child in a range of cultures and contexts. Besides, The Child Right Convention in 1989 adopted the principle that education is the fundamental right of every child.

By adopting the international framework of action, Nepal has set a goal of ensuring all children, particularly girls, the disabled, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities and Dalits, to have access to free and compulsory education of good quality by 2015. Education is the fundamental right of every child that aims to ensure all children to have access to an appropriate, relevant, affordable and effective education within their community. Ideally, IE should start at home with the family, and includes formal, non-formal and all types of community-based education initiatives. Within schools, IE is an approach which aims to develop a child-focus by acknowledging that all children are individuals with different learning needs and speeds. Teaching and learning can become more effective, relevant and fun for all if inclusive education is implemented. Therefore IE will always be good for all schools, although all schools may not be good for all children.

Nepal is a multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious country. The socio-cultural diversity of Nepalese people is categorized into a number of caste based groups and ethnic communities. We can find people with different types of cultural traditions and different levels of economic standing. Nepalese people speak more than 92 languages and it is impossible to establish different schools on the basis of social diversity of the state. School should therefore

accommodate all those children of varying social diversity. "Nepalese community, greatly known for its rich diversity, is a suitable example of inclusionary practice that the school should learn to be inclusionary. As inclusion is both a concept and a strategy, a welcoming and celebrating community of diversities can set an example for the school usually to avoid the notion that the child is for the school, not the either way" (Stubbs 2002 as cited in Kafle, 2007). IE is an effective instrument to promote unity in diversity and national integration in our country. There is no proper access of schooling to the disabled children of Nepal. Likewise, girls and low caste children feel discriminated in the remote and rural areas of the country. IE is therefore helpful to retain these children and the best way to access for the schooling of disabled children in our country. In this regard, inclusive education is important which recognizes the diverse needs of children in which learning materials and teaching materials are prepared in various ways to address the varying needs of the children.

IE is part of development, and development should be inclusive, i.e. responding to the needs of real people who are all different. As with all children, disabled children have a range of basic needs which should be met in order for them to benefit from education. These include nutrition, acceptance, love and basic health care. Poverty and lack of basic infrastructure (roads, transport) affects children's access to education, including disabled children. Whatever the level of socio-economic development, the education of disabled children should be seen as integral to the development of education for all children. Many of the 'problems' which exclude disabled children from education are a result of exclusive planning: therefore planning should be inclusive.

IE is the responsibility of the government as well as community, requiring collaboration between sectors and extensive participation. Supporting and involving families is central to IE, as the family has prime responsibility for the care and education of their children (whether disabled or not). Moreover, issues of disabled identity and discrimination need to be addressed as part of an IE strategy. In order to combat discrimination and to promote positive identity in disabled children, disabled role models should be accessible to all children, schools should employ disabled teachers, and curriculum materials should reflect the existence of disabled people in society in positive ways. In a country like Nepal where there is rich cultural and linguistic diversity, IE is always required to meet the varying needs of children.

### **National and International Perspectives**

The concept of IE was developed after the World Conference held on Special Needs Education held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994. The Government of Nepal has also ratified the Convention of Child Rights (1989), and is a signatory of the declaration on Education for All (EFA)- a call for the provision of public education to the citizens regardless of physical, intellectual emotional, social and linguistics or any other conditions. After the World Conference, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Royal Danish University of Education

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and the Ministry of Education and Sports/Nepal on implementing IE in the academic year 2056/57 BS. The program was piloted in four districts of Nepal-Banke, Kavre, Sindhupalchowk, and Udayapur in order to study how IE strategy could be implemented in the Nepalese context (Phuyal, 2008).

Many countries in the world have achieved relatively high initial enrolment figures, but they are struggling with poor primary school completion and high drop outs, especially for girls, children with special needs, and those from ethnic minorities. Despite encouraging developments, there are still an estimated 113 millions primary school age children not attending school (International Consultative Forum on Education for All,2000).To achieve EFA goals, the new constitution of 1990 established Nepal as a much more inclusive state-describing the country as multilingual, multi-ethnic and democratic country. The constitution equally gives legal provision to positively discriminate in order to secure the participation of vulnerable groups in the society. Most significantly, the Local Governance Act, 1999 and the Tenth Five Year Plan - Nepal's Poverty Reduction Strategy, is the first national plan to have social inclusion as a central approach to reduce gender, ethnic, and caste related disparities.

Likewise, Ministry of Education and Sports, Department of Education has taken up the challenges of initiating inclusive education in Nepal. Education for All-National Plan of Action 2001-2015, and the Education for All programs 2004-09 have taken inclusive educations as one of the major strategies and education for children with disabilities and marginalized groups has high priority. It seeks to address the learning needs of all children with a special focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups. Decentralization has become the core strategy in the Tenth Plan. The 7<sup>th</sup> amendment of Education Act, 2001 has provided formal rights to communities for the management of primary schools as means of improving both quality and access to primary education. Government's other agencies such as the National Planning Commission Secretariat, the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Local Development and the Social Welfare Council are taking various initiatives to provide integrated and inclusive education. . During the Basic and Primary Education Project (1992-1997), the concept of integrated school was introduced in school education. Consequently, emphasis was laid down on integrated schools in later projects and programs. However, it has been realized that the present strategies and interventions are not sufficient to achieve the goals of education for all. Nepal's experience with inclusive education starts with the piloting of this concept in 4 districts in 1999/2000 with Danish assistance under the Ministry of Education. Based on the experience gained from the piloted activities, the Department of Education has expanded inclusive education in other areas (schools) and now reached 210 schools of the country with the aim of establishing 500 inclusive schools by 2009. A study conducted by CERID in 2009 pointed that DEO has also developed 45 days training program for teachers and 6 days training program to PTA members to orient IE in Nepal.

## **Problems and Challenges**

Theoretically, the concept of inclusive education relates to the right based approach in education. To ensure the full implementation of right based education, it is necessary to make education and school system more responsive to all children regardless of their differences, which is very difficult tasks demanding more resources, time and efforts.

Boyd and Simpson (2000) have tried to describe the 'learning classroom', emphasizing the need for challenging teaching, the avoidance of labelling and the adoption of teaching methods which promote 'deep' learning. The emerging themes suggest that inclusion is accepted in principle but the majority of teachers believe that it is unachievable in practice. These teachers believe that raising attainment and tackling social exclusion are opposing, not complementary, pressures. They believe that class sizes are too high, that the pressure to improve examination results are too great and that the lack of training for them simply means inclusion is not achievable under the present circumstances. Indeed, they complain that they were not included in the formulation of the policy on Inclusion. It is clear that young people can be in a mainstream school but not necessarily be included. It may be also true because some young people need more specialist accommodation and care than a mainstream school can provide.

Inclusive education in Nepal has been implemented with the aim of ensuring the school and classrooms environment more conducive for learning to all irrespective of race, language, caste and creed of the students by welcoming them with least restrictive environment. Pigozzi (2001) has realized this scenario; "Efforts to make education more inclusive have been somewhat "spotty", with greater progress in some areas and virtually no progress in other". Research studies have also explored the situation of inclusive education in Nepal. A recent study on the Situation of inclusive classroom in Nepal (CERID, 2006) revealed that the true concepts of the inclusive education have not been translated in classroom practices. Likewise, another study conducted by CERID (2004), found that the school environment was not favorable for inclusion. The research studies, to some extent, indicate that inclusion can simply turn out to be a matter of discourse, much talked but little practiced. It is obvious that many children do not yet enjoy their right to a good quality education in a supportive, protective and non-discriminatory environment. Poverty, gender inequality and social exclusion are reflected in marked educational disparities between the most advantaged and disadvantaged groups and individuals.

A study of CERID (2004) reflects that despite the orientation on IE program in schools conducted by DOE, the concept on IE was not found clear to the local level stakeholders. The problems such as lack of orientation on IE targeting teachers, students, and parents with an aim to develop a complete environment of integration; lack of training to all teachers, large numbers of students in a class, unavailability of text books transcribed in sign language etc. are the existing turnouts. Many other challenges will occur while implementing inclusive

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education. In most cases, school itself creates barriers for some children and deny all children to enjoy their rights of receiving good quality education in an atmosphere of protection and non- discrimination.

The following issues are pertinent regarding in the context of Nepalese inclusive education:

- Conceptual clarity: inclusive education vs. special needs education
- Debate on the regular and inclusive education in terms of resources, management, effectiveness, efficiency
- Disability dominant inclusive practice
- Community awareness, parental education and training
- Teacher training: training on inclusion or regular teaching
- Trained human resources and support services: separate cadre or regular staff
- Inclusive school management: high operating costs.

### **Conclusion**

We believe that inclusive education cannot be developed in isolation from overall school development. IE is a decisive issue of how the individual pupil can be ensured for optimal education in accordance with his/her capabilities and needs. In the holistic view of the pupil, opportunities for participation and sharing in the work of the class are dominant factors in the classroom participants. Human differences are natural, contribute to the richness of every society and must, of course, be reflected in schools. Hence, schools must ensure opportunities for participation and sharing through a wide range of working methods and individual treatment. IE therefore must target that school can provide a good education to all pupils irrespective of their varying abilities. This strategy believes that all children will be treated with respect and equal opportunities will be ensured for them that the school children learn together. To a concluding note, IE must be regarded as an approach to develop the entire school system.

The journey from the World Conference on Education for All (1990) or World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994) to World Forum on Education (2000), the issues of participation, equity and freedom of children with special needs, in particular, have been at the core of the educational efforts to bring the disadvantaged, vulnerable and underprivileged children into the mainstream of education. IE has the objective and potential to promote educational strategies based on the rights of all – with the intent of nurturing differences among them. So, education has to take on the difficult task of turning diversity into a constructive contributory factor of mutual understanding between individual and group. Access to inclusionary settings and practices is possible only when School Management Committee (SMC) is inclusive in nature, structural



adjustment is attempted and teachers are trained along the line of inclusive strategies and approaches. To sum up, Nepal is in the process of reformation in which decentralization and social inclusion are vital issues. For promoting social inclusion, right based education needs to be ensured. The government is committed towards this approach and has already initiated various programs in line with inclusion. To materialize this vision, education policy must be sufficiently diversified and must be designed not to become another cause of social exclusion; and schools should foster the desire to be together, learn together and live together.

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## **Students' Learning and Achievement in Mathematics: Reflections on Some Cross National Studies**

Bharat Bilas Pant\*

### **Introduction**

Mathematics is considered a key subject of study in the school curricula especially at the primary level, throughout the world. It has been considered a main subject for basic literacy, a tool of communication in everyday life, the basis to pursue further education and to develop a basis for scientific and technological advancement of the country. It is a gateway to many areas and further studies. With the application of Mathematics, not only a school student but also housewives and farmers, who are semi-literate or illiterate, can make their life more meaningful. Those who are pursuing higher studies find its significant relationships with other subjects like physical sciences, biological sciences, social sciences, language, art, music, engineering and computer. Mathematics is an independent subject of study with its own language, symbols, content, structure, and systematic approaches.

The last two and half decades have witnessed a large number of research studies that have significantly contributed towards our academic understanding regarding Mathematics learning of students through instruction and teaching in schools. It is therefore contextual to have a brief discussion on the nature and importance of teaching and learning process that are conducive for better learning achievement in general and Mathematics learning in particular on the basis of national and cross- national studies.

### **Multi-factors Affecting Achievement**

Regarding the factors affecting students' learning and achievement, a number of studies have been conducted at the country level, cross-country level and international level which are precisely presented below.

### *Cognitive Basis for Learning Mathematics*

In a study, conducted through the use of a written test on Algebra with groups of 10th graders in Kenya, Pereira-Mendoza has reported as follows:

“Overall, the analysis seemed to show that students operate in two distinct but not disjoint spaces. Students' perceptions of the relationship between these spaces are complex, being influenced by their composition of arithmetic and algebraic

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principles and rules." (Pereira-Mendoza, cited in Bergeron et al. 1987: 335)

Emphasizing the importance of cognitive basis for the procedures in solving algebraic simplification, the researcher mentioned that it was important to note even students who could correctly simplify the algebraic expressions but did not have a well-developed cognitive basis for their procedures. The correct responses were reported to be the result of pragmatic application of algorithms.

### *Gender Attitude in Mathematics Achievement*

A number of studies carried out to explore the attitude of boys and girls towards Mathematics have been available in Kenyan research literature. Mbutia (1986) in a study entitled "Sex differences and attitudes towards Mathematics" found that 97% boys and 67% girls had positive attitude towards Mathematics. Similar trends were seen in an investigation done by Opondo (1984), Otieno (1985), Samumkut (1986) and Mbugua (1986) (cited In Bergeron, Herscovics, and Kieran, 1987). Regarding the correlation between attitude towards Mathematics and achievement on Mathematics, the Kenyan investigators found that pupils' positive attitude in Mathematics correlated with better performance in Mathematics. Parkar (1970) in a research with control and experimental groups of 13-15 year old pupils found that there was no significant difference in attitude towards Mathematics although Mathematics achievement and attitude towards Maths in treatment group positively correlated with one another. Studies done with the same age group by Kibanaza (1980), Samumkut (1986) and Patel (1985) also arrived at the same conclusion (cited In Bergeron, Herscovics, and Kieran, 1987).

### *Gender Difference in Mathematics Achievement*

Ma and Cartwright (2003) conducted a study on "Longitudinal analysis of gender differences in affective outcomes in Mathematics during middle and high school" with a purpose to examine the rate of change in Mathematics affect: how school variables were in the rate of change; individual differences in the rate of change; and school effects over and above individual differences in the rate of change.

Gender difference in the rate of change in Mathematics affect (attitude and anxiety toward Mathematics and utility of Mathematics) across middle and high school was examined using data from this longitudinal study carried out in a sample of American youths. The study indicated no gender differences in the rate of decline in either attitude or utility, but females grew faster in anxiety than males. It was observed that schools were more responsible for variation in male than female rate of change in Mathematics affect. It was also shown that in a quite different way, the student and school variables influenced the rate of change in Mathematics between males and females.

### *Sex Differences in Students' Performance in Mathematics*

Mukuni (1987, cited in Bergeron, Herscovics, and Kieran 1987) undertook a critical survey of studies, done in Kenya on dependence of attitude toward Mathematics and performance in Mathematics on sex differences of the school pupils. The result from the review and analysis of the researcher revealed that, during secondary school years, boys had more favorable attitudes towards Mathematics than girls and during primary school years, the performance of the children did not depend on sex. However, at the later stage of secondary level, girls performed better than boys in Mathematics. The study indicated that positive attitude towards Mathematics significantly correlated with better performance in it.

Wamani (1980, cited in Mukuni 1987), in a study of mathematical abilities among the primary school children of age 8-12 years in Kenya, found that sex differences in the performance of pupils were not significant. On the other hand, Samumkut (1986), Martim (1985) and Kapiyo (1982) in their separate independent studies for measuring sex differences in Mathematics achievement found that in the age group of 13-17 years, significant difference prevailed between boys and girls – with boys performing better than girls (cited in Mukuni 1987).

Similarly, Martim (1985), using the Kenyan National Examination Council (KNEC) results to find out the difference between the performance of boys and girls of the age groups 18 to 19 years (at 'A' level), found that girls performed significantly better than boys in Mathematics. Keeping the findings together, it was clearly shown that boys and girls performed equally at the age level of 8 to 12 years, differed significantly across the various age groups – boys performing better in the age group of 13-17 and girls performing better than boys in the age group of 18-19 years in the 'A' level examination.

In a discussion on the teaching and learning of Algebra, Kieran attempted to answer how the content, teaching, and learning of algebra contributed to the difficulties the students had in learning algebra. After critically reviewing the historical analysis of the development of algebra followed by a description of psychological demand made on the subject, he highlighted that both procedural and structural conceptions were important (cited in Bergeron et. al 1987).

### *Effects of Language in Mathematics Achievement*

Myers and Milne conducted a study entitled " Effects of home language and primary language on Mathematics achievement: a model and results for secondary analysis". Conceptually, the study had used two models. The first model used a measure of language usually spoken at home, regardless of the students' current or primary language; the second used a measure of the student's primary language. The analysis of the information and data demonstrated significant differences in Mathematics achievement between

various language status groups and English Monolinguals (cited in Cocking and Mestre 1988).

### *Cross Cultural Differences in Mathematical Achievement*

In America, a number of researches have been conducted in relation to cross cultural differences in the level of mathematical achievement and the potential causes of such differences. These researches have indicated the potential causes such as intelligence, language influences, schooling, family, and general cultural attitudes towards academic achievement in Mathematics (Geary, 1996). A quick review of the cultural influences on mathematical development is made below.

### *Effects of Time Spent, Opportunity to Learn, and the Quality of Instruction*

Aiming at compiling "Empirical evidence of a comprehensive model of school effectiveness", Jong, Westerhof and Kruiter (2004) carried out a multilevel study of Mathematics in the 1st year of junior general education in the Netherlands. The study used Creemers' model in a field situation in which teachers and students were observed, interviewed, and tested during math lessons in the 1st year of secondary education. The study indicated that the main factors in the model – time spent, opportunity to learn, and the quality of instruction – were most important in predicting achievement. However, no evidence was found for the relationships between levels.

### *Effects of Schools and Classes*

Opendakker et al. (2002) made a review of "The Effects of Schools and Classes on Mathematics Achievement" basically to answer the following questions:

- How important was the class teacher and school in explaining differences in Mathematics achievement at the end of the second grade?
- To what extent were differences between schools and between classes within schools with respect to Mathematics achievement attributable to differences in student intake?
- What characteristics of classes, teaching practice, and schools were linked to the achievement of students in Mathematics?
- Were there indications of differential effectiveness of classes or schools?

Important recruitment differences between schools and classes within schools were revealed through multilevel analyses. The group composition at the class level remained very important for the explanation of differences in Mathematics achievement. The review also indicated a positive correlation of learning climate in the class with group composition. At the school level, the proportion of girls was positively related to Mathematics achievement. Indications of differential

effectiveness of classes and schools and socioeconomic status (SES), average class size, sex, and learning climate were found.

### **Role of Classroom and Experience on Students' Achievement**

As regards the role of classroom and experience on students' achievement, Geary (1996) has mentioned that classroom experiences of Asian and American children are very likely to be the contributing factors to the cross-national achievement differences in Mathematics. Children in Asian classrooms spend much more of their Mathematics instruction by engaging themselves in activities that are directed by the teacher, are on-task much more frequently, and are asked more difficult questions by their teachers. These differences in the classroom experiences of Asian and American children are very likely to be contributing factors to the cross-national achievement differences in Mathematics (Geary, 1996).

While talking about the mathematical achievements of Asian and American students, the studies indicate a number of factors contributing to the important differences between the Asian and American families. Those family factors include particularly the parental expectations for academic excellence, relative emphasis on ability versus effort, the home environment, and the relative frequency of disruptive family influences (e.g., divorce) (Geary, 1996).

Regarding the factors contributing to children's achievement in Mathematics, the researches have revealed that parents' expectation, the children's relative valuation of school versus other activities (e.g., sports or social activities) and culture also have important role to play in the learning of Mathematics among children. Asian culture is generally regarded as that one in which parents place more value in the acquisition of mathematical skills than done by their counterparts in the United States (Stevenson, Lee, Chen, Stigler, et al., 1990, cited in Geary, 1996). According to Hatano (1990), American culture is also much more open than Asian culture, whereby individuals are also allowed to pursue their own self-interests or engage in activities that are inherently interesting. Studies have not generally indicated any gender differences in mathematical problem solving. Even when gender differences in mathematical problem solving are found, they tend to be modest and selective (Geary, 1996).

### **Homework, Curriculum, Classroom Experiences and Financial Support**

Geary (1996) has indicated opportunity to learn Mathematics, homework, curriculum, classroom experiences, and financial support for education as the influencing factors for child's experience in school. Referring to various types of international researches, conducted on the Mathematics achievement of Asian and American studies, Geary (1996) has mentioned that the amount of time spent

by the child doing Mathematics is important rather than the average amount of instructional time allotted for Mathematics.

Lapointe et al. (1992) mentioned that the most recent international study also found a positive relationship between the amount of time spent on Mathematics homework and mathematical achievement scores for 10 or 15 nations. The researchers did not do cross-national comparisons in this area. A positive relationship was found between the time spent in extracurricular Mathematical activities (e.g., practice at home) and mathematical achievement in most of the nations under study. The mathematical activities such as homework outside the classroom were found contributing to children's mathematical development. With respect to time spent on homework, studies have shown that Asian students spent more time on homework in all subjects than students in the U.S. (Cai, 1995).

### **Home Background Variables and Student Performance**

In Mathematics, a strong relationship between home background variables and student performance has been well documented (Robitaille & Garden, 1989, cited in Cai, 1995). Various cross-national studies have been conducted with respect to students' home environment. Surveys have been conducted on the educational and occupational status of the parents, parental help, study environment at home, parents' expectations from their children, their beliefs about their children's future happiness, and the way to achieve success. The performance difference in Mathematics was not found to be affected by educational and occupational status of the parents and study environment at home (Robitaille & Garden, 1989; Stevenson & Lee, 1990, cited in Cai, 1995). However, parental help, expectations of their children, and beliefs about their children's future happiness including the way to achieve success seemed to be related to children's school work (e.g., Lapointe et al. 1992; Robitaille & garden, 1989; Stevenson & Lee, 1990 Cited in Cai, 1995).

### **Cross National Study: Jordanian and U.S. Students**

Al-Mahmoud (1986) conducted a study entitled "A Comparison of Mathematics Achievement of Jordanian, Canadian and American Students" to compare the achievement levels of twelfth-grade Jordanian students with the achievement levels of twelfth-grade U.S. students on the basis of their performance on American International Mathematics Examination (AIME), Scholastic Aptitude Test – math section only (SAT-M), and American High School Mathematics Examination (AHSME). This study also aimed to compare the achievement levels of twelfth-grade Jordanian students with the achievement levels of twelfth-grade Canadian students measured on the basis of Canadian Mathematics Competition: Euclid Contest (CMCEC). The study revealed that there was no significant difference between the achievement levels of the high achievers among twelfth grade Jordanian students and the twelfth –grade U.S. students



measured on the basis of American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME). The study was revealing because it indicated several factors which might explain why U.S. students performed better on the AIME than their Jordanian counterparts.

Explaining the better result of twelfth-grade U.S. students over their Jordanian counterparts on the SAT-M (Al-mahmoud 1986), the study argued that the U.S. students were required to prepare for SAT- M in order to prepare for their college entrance. The other reason mentioned for this superiority was that the twelfth-grade Jordanian students were not used for taking long tests under the time frame. As the twelfth-grade Jordanian students did not carefully follow the instructions, most of their scores were affected by a high penalty for guessing. The study revealed that the twelfth -grade Jordanian average students of science did better than the twelfth-grade Canadian students on the CMCEC. A possible reason mentioned by the study was the continuous motivation and encouragement given by Mathematics teachers to their students (Al-mahmoud1986).

Cai (1995) carried out a study on the cognitive analysis of US and Chinese students' mathematical performance with particular attention to their skills in computation, simple problem solving and complex problem solving. For this purpose, the researcher used a set of 20 multiple choice items on Arithmetic computation to assess computation skills; 18 multiple choice items on world-problem-solving to assess simple problem solving skills, and 7 open ended problems to assess complex problem solving skills. The study showed that the Chinese students performed significantly better than the U.S. students on both computation and simple problem solving, while the results were about the same in complex problem solving.

The differences were obviously clear in schooling, parental support, and student attitude, contributing to Asian children's superior Mathematics achievement. More specifically, the curriculum, teacher beliefs about Mathematics teaching, teaching approaches, time spent on Mathematics, students' attitude, parental expectations of children's achievement, and parental beliefs about the roles of effort and ability were the most significant contributing factors to achievement differences (NCTM, 1995).

The cross-national differences in Mathematical achievement are often the largest, when the performance of American children is compared with that of children from Asian countries (Geary, 1996). According to Lynn (1982) and Rushton (1992), difference between Asian and American students is due, at least in part, to racial differences in intelligence (cited in Geary, 1996). However, the factors related to schooling (not necessarily intelligence) have also been mentioned in research literature to explain this difference in students' school performance. For example, Asian children have a greater opportunity to learn Mathematics than American children, which, in turn, is the most likely source of mathematical achievement differences between Asian and American children, as well as the

source of differences among ethnic groups within United States (Geary, 1996). As regards the influence of language in mathematical achievement, it depends on the types of skills assessed. Language structure might be an important contributing factor to the very rapid development of Asian children's basic mathematical skills during the first few years of formal schooling, where instruction is focused on basic number and arithmetic skills (Fuson & Kwon, 1992b; Geary, Bow-Thomas, et al., 1993; Song and Ginsburg, 1987; Stevenson et al., 1986, cited in Geary, 1996).

### **International Studies on Achievement in Mathematics**

Robitaille and Travers (1992) made a review of international studies on the achievements in Mathematics with a purpose of highlighting the major findings of those studies. The researchers, in their review, found that the significant researches carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), which is a consortium of centers of educational research from more than 50 countries, included the First International Mathematics Study (FIMS) in 1964 and the Second International Mathematics Study (SIMS) conducted in 1980-82.

The First IEA International Mathematics study covered issues surrounding the teaching and learning of Mathematics. The study was done in 12 countries - Australia, Belgium, England, The Federal Republic of Germany, France, Finland, Israel, Japan, The Netherlands, Scotland, Sweden, and The United States - with two types of population in which the younger population comprised of children of 13 years old and the older students in the last year of secondary school. The study used achievement tests consisting of basic and advance arithmetic, elementary and intermediate algebra, Euclidean geometry including analytical geometry, sets, trigonometry, analysis, calculus, probability and logic with a total of 174 items. The study used several descriptive and attitude scales and questionnaires to be completed by students, teachers, and school principals for data collection. The findings of the study showed that males outperformed females in both age groups and parents' level of education was positively correlated with the achievement of students, especially of age levels 13.0 to 13.11. Data on students' attitude towards Mathematics indicated that, compared to the senior students, 13-year olds in all of the participating countries had positive view of Mathematics as a process (Robitaille and Travers, 1992).

The second IEA Mathematics study, which included two dozen countries, was not participated by Germany but several Third World Countries such as Nigeria and Swaziland. The study designed as an in-depth study to be conducted at three levels, namely the intended curriculum, the implemented curriculum, and the attended curriculum, was administered to two different populations. Population A included all students in the grade (year, level) where the majority had attended the age of 13.00 to 13.11 years by the middle of the school year and Population B included all students who were in normally accepted terminal grade of the

secondary education system and who were studying Mathematics as a substantial part of their academic program (Robitaille & Garden, 1989 cited in Robitaille & Travers 1992).

The results of the study indicated that the importance of arithmetic and algebra was increased in the population A level between two studies, whereas the importance of geometry declined. Similarly, the findings showed, at the Population B level, the importance of algebra and elementary functions and calculus was increased in most countries, while geometry scores decreased dramatically. The study further revealed that the majority of Mathematics teachers at both the Population A and Population B levels were experienced and apparently well-qualified to teach Mathematics (Robitaille & Travers, 1992, cited in Grows (1992).

### **Conclusion**

In Nepal, given the hierarchical nature of content and learning as a growth process, Mathematics has always been a source of dread among the students who are the beginners; and there are challenges among teachers in making it one of the interesting and popular subjects in the school curriculum. At primary level, Mathematics is often called the backbone of primary education and fundamental component of literacy. As part of curriculum implementation, school teachers are given opportunities for curriculum orientation and participation in workshops, seminars and short-term training. Various research studies have been conducted on the achievement of students in various primary level subjects. Effects of curriculum and national assessment have revealed a very low performance level of students in Mathematics.

Thus, review of the aforementioned related literature indicates a number of factors that influence children's learning in Mathematics in particular, and including the socio-cultural and environmental factors that affect the students' attainments. In Nepal, some national assessments have been conducted at primary and selected grades of secondary level. Despite the evidence to prove widespread disparities among students in Math learning and achievement, no research as such has been carried out to have cross-national studies. Therefore, the need for cross-national studies in Mathematics is essential.

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## Embedding Libraries in Education and Research in Nepalese Context

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### Introduction

Library is the organized collection of printed books, periodicals or graphic, audio-visual materials and services of staff to provide and facilitate the use of such materials as required to meet the informational, research, educational and recreational needs of users. It is a public institution or establishment with a collection of books. It has the duty of making them accessible to those who require the use of them and the task of converting every person into a habitual library user and reader of books. A modern library is regarded as a service institution and its aim is to enable the users to make the most effective use of the resources and services available in it (Ranganathan, 1940).

The chief function of any library is to help achieve the mission of its parent organization. However, especially a library has four responsibilities: i) Collection of the information resources according to the need, interest of the user and objective of the parent organization, ii) Management of the information resources in systematic manner to ensure fast retrieval, iii) Dissemination of information to let the prospective users of the library via various modes of communication channels and format, and iv) Preservation of information and knowledge materials for further use.

The unique human attributes from the archives at Nineveh to the Public Record Office at Kew, Surrey; from the Alexandrian Library to the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. have been constantly at work (Feather, 1997). The momentous advances in information technology have made the role of libraries more advanced - e. g. from paper base to data base and knowledge base in electronic format. In earlier days, information seekers used to visit libraries personally but in modern days in addition to visiting libraries personally, the information seekers can also use libraries using their desktop, laptop and even mobile phones directly from their home or place of employment (Kawatra, 2000).

Libraries have significant responsibility in education because qualitative and extensive study is not completed without the use of library and its resources. Education is the process of teaching, training and learning, especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills (Hornby, 2005). Traditional and authoritative educationists opine that education is the process of pouring knowledge in students. But modern educationists opine that the process of

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education involves the participation of learners (Wagle and Karki 2061). It means authoritative educationists have the view that teachers should use the knowledge and information materials to impart knowledge to students. In the opinion of modern educationists, the basic infrastructure for participatory education means the resource centre which houses reference books, playing materials, toys, audio-visuals etc. A library is the best resource centre for participatory learning and teaching. In this resource centre a student can develop his/her potential abilities into reality.

### **Recommendations of Education Plans and Commissions' Reports**

Various educational commissions and committees were formed in Nepal for restructuring education system. All the education plans/programmes/commissions have suggested to establish library as one of the basic infrastructures of education and research. Each of the educational commissions/committees has identified the role of library and resource center as discussed below.

Nepal National Education Planning Commission (2010 BS) presented three recommendations related to library. As it suggested, there should be a library as the centre for education and research. Besides, there should be plenty of space to build a library in primary schools. Schools are the ideal place for public library and teachers can be the best librarians. However, All-round National Education Committee (2018 BS) simply stated the necessity of books in library.

Royal High Level Education Commission (2040 BS) mentioned the need for library improvement. It was also stated in the report of the commission that on the recommendation of subject departments, books and journals on specific subjects will be added systematically. In addition, departmental libraries also need to be established in the university.

As recommended by National Education Commission (2049 BS), every school should provide children with literature, pictorial books, and reference materials. Schools should increase the volume of course books to establish a library in them. It further stressed that every university must be enriched with library, archives etc.

High Level National Education Commission (2055 BS) pointed out that reading habit is declined or destroyed at all levels of education. Students and researchers are not able to purchase all the required books and reference materials. This has reduced the quality of education with negative impact. Hence, the commission suggested that a library should be managed with special type of reference materials, books and journals. It further indicated that the provision of library with sufficient number of books is one of the criteria for granting permission to start and operate schools. Similarly, to apply for affiliation, any institution must show the clear evidence to start and promote the facilities such as library, classrooms, teaching materials. It also stressed the need for rural library development movement to sustain the skills of neo-literates learned in literacy classes.

School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2015 has identified the establishment of strong library with basic requirements as one of the indicators of good school. It states, "Every school must have a library with books relevant to its students. In foundation schools, there must be 500 books other than text books. In a primary school there must be 1000 books and in an upper primary school there must be at least 2000 books. Such libraries must be open and easily accessible to students and teachers during school days.

### **Information and Communication Technology in Library**

Unavailability of right information in the right time leads research and learning towards unwanted direction and/or halts the whole process. Information is essential for knowledge and wisdom. However, to achieve educational wisdom, educational system should incorporate the use of library as a mandatory option in teaching-learning process. This practice and behaviour enhance information literacy skills among the learners, teachers and researchers. Eventually this leads to reduce information and library anxiety ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mellon%27s\\_Theory\\_of\\_Library\\_Anxiety](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mellon%27s_Theory_of_Library_Anxiety)) of learners and researchers. The availability and use of right information in the right time makes education and research more valid, authentic, reliable and sustainable. Information literacy is the fundamental and survival skill required for information and knowledge society (The American Library Association, 1989).

Library and information centers are always in front line to embrace the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). From the main frame computers to present day computers, most are used in information dissemination, retrieval and preservation. The first network ARPANET (Advanced Research Project Agency Network) in USA was the first attempt to give birth to the Internet. The paradigm shift in role and form of library is continuous. Libraries are shifted from paper based to data based and knowledge based as digital or virtual libraries using the state of art technology. At present each library is expected to provide service to local and global customers using ICT.

Information Literacy (IL) is the ability to recognize when information is needed, to identify the required information, to identify the sources, to locate and access information efficiently and effectively, to evaluate information critically, to organize and integrate information into existing knowledge, to use information ethically and legally, to communicate information, and carry out all of these activities effectively (UNESCO, nd). In short, IL is the ability to access, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources (Lorenzen, 2003). When information literacy skills are imparted, a person becomes information literate. It means information literate persons know when they need information, identify what information will address a particular problem, find the needed information, evaluate the information, organize the information, and use the information effectively in addressing the problem. Therefore, one should know what is existing, where it exists, why to use it, when to use it, and how to use it. So information skill is the survival skill in the Information Age.

## **Role of Stakeholders in Fostering Library in Education and Research Institutions**

Mostly libraries are established for attaining the objectives of the parent institution. Library is the important organ of any educational and research institution. Educational and research institutions are chiefly responsible for establishing and promoting library and information services. However, there are various authorities to influence the programs of the institutions. Mainly the role of policy makers, institutions, teachers, community and library per se are significant. Their roles are briefly mentioned below.

**Policy makers:** The most important responsibility of library promotion lies on the policy makers and executives who formulate educational plans. While formulating educational system and plans, the role and responsibility of library and information centers must be made an integral part of educational activities in formal, informal and non-formal education. To provide integrated and specific information to various disciplines, every program or institution must have a mandatory provision to appoint a professional librarian. The professional librarian/s must deliver their tasks effectively so that all of their clients receive the right information at the right time for right reason.

**Institutions:** Institutions should be provided with a high-quality and robust network –that is reliable, secure, adaptable, scalable, and fault tolerant. Fundamental infrastructure should be developed in higher learning institutions and research centers. Higher education's access to information assets is increasingly central to enhancing reputation, competitiveness, client satisfaction, revenue and accountability in their missions such as in teaching, research and business administration. This facility creates unique learning environments to students and teachers.

**Teachers:** The role of teachers in education and research is pivotal. They are the resource person and experts. Kafle and Aryal (2000) view that the initiator of change and the bearer of its impacts are the teachers who are equipped with a sound pedagogy based on the solid foundation of updated knowledge and information. The availability of properly trained and skilled manpower is one of the most crucial requirements in all sectors. Education and research centers cannot be the exception.

Hence an information literate teacher can play a vital role in quality education. S/he can teach the students and researchers to use authentic, valid and reliable information for their specific purposes. So, library use or information literacy should be a component of teacher training or teacher education. When a teacher is information literate (trained in library and information retrieval skills), s/he can impart quality education.

**Authority:** The interest of authority matters much in the promotion of library in education and research in specific institutions. In most offices, the authority (higher body to govern the institution) establishes library as the centre of learning



and research. The authority can allocate budget, human resource and other essential resources to provide efficient service to the users.

**Community:** The role of community cannot be left behind to intensify the use of library in education and research. The community comprising the elites, intellectuals, various professionals such as farmers, teachers, engineers, doctors, journalists, students, job-seekers, literate and illiterate persons can make the library as their hub of information. A rural library can act as the agency of record keeping of birth, mortality, employees, etc. A farmer or any other specialized professional can get the specific information. A library can be used as a life-long learning institution. So, the community can help a library by providing various resources such as money, real estate, books, computers, voluntary service etc. This means the relationship between community and a library can be reciprocal.

### **Challenges**

In Nepal students often do not get chance to come close to libraries, especially in rural areas. This is because of the identity crises of libraries. The main causes of identity crisis of libraries are the lack of government acts, policies, and lack of the mandatory use of library in curriculum. Eventually, this led to the stage of non-existence of libraries in various institutions. Libraries without proficient and professional librarians are not efficient to deliver their strength. So, many of the users do not feel the ownership of libraries. To promote the quality of programs, various activities such as workshops, meetings, researches, dialogues etc. should be conducted in the library, which increases the frequency of library use making the program more mature. So, the facilities and skills once acquired will help the participants to promote libraries in their own setting in various activities and programs. Libraries, in particular, should be strong to provide specific information meeting the objectives of its parent organization. For example, educational research libraries such as CERID Library should be enabled to provide “educational index” of Nepal and major educational institutions of the world. However, research is extremely expensive task to consider the factors like information, finance, time, human resources etc.

Many institutes of education and research have maintained a library in them. The parent organization is responsible for everything of the library such as its resource materials, human resources, real estate, furniture and daily expenses. The main problems for our libraries are financial constraints and lack of professional librarians. Now a library having only physical books, journals and maps cannot be complete. A library must have computer, internet, telephone, and reprography service etc. The world is shifting from paper based towards paperless society. Many of the big publishers have stopped publishing books and journals in paper. They publish in electronic form. For example, INASP/PERI, HINARI, [www.oxfordjournals.org](http://www.oxfordjournals.org), [www.ebscohost.com](http://www.ebscohost.com), [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org), various specific websites, Amazon.com, Questia.com, Lexis Nexis, World bank, United Nations, World Health Organization, sites of various organizations, and

networking and resource sharing institutions such as Delnet— [www.delnet.nic.in](http://www.delnet.nic.in) Australian Education Network <http://www.edna.edu.au/edna/go> , International Education and Research Network [http://www.us.learns.org/about/about\\_learns.php](http://www.us.learns.org/about/about_learns.php), Asia-Pacific Development Network of UNDP <http://www.apdip.net/resources/partnerships/> , Asia legal information network <http://www.e-alin.org/index.jsp> etc are functioning as an alternate to libraries. The library patron can also access libraries via world wide web such as the Library of Congress [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov), the British Library [www.bl.co](http://www.bl.co), Tribhuvan University central Library, [www.tucl.org.np](http://www.tucl.org.np), Kaiser Library [www.klib.gov.np](http://www.klib.gov.np) , Nepal National Library [www.nnl.gov.np](http://www.nnl.gov.np), Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya [www.Madanpuraskar.org](http://www.Madanpuraskar.org), etc. e-reference service is helping to quench many of the users queries using Artificial Intelligences (AIs) in the electronic library system.

### **Opportunities**

Often an education and/or research institution has to pay high to access the electronic books, journals and database. For example, the annual subscription charge of one journal from Ebsco Host is \$200. But there are options for this as well. Education and research centers may get scholarly journals and publications free of cost from open access journal (OAJ) system. Anyone can use such open access journals free of cost. They can read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to the full texts of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, technical or legal barriers through the Internet. The education and research institution should not suspect the authenticity and reliability of information because these OAJs strictly follow the quality control mechanism like those of conventional journals. Similar to OAJ, other types of free educational resources are also available. Education and research institutions can get Open Educational Resources from MIT Open Courseware, Research Papers in Economics, Public Library of Science, Monterey Institute for Technology and Education, Commonwealth of Learning, Utah State University Open Courseware, E-Science Projects, John Hopkins School of Public Health Open Courseware, Tufts Open Courseware, Arxiv.org, EduCause, Global Education and Learning Community, IBM University Initiative, OpenCourse.org, Multimedia Educatin Resource for Learning and Teaching Online, Open Learning Initiative, Sofia, Sakai, Research Channel, The Open University, OER Commons, Connexions, SHERPA, Virtual university for Small States of the Commonwealth, Directory of Open Access Repositories, Open Access News, eXe, National Programme on Technology Enhanced learning, Ekalavya Project, Education-Grid, e-Gyankosh, UNESCO SASIS e-Learning Portal, NCERT Online Textbook (Jha, 2008).

### **Conclusions**

Sustainable development is not possible without utilizing the findings of mature research and experiment. Libraries are the chambers and hubs of knowledge to aid for mature research and experiment. Various educational commissions,

reports and high level decisions have recognized the provision of library and resource centers. Universities, colleges, schools, institutions, research centers, clubs, projects, and individuals all have the common core for success. The core lies in the power of knowledge. Knowledge is available from libraries and resource centers. Therefore, any agency which requires knowledge for research, distance learning, workshop, lifelong learning, and formal or informal learning etc. must have a library and/or resource centre with skilled, learned, helpful, dynamic and professional librarian/s.

In this age of information society, only knowledge can direct and improve economic condition and overall development (Sinha 2064 BS). Information is the only component which is used for knowledge and decision. Facts and information are embodied in various forms including printed books, electronic materials, audio and / or video CDs, DVDs, graphics etc. These are called the resources or information carriers. These various forms of information resources are the chief source of research and educational activities. Everyone involved in education and research cannot have all the resources due to various problems such as finance, space, time, human capital and many other constraints. But a library can house most of the resources for most of the persons who are involved in knowledge work. So library is the institution which provides factual and informational service for sustainable knowledge and wisdom.

Our education system should be changed from teacher centered teaching-learning to resource centered learning methodology. This is the key point for us to transform from, often blamed as unproductive human resources, to achievement based products and market oriented educational system. Our government and various organizations which are working in informal and non-formal educational system impart literacy skills in various rural areas. They conduct various classes during their active project periods, and the activities make the literacy rate high. But after 6-7 months the learners forget and turn to be illiterate. Again and again they should be provided with literacy classes. School Sector Reform Plan has identified a problem as "visible challenge in the literacy program is to sustain their acquired knowledge and skills. Lack of continuous learning opportunity for the neo-literates brings them back to the state of illiteracy. Therefore, for sustainability and to eradicate this pathetic problem, organizations should establish a library in the community so that after the project the participants may use library for practicing to advance their knowledge and skills. The global and international organizations should encourage **information literacy for all**, along with the Millennium Development Goal-targeted activities. This is simple but very crucial for qualitative, holistic educational approach to our future generations.

In this fast changing world, teachers can never be the sole authority of the whole universe of knowledge. Their knowledge is being obsolete because in our context teachers do not often keep them abreast of the latest developments in their field. Due to the lack of a library and efficient librarian/s, the students are limited only with their textbooks; teachers do not have information literacy skills; and

researchers are limited with a limited information and knowledge resources. Therefore, library is a must for any academic, training and research institution. Embedding libraries into education, training and research is the only way of enhancing quality in education, training and research in Nepal.

### **Suggestions**

The following strategies can be used to embed libraries in various aspects of programming of education and research.

1. Workshops, trainings, seminars, meetings and several other educational activities should be conducted in library. Doing this in library eases in the availability of various resources of knowledge saving time and providing authentic information.
2. Librarian can have the role of facilitator, secretary or convener or have any direct and indirect roles. This promotes the image, success, and identity of the library and librarian.
3. Skill of library and information management should be made an integral part of the program. This is important because the whole event becomes more mature. Using the library and information skill in learning is crucial for finding the latest developments in the specific fields. The participants can learn about the use of library, various databases of specific discipline, new trends and avenues of the program etc.
4. Classes need to be conducted in library such as library orientation, information literacy classes, reading competitions, educational debates, story telling, preparatory tasks, tuition classes (after regular classes the librarian can help the students to complete their assignments) etc.
5. The library should be made the community centre and a place of informal and /or non-formal education. For this, exclusive permission should be received from the parent institution and library committee.
6. To strengthen the library specific and updated informational resources should be housed according to the institutional objectives as far as possible
7. As a library and information worker, librarians should have obligation to teach information navigation and literacy skills such as teaching the methods of searching the resources both in physical and virtual (web) space, specific databases, various sites, wikis, blogs etc. with the ontology<sup>7</sup> to the teachers, students and any interested library patrons.

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<sup>7</sup> The components in the concept of object/thing or ontology are individuals, classes, sets, attributes, relations, function terms, restrictions, rules, axioms, events etc.

8. Librarians should be serious in educational, research and employment information, housing and disseminating authentic and valid information, so that library becomes really a lovely hub of users.
9. A set of principles should be developed, in collaboration with other stakeholders and experts for the promotion of library.
10. Librarian should be proactive and professional in carrying out his/her responsibilities.
11. The librarians should establish and practice resource sharing activities between and among the libraries making a consortia. For example, education related libraries can form EDUNet, Human Rights related ones can form HURNNet, etc. This reduces the operation and subscription cost of information and knowledge resources.
12. Libraries should promote Open Access Journals and Open Educational Resources along with Open Source Software because it is reliable, participatory and free of cost.

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