2

Education for Nepal

Education for the Sustainability of Biological Diversity

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Introduction

Earth is the only living planet. Living environment of the Earth is governed by the five elements (Pancha Tatwa) i.e. the air, the water, the land, the sky and the Sun. Environmental balance of the five elements is regulated by the greenery and biological diversity of the Earth. Threat to the biological diversity is the direct threat to the sustainability of the Earth's living capacity.

Greater threat to the Earth's living capacity has become eminent from the population growth of human being on this planet. It took 200,000 years for human beings to arrive at one billion mark from its early days of stone age. Next billion was added just within 100 years. The first Earth Summit of 1992 witnessed 5 billion population. Just after 10 years another billion is added to it. We have now 6 billion human population on our planet. In Nepal itself the population doubles in a period of about 25 years. Current population of 23 million is already exerting severe pressure on natural resources and biological diversity. Education for sustainable development (ESD) has therefore a great relevance in developing a society which should be responsive to the carrying capacity of it's supporting ecosystem. The overarching goal of ESD in Nepal should seek to set a process in motion that

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provides to its entire people, the broadest of choices for the management and development of endogenous resources -natural, cultural and human.

Biological diversity

Biological diversity or "biodiversity" is understood as the variability of life in all forms, levels and combinations. It encompasses the diversity within species. Nepal has over 1800 land-races and varieties of rice within one species Oryza sativa. Similarly the diversity of species is also equally impressive. For example, there are over 5800 species of flowering plants in Nepal that represent 2.7 per cent of the global resources. Nepal claims over 9.3 per cent of the global wealth of bird species, 4.5 percent of butterfly species and so on (Nepal Biodiversity Strategy, 2002). Habitat / ecosystem diversity also is the most pronounced in Nepal due to the Himalayan terrain and topography. As such ecologists have identified 189 different ecosystems that range from snowy nival habitat of Yaks, Yetis and Snow Leopards at about 5000m altitude to sultry tropical region of Rhinoceros, Tigers, and Water Buffaloes. Biological diversity is also mirrored in cultural diversity of Nepal with ethnic groups of high mountains like the Sherpas to the mid-mountain groups like the Gurungs and the Tamags and the dwellers of tropical flat lands like the Tharus and the Dhimals. Therefore the challenges in ESD lie not only in delivering goods and services to remote areas but also to develop unifying linkages among differing cultures. The need of education to improve agricultural productivity, to improve sustainable harvest of forest and vegetation seasons, to enhance the status of women, to reduce population growth rate, to enhance environmental protection, to reduce ecological hazard and to raise the standard of living is widely acknowledged in modern Nepal. However, the current thrust of educational development has not adequately addressed the differing need of different ethnic groups whose language and dialect is not exactly Nepali, the national language. Beside the curricula of basic education can not address the problem of local environmental stewardship. As a result formal education has become a force and factor to push younger generation away from their place of origin to centers of new job markets, especially urban towns and cities. This trend is also threatening to the loss and extinction of indigenous knowledge, tradition and technologies.

Sustainable development and environmental education

Sustainable development is still a debated doctrine in spite of its being explained and defined in various international fora including the Earth Summit. It may mean different things to different people. However a common understanding underlying the notion is that "*humanity must take no more than nature can replenish*". Nepali society and their culture has a long tradition of respecting this notion, especially in the harvesting of forest resources. However the disparity among people and their relations in terms of economic development, consumption patterns, and environmental pollution hinders sustainable development of non-industrialized countries. Widespread poverty, hunger, diseases and illiteracy among people have contributed to cause environmental degradation and the loss of the Earth's biological diversity. The initial concept of sustainable development as defined by the Brundtland report in 1987 that reads; "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" has opened up avenues for global alliances to overcoming interdependent problems of environmental sustainability. The threshold to sustainable development is better to be sought in the process of educating the society and imparting knowledge and awareness to the present generation. The type of education to address the problem of sustainable development would need to integrate three main components; environment, society and economy.

Environment as the resource for development would need effective conservation efforts.

Nepal has set aside over 18 per cent of its territory as protected area to conserve rare and threatened biodiversity. Empowerment of people through community forestry programs has illustrated environmental revivals of degraded areas. Economy of over 80 per cent of people largely depend on agriculture. The "Nepal Biodiversity Strategy 2002" and the "Agricultural Perspective Plan 1995" seek to follow a development model that is sustainable. But the path of educational development has not yet taken a course to contribute towards sustainable development. The National Conservation Strategy Implementation Project (1989-1996) under the aegis of the National Planning Commission and the World Conservation Union-IUCN for the first time identified "environment

education" as a priority area to support the goals and objectives of the National Conservation Strategy (NCS).

Other areas of NCS implementation were heritage and biodiversity conservation, environmental impact assessment, and environment planning. The Project assisted to incorporate environmental education in the teaching of formal school education as well as in the new 3-year Bachelor of Education Program. The environmental curriculum was integrated with existing curricula of four subjects, namely Nepali language, Social Studies, Health Education and General Science. Basic issues like pollution and contamination of land, water and air, conservation of biological diversity, degradation of forests and land resources, natural hazards associated with the monsoon and the mountain ecosystem, and global environmental concerns like ozone depletion, global warming and climate change were the main themes for environmental education. Besides it also dwelt upon population pressure and heritage conservation.

Similarly, non-formal education packages were prepared for various training program in agriculture, forestry, tourism and so on. Public awareness, programs were conducted with various partners and NGOs. While environmental education is increasingly getting popular, the need to re-orient the entire education program towards sustainable development would be a challenging task. It would require intensive exercise to fully understand the changes required for ESD. One of the major changes would lie in the revival and use of indigenous knowledge system which may vary from place to place. While returning to indigenous lifestyles or to a lost Eden may not be an option for modern generation, the values and major tenets of indigenous traditions can be adopted to live with the 21st century. Reorienting education to address sustainable development should therefore require a long term national commitment based upon a well-planned educational system. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 recognizes three major thrusts to begin the works of ESD; improving basic education, re-orienting existing education, and developing public understanding, awareness and training.

The Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) entered into force on 29 December 1993 after it was adopted during the Earth Summit 1992 in Rio de

Janeiro, Brazil. It is a major international response to managing the Earth's biological resources for a sustainable future. Its objectives are extremely broad in scope and have the potential to affect all kinds of human development. Main objectives encompass three interlinked aspects of management i.e., the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the equitable sharing of its benefits. ESD should be able to foster and reinforce attitudes or behaviors of human communities towards effective implementation of CBD. Article 13 of CBD dwells upon public education and awareness. The goal of Article 13 is to promote and encourage understanding of biological diversity and the measures required for its conservation thorough formal and informal education. It also goes to emphasize the importance and significance of locally developed curricula which have direct relevance to students' own surroundings and resource base. Besides it recognizes the potentials for a variety of informal means, especially built upon local language, culture, art and literature. Indigenous knowledge system is regarded as a valuable asset for sustainable development especially in the management of natural resources. Article 8 (j) of CBD dwells upon knowledge, innovations, and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. A productive relation between CBD and ESD is thus so very obvious. Therefore education for the sustainability of biological diversity has a strong bearing upon sustainable development especially for those countries which are rich in biological diversity but weaker in technology and industry.

Concluding remarks

Education is the key to influence human behaviors, attitudes and actions. Of the three main stages of education attainment, i.e., Sila (precept), Samadhi (concentration of mind) and Pragya (wisdom-insight), the first stage "Sila" is related to human behaviors and attitudes such as right speech, right action and right livelihood (please see U Ba Khin for details). ESD is a process to enter into the first stage, and it should be able to bring about a harmonious co-existence between the developing biodiversity rich countries and industrialized technology rich countries. Relating education with nature and biodiversity is an essential path to leading to the sustainability of this planet.

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Education, Governance and Economic Growth in Nepal
Inquiries into the Scope for Sustainable Development

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In fifteen years, in 2018, Tri-chandra college, the premier college of this country, is going to celebrate its first centennial, but how many of us have noticed that that year also heralds the possible celebration of an even more important occasion; the quarter millennium of Nepal's nationhood? Somehow did we miss celebrating our nation's two centennial anniversaries in succession: the first one in 1868, another in 1968. If these two cases of historic amnesia suggest our low level of national awareness and we have a long way to go in the course of political education, the slips also remind us that we do not miss it again, 15 years later, when the day arrives. The point is worth remembering that when Nepal appeared on the world map, the number of independent nation-states was hardly more than nineteen.

This historic perspective raises queries of direct bearing upon the issues taken up here. Does education sustain growth? Does education affect governance? And, does governance in turn impact on growth? How are these three elements related to each other and how do they sustain the overall process of development?

While the paper does not intend to address all of these queries, it does try to explain some of these relationships.

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In that context, the first part of the paper offers a conceptual outline to explain the possible relationship between the three sectors. It then discusses the determinants of growth before presenting a chronology of developments in the history of Nepal's education, the level of public awareness on education in Nepal, and the perceived impact of education on citizens' individual capacities. The last part of the exercise presents SWOT and stakeholder analyses on education, strategies for development, and a round-up of the arguments at the end.

Does governance matter?

Put simply, politics is about governance. Put another way, it is about how people manage their government. However, the relationship between the governor and the governee, when one tries to go deeper turns out to be far more complex, and multi-faceted. It is this multi-level dimensionality that lends governance its significance. It means the process of governance, the capacity of government in policy formulation as also the quality of citizen-state interaction. A World Bank study finds a strong relationship between governance and development outcomes[2]. More specifically, a one-standard deviation increase in any one of the governance indicators selected by it from the six governance clusters (a. voice and accountability, b. political instability and violence, c. government effectiveness, d. regulatory burden, e. rule of law, f. graft) causes between a two and a half to four-fold increase (decrease) in per capita income (infant morality) and a 15 to 25 percent increase in literacy. Another report, one from within this region, establishes a similar close relationship between human development and humane governance – a composite of economic, political, and civic governance[3]. In fact in eradicating poverty and promoting development, democratic or good governance is the single most important factor.

Retracing the roots

Governance has been analyzed in more than one way. Thus, if the regional report looks at the economic, political, and civic aspects, the *Nepal Human Development Report 2001* considers increased ownership, enquiry, transparency, accountability, and overall system efficiency to monitor the process of governance.

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[2] Kaufmann, Daniel, Anart Kray, Pablo Zoido Labaton. 1999. *Governance Matters.* World Bank.

[3] Oxford University press. 1999. *Human Development in South Asia: the Crisis of Governance.* Chapter 2, pp.28-40.

The 40-country World Governance survey (WGS) conducted by the United Nations University (for 1995–2000) identifies a total of six dimensions—a. political participation, b. interest aggregation, c. government stewardship, d. civil service and policy planning, e. state-market relationship, and f. dispute resolution system[4].

Parity index and participatory education

This paper is conceptually based on two starting propositions which appear almost self-evident and need little elucidation, each leading to a pair of hypotheses in turn.

But the four terms used in this paper need to be defined. In the course of developing a paper last year, this observer proposed a term: Parity Index of Governance (PIOG). Another term, Delivery Coefficient, can be proposed at this point to develop the conceptual framework on the basis of the analysis done in a report submitted to UNRISD in 1998.

Essentially, if PIOG is the ratio obtained by dividing the percentage of a particular community represented in governance by its share of population, Delivery Coefficient is a hypothetical concept for a country which reflects the proportion of its capacity to produce or perform compared to its potential in a certain sector in terms of the system capital. In hydropower, for instance, it has been observed to be less than 2 and in the tourism sector, it persists on the whole in the case of mean regional tourist flow to Nepal at less than two, as conducted from an analysis of Table: Comparative County Profile of the South Asian Region on Tourism.

The term, system capital implies a sum total of six more forms of social resources, apart from finance – a. social capital (trust), b. human capital (skills, knowledge, and science and technology), c. political strategic resources, d. administrative and management culture, e. physical assets (structures set up by human kind), and f. natural resources. Finally, participatory approach to education (PATE) implies the active interaction and collaboration of various stakeholders in the education sector to minimize costs and wastage that can otherwise significantly undermine the sector preventing efforts at its sustainability.

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[4] Dhungel, Dwarika N. 2002. *Governance Situation in Nepal.* Kathmandu: IIDS

Proposition One: Parity Index and Participatory Education are positively and structurally correlated.

- *Hypothesis a*: The larger the parity index of governance (PIOG), the larger a community's delivery coefficient.

- *Hypothesis b*: The larger the delivery coefficient of a community, the larger the scope for participatory education.

Proposition Two: Participatory education and sustainable development are positively and intrinsically correlated.

- *Hypothesis c*: The higher the level of participatory education in a system, the larger the magnitude of social synergy of that system.

- *Hypothesis d*: The larger the magnitude of social synergy, the larger the scope for sustainable development.
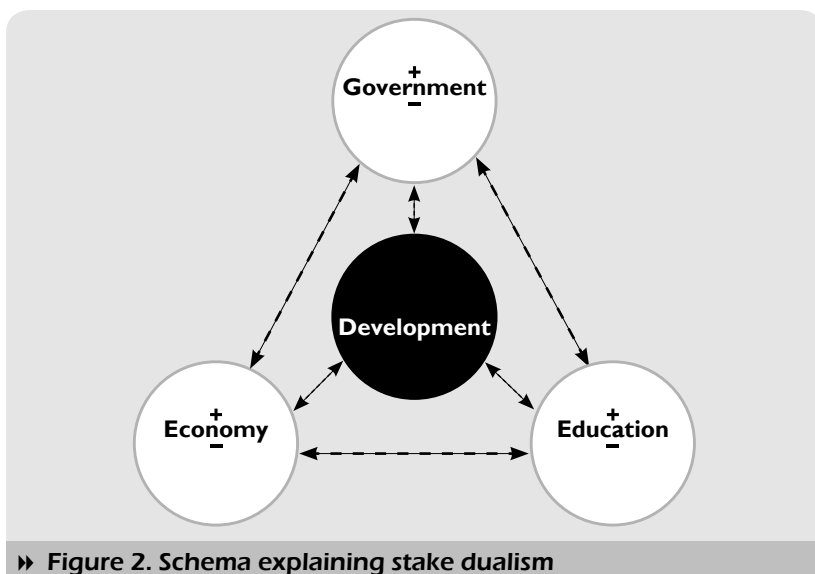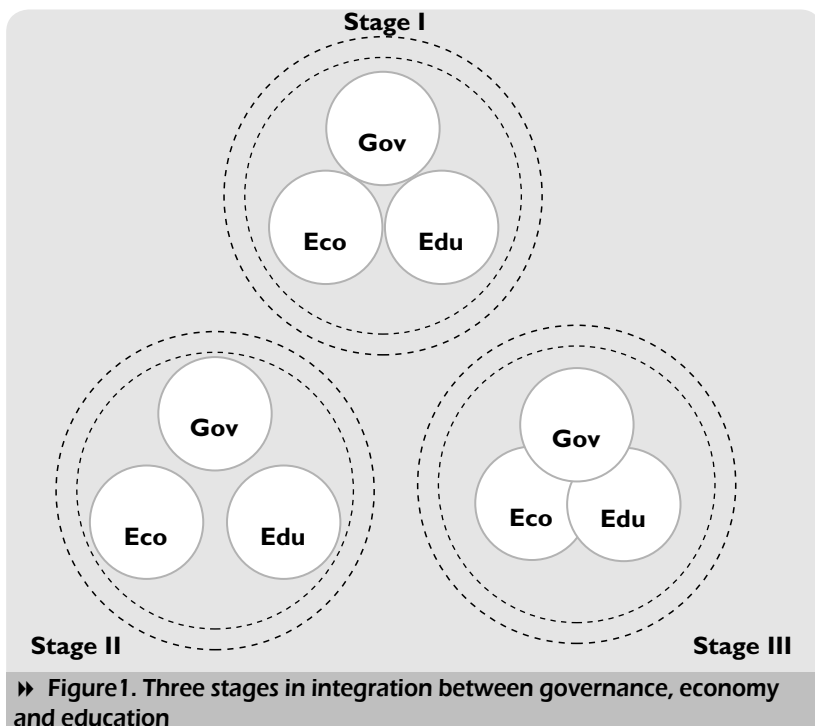
Participatory approach to education

Table 1. Participatory approach to education (PATE)

Attribute	Dimension	Objective
1. Holistic	Individual	Full development of human personality
2. Integrative	Various sectors &	Synergy
	disciplines of study	
3. Inclusive	Society	Equity & equal access to opportunities
4. Participatory	Action	Proactive mobilization of resources at all levels

Interaction between Governance, Economy and Education

Before proceeding further, two points are in order. First, the interaction between governance, economy and education can be understood to evolve over time in three separate stages (Fig. 1) and the interaction in Nepal is still in transition (stage II) as it is in most of the developing countries. Second, in each of these three sectors, the emergence of a sort of dichotomy in stakeholding sooner or later usually gives way to a state of conflict between the positive and negative stakeholders generating crisis, if they remain unresolved for long. Nepal is no exception to that.

‣ Figure1. Three stages in integration between governance, economy and education

‣ Figure 2. Schema explaining stake dualism

Recent trends

Studies show education of girls and women effects child health. One study done in 45 developing countries says the mortality rate for under 5 children per1,000 live births was 144 for mothers without education, 106 for those with primary education, and 68 for mothers with some secondary education.

Education in a number of countries is seen to have a visible impact upon household economy, in Peru, for instance. In Vietnam, for another example, the poverty rate for households with parents with no education was 68%, for those with primary education 54%, for secondary 41%, and for university education12%.

One US study has shown that the growth in years of schooling explained about 25% of the increase in GDP per capita between 1929 and 1982 (World Development Report 1998/99). Also more than half of the GDP in the major OECD countries is said to be based on knowledge production and management.

While the three observations made above highlight the strong relationship between knowledge (a product of education) and growth, three trends can be noticed currently with critical implications for future policies related to education, governance and sustainable development.

1. Improvements in international communications have made distance and location even landlockedness of Nepal largely irrelevant.

2. More workers are engaged in the high growth states and are likely to be engaged in the future in other countries, too, in producing and distributing knowledge than in making physical goods.

3. Information technologies are advancing at a tremendous rate. Information revolution not only accelerates creation of new knowledge, it also facilitates production of a large number of goods and services. Technical knowledge also is expanding rapidly.

4. Another analysis, done by the World Bank[5] in 1995, shows that human resources make up a much large share of nation's real wealth and that investing in human resources is the most important way to promoting sustainable development.

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[5] World Bank Press Release, September 17, 1995.

Determinants of growth

Physical and economic assets, it has been claimed, do not necessarily determine the quality of a nation's education and growth. But, if they do not, what does? And how should a country like Nepal set out its vision for a new society? On that issue what Schumaker says is worth recalling, "*Among the causes of poverty, I am sure the material factors are entirely secondary – such things as lack of natural resources or a lack of capital or an insufficiency of infrastructures*". The primary causes of extreme poverty, he argues, are non-material which lie in certain deficiencies in education, organization, and discipline and adds: "*Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization, and discipline*".

Alvin Toffler would agree. He declares that instead of land , labor, raw materials, and capital, which were the main factors of production in the second wave economy, it is knowledge (broadly defined to include data, information, images, symbols, culture, ideology, and values), which would be the central resource of the third wave economy .

Thus, unlike the need for more territory – the demand of the agrarian states of the first wave economy, or even the vast natural resources which the industrial states of the second wave economy needed, the soft hyper-connective context of the Prigoginian post-nation environment in the 21st century will demand an altogether different kind of resource and capital base for growth and development.

Focusing on moral development as a psychological issue of crucial importance for national development, and the need of a war against indiscipline(WAI), Alastair Munday Castle proposes a humanistic psychology as an approach toward meaningful and effective national development. In doing this, he suggests departure from the hitherto dominant scientific behaviorism of the existentialist – phenomenological school of psychology – as a total approach to national education and development.

The cases of some small, poorly endowed states will help to place the problem in the right perspective. Like Nepal, Uruguay has no minerals, no petroleum; in fact no mineral wealth, simply its farms. Like Nepal, again, it is also sandwiched between the two giants of Latin America – Brazil and Argentina. Unlike Nepal,

however, it became the world's first welfare state establishing a vibrant democratic tradition long before most of its sister states in the region could even hold a free election. Today it has, in fact, few poor, and virtually no illiterates.

Uruguay apart, there is the case of Costa Rica which targeted literacy for action and pushed its female literacy from a low 17 percent in 1960 to a near spectacular 65 in 1989. During the last quarter of the 19th century, Denmark demonstrated a pace worth emulating. Ethiopia itself raised its literacy rate from under 10 percent to over 60 within a decade after its Revolution. Following the collapse of the Somoza regime in 1979, the Government of Reconstruction in Nicaragua cut off all aid, and yet succeeded in reducing illiteracy by more than three times – from 53% to 13%–achieving , according to the *New England Journal of Medicine,* more advances in "*most areas of social welfare than in fifty years of dictatorship under the Somoza family*".

The most remarkable case in history of a nation's transformation through public education is, of course, Japan, which after 1868, the year of Meiji Restoration, set itself the task of modernizing its feudal, self-isolated and technologically backward society. That it did in twenty years, motivated by the theory that education of the people must be ensured if a nation is to win its right as a state in the international community. Japan, as a consequence, was able to beat Russia in 1940 and challenged the western powers.

Without a drastic reform of the educational system and the creation of a new type of man, the success of social reforms founded upon the idea of democracy would not have been possible for Japan.

Education in Nepal: Chronological highlights

1918   Tri-Candra College established
1920   I. Sc. course started
1930   Ayurved College
1932   S.L.C. Board set up
1936   Tansen starts library (Pustak Padhne Dalan) and becomes Dhawal Pustakalaya in 1947
1942   Technical Training School established to produce overseers
1947   Training of primary school teachers started

1947	Basic Teacher Training Center changed to Nepal Teachers' Training Center in 1956
1948	B. Sc. course started
1950	Montessori School in Kathmandu
1952	Central Library
1952	Education Board established to supervise and expand educational facilities
1953	A national inspectorate system established to maintain first-hand touch with the schools
1953	Durbar High School
1954	National Education Planning Commission
1956	Multipurpose Vocational Education
1956	Curricular Program starts to work
1957	College of Education
1959	Tribhuvan University (TU) founded
1959	Post-Graduate Classes at TU start
1960	Ban on political parties shifts political activism toward colleges and universities
1961	Multi-Purpose School Program
1961	Sarvangin Rashtrita Shikshya Samiti
1962	UNESCO Report on Education in Nepal
1964	Efforts on nursery classes start
1965	TU shifted to Kirtipur
1965	M. Sc. classes at T.U.
1965	Sajha Prakashan
1965	Bal Mandir
1967	HMG starts Special Education Program setting up a council in 1976
1967	National Education Advisory Council
1968	Work on Child education Curriculum under MOE
1970	Nutritious Food Program (HMG-WFP)
1971	Curriculum Development Center
1971	TU Act 1971 brings all teaching instructions and training programs under TU umbrella
1971	New Education Act
1972	NESP (New Education System Plan) implemented
1974	Five month-long student strike

1976	Ph.D. in Science and Technology program
1977	CEDA, CNAS, RECAST set up
1977	B. Sc. Nursing classes
1978	Radio program for teacher's training started
1978	B. Sc. classes started in Agriculture, Engineering, and Medicine
1978	National Literacy Program
1979	Private school permitted
1979	Recentralization of campuses
1979	Students protest against Bhutto's execution (April 6); April 9 brings 27 fresh demands from students
1980	Private schools emerge
1980	Technical School Plan
1980	Private campus permitted
1981	National Education Committee forms a task force to study TU structure
1981	B. Sc. Forestry classes
1982	Semester System changed to annual system of examination
1983	Royal Commission on Education (Ranadhir Subba) submits report (July 24)
1985	Seminar in Kathmandu on private sector's role in development of higher education
1986	Mahendra Sanskrit University set up
1987	B. Sc. Veterinary's Science Course started
1988	Basic & Primary Education Program
1992	National Education Commission's Report
1996	Policy on Special Education
1998	New National Education Commission's Report

A cross-country comparison

Comparison with 18 other countries done on 11 educational parameters in Table 2 shows how poorly Nepal fares on various indices of education. While in spending on public education (cols.1& 2) and net secondary enrollment ratio (col.6) , it is not very much behind, the showings in the other areas present a stark contrast, particularly in both adult and female literacy figures (col., 2 and 4) that rank at the bottom, and in primary enrollment (col. 5).

Table 2. Cross-Country Comparison of Nepal's Educational Parameters

Countries	Public education expenditure, 1995-97 as % of GNP	Public education expenditure as % of all levels, 1995-97 pre-primary and primary	Adult literacy % 15 and more, 2000	Female literacy % 15 and more, 2000	Net primary enrolment ratio %, 1998	Net secondary enrolment ratio %, 1998	Tertiary enrolment by field of study (% of 20-24 age group) Nat Sc.	Eng	Tertiary students in Sc., Math., & Eng., as of all tertiary students, 1994-97	Scientists and engineers in R & D per million people, 1981-95 (WDR 1998-99-T19)	Children aged 10-14 in labor force % of age group, 1997 (WDR 1998 T3)	Printing and writing paper consumed kg per capita, 1997 (HDR 2000 T21)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7a	7b	8	9	10	11
1. Bangladesh	2.2	44.8	41.3	29.9	100	...	...	...	...	...	10	1.1
2. (Bhutan)	4.1	44.0	...	...	16	5	...	...	...	...	...	0.0
3. Bolivia	4.9	50.7	85.5	79.3	97	...	0.5	2.9	...	250	13	1.2
4. China	2.3	37.4	84.1	76.3	91	50	0.1	0.8	...	537	10	...
5. Finland	7.5	33.0	...	...	99	95	2.9	12.7	53	3,675	0	249.9
6. India	3.2	39.5	57.2	45.4	...	39	1.1	0.3	37	151	13	2.2
7. Israel	7.6	42.3	94.6	92.4	95	85	2.1	6.2	25	4,826	0	49.5
8. Japan	3.6	39.3	...	...	100	...	0.7	9.0	23	5,677	0	117.9
9. Maldives	6.4	...	96.7	96.8	...	...	0.7	...	...	...	...	3.6
10. (Mongolia)	5.7	19.9	98.9	...	85	53	...	2.5	25	(910)	2	0.3
11. Myanmar	1.2	47.7	84.7	80.5	...	...	...	...	37	22	...	0.6
12. (Nepal)	3.2	45.1	41.6	24.0	78.4	54.6	0.8	0.1	14	...	44	0.1
13. Pakistan	2.7	51.8	43.2	27.9	...	...	0.3	0.4	...	54	17	1.4
14. South Korea	3.7	45.3	97.8	96.4	97	...	3.8	13.5	34	2,636	0	56.3
15. Sri Lanka	3.4	...	91.6	89.0	100	...	0.5	0.4	28	173	2	2.8
16. Sweden	8.3	34.1	...	...	100	100	1.8	6.2	31	3,714	0	77.9
17. (Switzerland)	5.4	30.6	...	...	94	83	2.3	4.4	31	3,006	0	11.7
18. Thailand	4.8	50.4	95.5	93.9	77	55	1.3	1.7	21	173	15	13.5
19. USA	5.4	38.7	...	...	95	90	2.6	4.2	...	3,732	0	145.9

Note: Landlocked states have been put inside parentheses; large powers or states are in bold face; and South Asian countries have been italicized. Figures in parentheses are from WDR 2000/01.

The standing on tertiary education looks no less depressing (cols. 7a & 7b, and 8). With the nation's figures for children aged 10-14 employed in labor force at the top (col.10), no wonder that our share of scientists and engineers in research and development per million people is minuscule compared to all other 14 countries entered in the table: a mere 22 (col. 9). As for the paper consumed by the average individual in printing and writing 0.1 kg (col. 11), it could be hardly anything

Public awareness of education as an issue

Surveys done in Nepal from time to time suggest that people in general do not take education as a very important issue. At least this is what one can infer from Table 3 which shows that the proportion of people who said education is the most important issue of the nation did not range above 17 at the national level and above 22 at the local level. Ironically, the figure was much lower in the case of the political parties and MPS.

Table 3: Percentage of people who said education is the most important issue

	Mass survey (N=1004)		Elite survey (N=100)		Political parties (N=805)		MPs (N=752)
	National	Local	National	Local	National	Local	
1	13.5	7.3	9.0	3.1	4.2	3.1	3.9
2	17.2	13.3	14.0	6.5	4.8	6.5	
3	14.0	17	22.0	4.6	6.1	4.6	

Source: POLSAN 1991   *Source: POLSAN 1992*

Impact of education on individual capacities

A change in the citizen's individual capacities is likely to bring change in specific ways. The national survey done by the IIDS on media shows clearly that an increase in the level of education tends to increase the proportion of people involved in issue discussion, of those aware of the concept of freedom of expression, of individuals with regular source of information, and of persons with perceived

self-ability to evaluate the role of the state media. Even more important, critical capacity also increases with important implications for democratization.

Another survey, done by the NOSC, suggests that increase in education tends to increase the percentage of people who:

- Feel the most important benefit of democracy is individual freedom (rather than economic opportunity whose share decreases)

- Are critical of the performance of political parties

- Support multi-party's positive role in democracy

- Favor a secular role of religion in politics

- Feel voters are very influential in the political system and local government decisions

- Feel media are very influential in government decisions

- Believe women, minorities, and the disadvantaged groups are inadequately represented in local government. (Source: NOSC 1993, various tables)

SWOT analysis of education in Nepal's context

Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
• State commitment: Decentralization Act 1997; 60% of local revenue set aside for local spending • Increased presence of UN and other international agencies and INGOs in support of development • Rapidly growing civil society and NGO strength • Freer media environment • Holistic restructuring of concepts and strategies for peace, security, and development	• Endemic poverty:45% of population below poverty line • Poor professional skill in teaching and research • Low levels of communication and interaction • Weak implementation, institutionalization, incentive mechanism • Poor monitoring, evaluation, and feedback system • Inadequate information and data banking system • Skewed concentration of agencies and resource distribution at the center • Given the size of the state, personalized nature of planning can induce interference, conservatism, and conflict quicker than in large states (Mark Bray, 1992)

Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
• Growingly assertive local self-government • Increased IT and physical infrastructure for development • Growth in awareness of human, gender, ethnic, and Dalit rights in support of larger local ownership, participation, and decision making • Globalization increases the potential for privatization and education marketing (students, teachers, and experts) at the domestic and international levels • In the context of the relatively small size of the country and the multiplex nature of its social relationships, there is more scope for social cohesion, issue sensitivity, accountability, coordination, and participation; issue identification becomes easier and innovation may have more rapid spread effects (Mark Bay, 1992)	• Threats emanating from political violence (insurgency) • Threats to environment • Threats to national heritage, social culture, and norms • Risks rooted in unmediated globalization • Risks engendered by political instability and policy and planning discontinuity, particularly on the education front • Failure (as well as success) may have a larger impact than on larger states which can absorb negative impacts more resiliently

Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis implies focusing on the issue of stakeholding, the process of cultivating stakes, and the various roles that stakeholders can play. In so doing, the focus has to be not only on what the traditional role players can do, but also on what new emerging agencies can do to improve the overall efficiency and effectivity, equity as well as efficacy aspects. A dynamic stakeholder equilibrium model generates stakes where such a possibility exists, cultivates it where it has taken roots, and optimizes its role where it has started functioning.

The table below offers a view on the possible roles that the various stakeholders can play in promoting education in a participatory framework.

Table 3: Stakeholder-Role Matrix

Roles (functions) of stakeholders (partners)	Community	Educational institutions	Cultural associations	Professional associations	Civil society/NGOs	Media	Govt./Local Self-Governments	International Organizations
1. Awareness campaign	+	+	+	+	+	+		
2. Education and training		+		+	+			
3. Entitlement							+	
4. Empowerment	+			+	+		+	
5. Communication	+			+	+	+		
6. Coordination							+	+
7. Infrastructure building	+						+	
8. Conceptualization (vision, mission & goals)	+	+	+		+		+	+
9. Planning, policy making, and strategy formulation	+	+	+		+		+	+
10. Resource generation and funding	+			+			+	+
11. Monitoring, evaluation & feedback	+	+			+	+	+	+
12. Linkaging					+		+	+
13. Survey, research, and innovation		+	+		+		+	+
14. Institutionalization	+						+	+

Strategies for future education

The strategies envisaged here are anticipated to improve competence in the education sector, enhance its impact in the target area, and explore the scope for its extension and consolidation through seven policy measures.

Sensitization: Active advocacy at the mass level to increase public awareness on education-related issues and mobilization of resources through talks, seminars, and use of media and publication.

Enablement: Efforts at capacity building of professionals and to increase human capital through courses, trainings, and workshops.

Entitlement: Effective use of legislation, enforcement, and adjudication measures to implement laws, rules, policies, programs, and decisions made.

Empowerment: Focusing on concrete and empirically measurable improvement in the professional competence of individuals, agencies, and organizations through the increased level of collaboration and solidarity building.

Mainstreaming: Targeting and channelizing the new generations (children and youth) in an inclusive manner, and also women, disadvantaged groups, and minorities as well as communities at the local level.

Reenforcement: Strengthening the capacity building of the key educational agencies, organizations, and institutions by consolidating their policy, decision-making, and implementation mechanism focused on the promotion of a healthy self- through civic, security, and scientific education.

Networking and Synergizing: Linkaging the stakeholders at the local, national, regional, and global levels in a coordinated framework of proactive communication, creative interaction, and productive collaboration for sustained flow of the resources and assistance needed in the education sector and integrating the educational policies. Also, development of programs and activities with other existing and upcoming initiatives in the field at home and abroad.

Conclusion

The main strands of the discussion can now be summarized:

1. Education, governance, and growth are reciprocally related in significant ways with a critical bearing upon the overall process of the nation's course of development. If, therefore, the pace of development is to be sustained, policies related to education, governance, and economic growth must be reformulated and implemented in a substantively new framework: policies that materialize the goal of mass education, policies that can effect the objectives of good governance, and policies that fuel up the process of vibrant economic growth. Only the synergy that such policies engender can transform the pace and momentum of this nation's development. But since the comparative evaluation of the nation's parameters shows it at rock bottom, attempting such a reformulation means tremendous efforts and huge inputs in all the

three sectors. The question then is: Are we ready for such a momentous take-off?

2. At the threshold of the 21st century, the challenges that lie ahead for Nepal in the course of sustainable development are going to be fundamentally different in nature and magnitude than the nation has faced so far. These challenges are likely to be as much ethical in their nature as ethnological, as much ideational as institutional, and as much professional as political. All this demands a fundamental change in our national style and habits of heart and work as well. Changing habits of heart and work style will, however, not be possible without changing our existing mode of education and governance.

3. Changing age-old habits will be at a premium as, of course, eternal vigilance over the process of social democratization which makes the list a tall bill. But that is the way things are. To achieve the goals, the nation must invest increasingly on education and a new mode of socialization. The course of development, like all courses toward ideal goals, after all, is a nation's unceasing journey of discovery that, like the asymptote of democracy ever surges forward but never quite meets its destiny. It is a perennial effort that does not end when the peak of a parameter is reached. Such a journey means a relentless ordeal, and will be a hard long test of our will and skill to democratize, educate, and develop as well as a certain level of patience and determination.

4. When all is said and done, there is no royal road to democracy and there are surely no shortcuts to development. But if we are mentally ready for such test and the ordeal it implies, and brace up ourselves with the right kind of national vision and the adequate measure of political will and strategy on education and governance that really works, we could still strike our tryst with the nation's destiny to which Perceval London beckoned decades ago.

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Education in the Special Context of Nepal

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Our educational experts almost always consider education in terms of Western thinking and totally neglect the traditional teaching and learning. We had our own traditional system of education handed down to us from generation to generation for thousands of years. Ours is a glorious land where the Vedas were composed, the Upanishads created and the Puranas written. There were scholars who studied planets and stars, interpreted their distances and calculated their movements quite correctly. They experimented scientifically and cured many diseases by discovering various precious herbs.

Nepal, however, entered into the world of modern education by directly copying the British system of schooling introduced in India. Most educational experts are of opinion that the British Indian system was launched to produce administrative assistants of lower and middle orders in a massive scale to smoothly govern the vast empire they had established in the subcontinent. We imitated the colonial British system of education lock, stock and barrel.

The first such educational institution to appear in Nepal was Durbar School in 1853 AD, initially begun to modernize the Rana boys who were to assume the administration of the country. They indeed were expected to keep themselves abreast of things happening generally in countries abroad and particularly in the

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British Empire. But the personnel employed to serve the Ranas could not keep themselves forever blind to the rising tide of modern education among the conscious Indian neighbours and, of course, from their consistent struggle for independence. The Brahmin priests as well as other servants of the Rana high officials appealed to their ruling masters to allow their sons to join the school which was exclusively reserved for the Ranas. So the Durbar School was partially opened for commoners only after thirty-two years of its inception.

The reasons for making the Durbar School public were twofold. First, many officers serving the Ranas were expelled and exiled to India for their disagreements with the Rana masters. And they began to educate their sons at Indian universities. They would definitely influence their friends and relatives still in Nepal. Secondly, the English language assuming far more importance particularly in matters dealing with British India and as the Durbar School was started for imparting the British style of education in which English played a dominant role, the products of the school were naturally expected to be useful and handy in dealing with the British rulers.

The freedom struggle in India began to have its wider repercussions on Nepal and first the people of the valley and later those living in smaller towns outside clamoured for opening up schools. By the time the Ranas were removed from their positions of power, schools on British Empire pattern were already making their inroad into almost every part of the Himalayan kingdom. The more liberal administrative authority at the centre after the overthrow of the Ranas in 1951 allowed people to open up schools everywhere. The government also invited a US educational expert to prepare a report, which, they thought, would pave the way for future planning of education. It was a sort of guideline for those involved in teaching and learning within the country.

But there were several glaring lapses in that educational report. As it was prepared by a foreigner with no access to our ground realities and specifically the traditional heritage of the Nepalese people, it was far removed from what the country immediately needed to improve the lot of its uneducated people. Not only this, he neglected the social and vocational aspects of education altogether. The emphasis was only on liberal, or what we usually refer to as academic type of education aiming at conferring university degrees like BA, MA, BSc, MSc, BCom, MCom, etc.

The first higher educational institute founded in the country was Tri-Chandra College as late as September 12, 1918. We had no university and no education board to prepare courses of study nor we had set any national educational objectives. Our students had to follow Patna University and study whatever books it prescribed. It was again Patna University that conducted our school final, Intermediate and Bachelor examinations. It was in 1933 or thereabout that our School Leaving Certificate Board was finally established which conducted the SLC Examination of our students. But for college degrees up to the bachelor level we depended solely on Patna University.

Only after the Tribhuvan University was formally inaugurated in 1956 that the examinations were conducted by our own educational authority. Since its inception the Tribhuvan University has done a wonderful job of disseminating academic type of education all over the country. But due to the lack of a proper national education policy vis-à-vis the needs and aspirations of people, the praiseworthy achievement the university has made so far hasn't been able to contribute anything substantial in the area of practical development.

In the sixties during the heyday of the Panchayat system of governance, a new education system plan was launched with much fanfare. Many educationists, however, criticized the plan as undemocratic and impractical in our context. The main slogan of the new plan was, however, to mainly emphasize on vocational and technical education, and it was for the first time the economic concept of manpower was brought to fore. Education was considered on the background of country's developmental needs. And our schools and colleges were proposed to be converted to training centres for supplying required technical and other hands in the country with a view in mind not to wasting manpower on areas of education with no relevance to the national practical uses.

Although the new education plan proved to be almost a disaster in terms of its highly propagated objectives of the government, yet its main thrust of orienting the country's education to jobs was not at all out of place. The failure of the system lay not in its concept, which was indeed excellent, but in its application.

The new education system, in order to do away with the British Empire style of annual academic year and the assessment of students by examinations at the end of the year, introduced the semester system prevalent in the USA. But the teaching

community was not trained for the new and obviously complicated assignment. Failure of the semester system can be attributed to the following causes:

i)   There was a total lack of infrastructure for a new semester style of teaching and assessing students. Lack of libraries was the most important disadvantage.

ii) Lack of properly trained teachers particularly to conduct tutorial classes was felt everywhere. The teachers with the experience of the old system were unable to assess their own students internally, as they were used to checking answers of unknown students privately at home without fear of being detected or feeling no direct responsibility during the previous examinations. Now, because the students knew their examiners personally, the teachers hesitated to fail undeserving students for various reasons. There were several cases of threats to teachers and so out of fear students who would certainly fail were given good grades. And, on the other hand, if the teacher had a grudge against any student for personal causes, the student would not get a deserving grade. Thus a whole generation of good for nothing students got excellent grades jeopardizing the whole objective of quality education.

iii) The plan advocated for the spread of vocational education. Several regular high schools were developed and transformed into multipurpose schools where such technical subjects as carpentry, weaving, typing, sewing, cooking, knitting, brick laying, agricultural skills, poultry farming, gardening and such were taught. But unfortunately the students had no practical value of their acquired skills as they universally opted for conservative academic degrees after their school. And the training they got at such multipurpose schools could not be attuned to real life situations.

iv) The new education system plan had envisaged a job-oriented practical education and tried to produce trained manpower in the areas of country's needs. But in reality due to lack of coordination, non-availability of vocational experts and absence of confidence in teachers brought the new policy to a complete collapse and a severe deterioration of general educational standard.

With the collapse of the new education plan came down the edifice of the partyless Panchayat political system like a house of cards. The popular movement did re-install democracy but in the euphoria of gaining political rights the people

at the helm of affairs in the new political dispensation brought in disorganization, distrust and disorientation in the country's education. Instead of setting things right and putting unbalanced system ruining the public schools in order, they allowed privatization with no proper programming and guidelines.

It is true that private schools mostly with residential facilities did much to eradicate the defects of public schools. They highly raised the standard of teaching and with good management produced excellent results.

The overall result of the SLC Examination was going deplorably down at government schools, but, on the contrary, the private schools have been showing almost a hundred per cent result and that also in first division.

There are now private schools almost all over the country and they are doing an appreciable job of providing quality education within the country. A large number of students were sent annually to different cities of India in quest of quality education investing a huge amount of money. Private schools put a stop to this tremendous national loss by providing equally good or in many ways better schooling to Nepalese children right inside the country.

The only snag with the private schools has been that they are not at all affordable and accessible to every sect of our society. Only those with substantial monthly income can send their sons and daughters to privately run schools. Thus a very wide gap has developed between two distinctly different sets of students, one enjoying the benefits of quality education comparable to prestigious schools anywhere in the world and another hardly able to cope up with the prescribed courses at poorly run public schools with incompetent and miserably paid teachers and mismanagement due to sheer negligence. Our students in an overwhelming number are made victims of confusion and chaos. They are made to suffer below standard and failure. Besides, the self-seeking democratic leaders for their nefarious political gains have been fanning up these educationally dissatisfied and disgruntled students to stage strikes, to resort to lock-outs and burnings of priceless teaching materials. It's all the fault of the Education Department of the so-called democratic government. Only a mere thirty-three per cent from among the SLC candidates gets through the school final and that also mostly in the third division. The Ministry of Education just watches this rampart national wastage doing nothing.

Had there been no private schools with excellent results it would be far better to immediately dislodge the SLC Examination altogether.

A mental complex is clearly making a dichotomy in our rural community due to the type of education that has taken roots in the country after the ouster of the Ranas. The children who go to school develop a psychology that makes them feel superior to their non-school going members in the family. The students are alienated from the family, their tradition and occupation. The system of education doesn't permit them to appreciate farming, or any other family trade. They harbour higher ambitions of going to cities and doing government jobs in offices. Realistic education should have aimed at either improving the existing indigenous techniques and capacities or innovate new viable methods for higher production. If the uneducated older generation worked in the field with primitive tools, the young educated generation should have developed better methods to improve the quality of life. But instead of that, the whole new school going generation is cruelly leaving the rural areas in search of fanciful, impractical and utopian life away from home. Thus a large number of youths is either perspiring in the deserts of the Middle East or in the hot jungles of Malaysia.

The scenario of modern education is pitifully sad. It requires a revolutionary overhauling. When 66% of students fail and only 10% or less get the first division in the school final, only 10% should be allowed to pursue their higher studies for university degrees. The other 90% should be tuned to vocational and technical skills required for nation building. Practical training should be provided with the opening of technical schools offering huge incentives to the young generation. Flower gardening, herbal plantation, irrigation, animal farming, bee-keeping, fish farming, poultry farming, road and house building, bamboo arts, cooking, internal decoration, sewing, knitting, carpentry, masonry, house painting, dying, electric wiring, wood carving, and hundreds of other essential skills like them could provide adequate income to lead a decent life to our people.

Many people today think that our educational experiment began with the establishment of the Durbar School, but it is not at all true. Ranas had formally opened up two kinds of schools: (I) vernacular schools, and (ii) Sanskrit schools. Although Sanskrit schools existed since time immemorial, the Ranas tried to give economic support to such schools. Today most of such schools are either

defunct or transformed into modern English medium schools, yet the tradition of Sanskrit learning is still intact mostly in rural areas.

The vernacular schools were meant for teaching commoners the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic). The three Rs made people capable of reading the vernacular, writing letters and applications and doing basic sums like addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The skill of three Rs can prove to be greatly beneficial for societal reform, for the literate people can read the message of the government and be aware of developmental activities much better and more efficiently than the illiterate lot. We can cite the example of the states of Kerala and Karnataka in South India where almost everybody knows the three Rs with a result that the overall developmental situation is remarkably ahead of other states. In our case, however, alienation of the new generation has prompted youths to vacate their homes. Ranas didn't introduce the vernacular schools for social uplift, and hence the schools didn't continue for long.

The Sanskrit schools too didn't fare better. The so-called educationally conscious people of this country paid no attention to Sanskrit education regarding it as out of date and of no relevance to national context at all. But they were totally wrong.

The Sanskrit Pradhan Pathshala, a secondary level Sanskrit school, was run on the ground floor of the building of the famous Durbar School from 1877 AD and a hostel at Teendhara nearby was begun in 1885 AD. Unfortunately, they were open only for Brahmins. These institutions are still running and they are now under the Mahendra Sanskrit University, established as late as 1988 AD. Some educationists may dismiss Sanskrit education as irrelevant in modern times, but a wide section of Nepalese population is served by the products of this form of education. The following are the professional experts required by people of many walks of life:

1. Scholars/Pundits, who interpret the Sanskrit mythological and religious texts together with the Vedas, are held in high esteem.

2. Priests, who perform rituals at the houses of clients during births, deaths, marriages, sacred thread wearing ceremonies, religious functions and all kinds of worships. They are also profitably employed at temples to perform

regular worshipping rituals in the mornings, evenings and at special festive occasions.

3. Teachers, who are useful, even for modern schools to teach Nepali as well as Sanskrit. They teach Sanskrit literature, philosophy, grammar, astrology, Ayurveda system of medication, yoga, acupressure, herbs, etc.

4. Astrologers, who make and interpret our horoscopes and make a good income.

5. Health scientists. They are either vaidyas, healers with Ayurvedic method or employers of herbs, or yogic experts, acupressurists.

Although those who are appointed at the Mahendra Sanskrit University still have no vision to grapple the future potentiality of the ancient learning in the universal context and are still under the illusion of superstitious orthodox view that the immense treasure of knowledge that's in store in the ancient texts is divine and beyond the critical analysis and interpretation of human beings, yet if the perennial source of knowledge were properly tapped, it could immensely help in the process of development in the country. We could update the hidden knowledge and put to our use intelligently and in a liberal and humane way.

The universities that have recently come up in Nepal can work together to make our education more people-oriented and practical, more useful to natural job seekers and employers. The only areas our universities have given some importance are modern medicine, engineering, management, computer application, information and agricultural theory. These areas are definitely very essential to look into, but we could expand the areas and make them unique and our own by adding and updating them. For example an addition of Vedic architectural techniques in modern engineering, as the Maharishi University of Management has done in Iowa, USA and enriching modern methods of medicine by incorporating the Ayurvedic system, herbal knowledge, yogic practices and acupressure, etc. We could also give due recognition on ancient astrology and increase our repertoire of human knowledge. We cannot make a headway in our educational venture if we blindly copycat the West and completely forget or neglect our own rich heritage. Who can shine unless standing on firmer foundation of one's own ground?

A Simple Educational Structure and Prioritized Sustainable
Development Curriculum

Dr. Chiran S. Thapa

It is important that we get the educational structure right as the foundation on which the educational curriculum (ecosystems, sustainability, environment conservation) can be imparted. The challenge is to have a uniform but simple structure from Mechi to Mahakali and from the Himalayas in the north to the Terai plains in the south. It is best to have a twelve-grade all-Nepal school structure which leads to a further four-year University/college studies and for those whom society chooses to make available, with choice left to competent young men and women, specific training in medical, engineering, business and law schools or postgraduate education. The educational structure has to be right for all the important reasons. At the higher education level, competent students should have the right to choose the course of study they want to follow and even the amount of time they want to devote to their coursework and balance it with their other interests, extra-curricular activities, sports, etc. This way, democracy is built into the educational structure and the country's future leaders will learn to institutionalize democratic values while being competent in their own profession. In Nepal's case, with diverse structures in place, the challenge is to move towards this uniform structure, and the right way of going about it may be to have some models, with a twelve-grade school structure ascending to a four-year college course and, for those who can make it, specialized schools, law school, medical school, business school, etc. or further education to the master's level and the

Ph.D. British Prime Minister Tony Blair says that his three priorities are: education, education and education. Our priority has to be a simple and uniform all-Nepal structure. The transition may not be as complicated as may appear. We have large numbers of very fine students who want to continue higher education in the United States. One of the attractions is that, in the country with the largest educational infrastructure in the world, the organizational structure is the same from the east coast to Hawaii and from Alaska to Mississippi. The structure obtains in private schools or in community-financed ones, in community colleges, or private liberal arts. There are great differences in the quality of the teaching and in the fees students and schoolchildren have to pay, but the organizational structure is uniform.

Within the uniform educational infrastructure, there is great variety, a further reason, at the higher education level, of attraction for Nepali students. For example, community colleges, and two-year colleges are relatively easy to get admission into, and costless. But competent and hard-working students can transfer to a tougher and higher-standard institution at almost any level. This is one more argument for a uniform structure; with one more choice to transfer on the basis of achievement, additional to the choice at the start in admission. With a basic all-Nepal structure at both the school and higher education levels, the curriculum needs to focus area-wise on diverse priorities based on the region-specific resource endowments and needs of different geographic areas.

The challenge is to have the rich diversity of Nepal's terrain reflected in the curriculum within the simple uniformity of an all-Nepal educational structure. As an instance, teaching would focus on protecting forests, with the success of community forests highlighted in the hills so that the local needs of fodder and wood are protected and the sources of drinking water insured, while in the food-predominant Terai rural economy, protecting the fertility of the soil and measures against soil erosion would have priority.

Nepal's topography rises from near sea level in the lowlands of the south with sub-tropical jungles to the Himalayan range in the north with peaks above 8000 meters. The summer monsoons in most of the country combine with the topography to provide every kind of climate zone on the face of the earth. The great variety of life zones provide the habitat for a large number of plants, birds and animals. Despite the grinding poverty of the vast majority of its population,

Nepal has set aside more than 13,000 square kilometers, almost a tenth of the country's total area, as national parks and wildlife reserves. These protected areas cover wetlands and grasslands vegetation in the south and temperate forests in the mid-mountain region and alpine meadows and the glacial tundra of the Himalaya mountains including Mount Everest in the north. The national parks and the wildlife reserves provide sanctuary to hundreds of land-based and aquatic animals, including many endangered species such as the one-horned rhinoceros, the Bengal tiger and the gharial crocodile and protect flowers, trees and other fauna , some of which are found only in the country. It is important that for sustainable development, development is as important as its sustainability. In the way it is self-defeating and harmful for any country to implement policies which harm the environment or degrade ecology, the opportunity cost of not getting more out of the resource endowment is high and gets higher with growing population and rising aspirations.

The terrain gives the country one of the highest, relative to size, hydroelectric potential in the world. Much of it remains untapped and the bulk of the population, which is rural, is dependent for energy on inefficient exploitation of biomass and forest logging. Community forests have helped to stem the damage to the environment through loss of forest cover (except in the ten per cent of the country's area which is protected). Multipurpose development of the country's water resources for power, irrigation and flood control could turn around the fate of one of the poorest countries and would help protect forests by reducing the cutting of trees for firewood and improve soil nutrients by diverting manure to the fields rather than use as an energy resource. Dam construction is usually sited where population density is low, so relocation would not cause the problems that construction of dams and reservoirs pose in other countries.

While Nepal's geographic location and terrain endow the country with some unique and extraordinary features, the country has commonalities with other poor countries. Like other poor countries, Nepal has to make agriculture more efficient so that the food needs of her growing population and the fodder needs of animal husbandry are addressed. While Nepal has protected biodiversity and the country's unique flora in its national parks and other protected areas, meeting adequately the country's demands for food and feed would release pressure on ecologically fragile areas. There is no greater challenge before the country than

producing adequate food and the necessary feed. Protecting the country's ecology and sustaining the environment would be an exercise in futility if millions of our countrymen and countrywomen continue to go to bed hungry, and even more have less than the necessary caloric intake. How do we implement measures which assure food to the hungry and the malnourished? There is no doubt that, in the way, the 'green' revolution reduced the numbers of the hungry, genetic modification (GM) provides the best hope for today's hungry and the malnourished. GM has the potential to improve the quantity and quality of global food production and to do so in food-deficit countries within the terrain and climatic constraints facing these countries. Nepal may be unique with its cloud-hugging Himalaya mountains but it shares poverty and a growing population with many other developing countries. Rainfall-dependent crop cultivation suffers from drought one year followed the next year or the year after next by heavy downpours which flood the farming areas. If GM could produce seeds which would give reasonable yields regardless of the rain pattern, stable local production would improve the food supply for the hungry and the malnourished. The main consideration in the use of any new technology is that product safety has to be ensured. More than eighty crops have been genetically modified and tens of thousands of field trials have been conducted worldwide. At the latest count, some 30 million hectares of farmland, more than a quarter of it in the United States, but also in over forty countries as diverse as China, South Africa, France and Argentina, grow GM crops, which include soyabeans, maize, rapeseed and cotton The consumers in richer countries have every right to assess the environmental concerns and even perceived ethical issues in deciding whether to stick to food from organic farms, or diversify the menu from the output of conventional agriculture and additionally GM crops. The hungry and the malnourished have no such luxury when what they are being offered with GM food is not only more and safer product, but also improved processing and more value for less money. GM has advantages over natural conditions of crossbreeding: pest and herbicide resistance has been achieved in GM maize and soyabeans and genetic engineering has developed cotton and potatoes which resist insects. And there are tantalizing but realistic possibilities of potentially better nutritional content and targeted sensory properties. Food materials can be improved faster and at lower cost and GM allows more choice in selecting characteristics. In the longer term the farmer, the food industry, and the rural environment could benefit from higher yields with reduced use

of pesticides particularly where fertile soils make weed control difficult. Crops could be genetically engineered to survive in conditions of dry or excessive wet weather or frost conditions leading to ability to feed a growing world population at a reduced environmental cost.

Food value could be improved to combat nutritionally harmful and allergenic factors. GM rice rich in vitamin A content could prevent blindness in countries where rice is the staple diet. Breeding cereals with better proteins is a matter of time. Processing characteristics could be modified to reduce waste and lower food costs to the consumer. Rapeseeds with fatty acids more suitable for certain diets and virus-resistant bacteria in production of milk and meat would make the production process and the food safer. Thus GM could contribute to alleviation of hunger and malnutrition, while helping to prevent the otherwise inevitable pressure to take more out of the natural environment. Phytase is an enzyme produced by GM bacteria and its use for poultry and pig feed reduces phosphorus deposited in the fields, something which is positive for the environment. Genetically modified food has not been found to pose a greater risk than normal food, so with all their advantages, in the absence of problems in digestion or allergies, or damage of internal organs, or malfunction of the immune system among all possible health hazards, there is every reason for poorer countries to go for lower cost but more nutritive imports and cultivation of GM crops.

In the food-deficit poorer countries, too, it is possible as in the food-surplus developed countries for farmers to increase efficiency with minimal impact on the environment, for example through reduced use of weed-killers and targeted energy savings. With improved crop management, farmers in the poorer countries too could apply cultivation practices to preserve soil structure and the harmless fauna that live in it, ensure that the fertilizer and nutrients are applied in the right quantities and at the right time, protect crops by targeting pests and diseases whilst minimizing the impact on non-target insects and the environment and manage the protection of a rich diversity of flora and fauna. Farmers in the developing countries have to be aware that organic foods are generally more expensive than other foods as yields of organic crops tend to be lower and more labor has to be applied. Organic farming too has some negative effects on the environment: organic pesticides require careful handling to avoid killing field-endemic fauna and plowing and tilling can be more harmful than herbicides to creatures which

thrive in the soil and organic fertilizer can be toxic to earthworms and fish. But whereas GM is, in the rich countries, an alternative for recent practices, for the farmers of the poor countries GM is an important strategy towards greater efficiency and sustainability with higher yields of important crops such as wheat, maize, soya and potatoes and decreased use of insecticide leading to higher value of output for a smaller outlay.

While nature is unique to Nepal and, despite the constraints posed by a growing population and acute poverty, the country has protected biodiversity and the country's flora and fauna as part of the common heritage of mankind, the country is considerably behind in benefiting from the advances which, both for want of any better alternative and its product and cost advantages, GM technology can provide as food and feed. The unique terrain bestows an energy potential, which, if developed, could do away with the country's grinding poverty. Instead, life for the vast majority of the population continues to be much as it has been for centuries, dependent on the cycle of nature for low-yield agriculture and use of traditional source of biomass and firewood for heat and energy.

Food-deficit countries have fallen behind in improving yields at lower cost through cultivation of GM crops tried, tested and used for food in more than forty countries. Traditional cultivation practices, improved some through use of chemical fertilizers, for example, but not enough, could be replaced with cultivation of GM crops, which give higher yields with reduced costs of pesticide and fertilizer application. If these countries have been wanting in getting more out of Mother Nature in agriculture, the same holds for failure to develop the energy potential which, as an instance, Nepal's terrain makes available. Instead, the natural forest endowment and traditional biomass continue to be encroached upon for traditionally inefficient exploitation of energy. The poorer countries need to sustain the natural environment but they can do so only by making better use of their endowments by growing GM crops for more food and feed and developing energy sources which the natural terrain offers.

This paper has argued that any education, including education for sustainable development has to be grounded in a simple and uniform structure. Within this structure, a region-specific curriculum of education for sustainable development has to be formulated. In this curriculum, education and research have to be focused, as an example, on protecting the forest resources and the fodder needs

of the hilly districts, while the priority has to be on protecting soil erosion and the soil resources and the water needs of rain-fed and mechanical irrigation in the food-producing Terai plains. Sustainability and development are interrelated. To the extent that we can make agriculture efficient, the pressure on the natural environment is less. Generation of hydroelectric power makes available more efficient energy, which releases biomass as fertilizer, and the right choice of herbicide-resistant and insect-resistant GM crops provide higher yields at lower energy and financial cost. Education for sustainable development has to be in the organizational context of a Nepal-wide uniform structure but with a curriculum from the school level to advanced education which is region-specific. Development of hydroelectricity provides us the resources to sustain the natural environment which we have to give priority to.

On the Principles of Community School

Dr. Poorna Kanta Adhikary

Schools in the community

A few years ago, I was passing through a community in Lamjung, which I knew since my early childhood. I stopped by the local public school and inquired about its status. I was told that their enrolment in the lower grades was decreasing mainly because parents started sending their children to a nearby private school. When inquired about the reasons, one of the teachers replied '*forget about the others, me who is teaching in this school, am sending my child to that private school and not to this one.*' I asked: '*why?*' He replied: '*Very simple! The classes are not held here regularly. But there, they are done. Even as a teacher I have not much say in the way my own school is managed*'. I knew that the public school was opened and constructed by local people without any government support. Local people searched for teachers and recruited them from far away places as they could not be found locally. The community managed the school on its own. After it was nationalized according to the New Education System 1971-76, the management responsibility shifted to the government.

A quick appraisal indicated that the former students of the very school had become university graduates and then its teachers. They have also received

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training on modern methods of teaching and school management. Looking at their qualification and home- based employment, there is not much to complain about their salary and other benefits. They look quite healthy and the school outfit looks quite good as well as it has sufficient furniture, a new roof, sports facilities and other educational materials. Everything looks fine, except that the classes are not held regularly. The teachers are often busy in party politics. There is often confrontation within and between teachers and students, which is influenced by party politics.

Similar appraisal of the private school indicated that the school was started by a few young people of the village out of disgust of what was happening in the public school. They collected some money from among themselves including personal loan as the community had encouraged them to open the private school. The school was yet far from having adequate facilities, teachers were not that qualified either, nor had they any training on the modern methods of training and educational management. Yet it was attracting large number of children and the enrolment was going up. The parents were taking the children out from the free public school and putting them in the private school paying Rs.200 a month. The difference here was that the classes were held regularly. And the parents have been visiting the school quite frequently and demanding the progress reports of their children. When I asked about the nature of the parents, the teachers told me that it was not only the educated and well-to-do parents who were demanding the children's progress reports but the poor and illiterate ones as well. This indicates that not only the educated and well-to-do parents value the quality of education but the poor and illiterates ones as well.

There may be a great deal of debate on what does quality of education means. But for ordinary people it does definitely means regular classes, responsible children who pass examinations with good grades. Nepali parents, rich or poor, educated or not, are investing in their children's education as they think that they should be placed higher in the society than they themselves have been and they believe that education does make the difference. When public and private schools gear for preparing the children to take them through the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) Examination, obviously society measures their efficiency in terms of comparative number of children passing SLC and the grades they receive. In this context, private schools have demonstrated very high efficiency compared

to the public ones as the passing rate is more than 80% for private and less than 20% for the public ones and the First Divisions seem to be more associated with the private compared to the public. One could argue that passing exam is not necessarily a measure of quality education of a child. No matter how much of righteous assertion one may have in this opinion, for the common public, it is the only indicator that is available to them to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of school education. As a result, many parents, especially the well to do ones, started rejecting the public schools by putting their children in the private ones. This has resulted in the class education in Nepali society and is developing a deep division within. This leads to serious questioning on the accountability of the teachers and the related education administrators and managers in the public education system and the rationalization of huge public expenses in education.

Community participation in school building

During the later half of the eighteenth, the whole of the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth centuries, Nepali people, although being the subjects of an independent nation, were kept in total darkness by their feudal rulers when scientific, technological, socio-economic and political revolutions were taking place in the countries of Europe, Americas and Japan. Only after the revolution of 1951, when the Rana Regime was thrown out and both Nepalis and foreigners could move freely in and out of the country, then the people realized their level of illiteracy and backwardness. Then their spontaneous action, often without any government support, was to open school in their own communities. There was both immense cooperation within and competition between communities in not only opening the school but also in its management. The decades of 1950's and 1960's marked the golden age of education development in Nepal as it was a big movement which not only conscientized the people but also empowered them to transform their own praxis. People had already started questioning on what goes on inside the classrooms demonstrating their concern on quality of education of their children.

People had built up and managed not only the schools in their communities but also higher institutes of learning by opening colleges in several parts of the country. Curtailing their basic needs people invested in education development, which was considered as the topmost social, political and spiritual task of the time, which generated a great deal of financing through voluntary contribution

based upon individual capacity. The school was regarded as a secret and common place for everyone. The children of rich and poor, different ethnic and dalit, communities went through the same schools. The schools were the rallying point of all sections of the society. The above movement was totally halted in 1971 by government's nationalization of the school system as a part of its program of the New Education System (1971-76). Whether this action of the government was motivated by the interest of controlling the educated elites by the authoritarian Panchayat Regime, or by making the teachers' government salary scheme as lever against their free actions or that a few within it felt the responsibility of the state to provide education for all, the government action snatched the schools away from their community bringing an unprecedented alienation between them.

This action of the government had both positive and negative effects. Positively, schools were open even in those areas where the educational movement had not reached as yet. Negatively, it created alienation in the communities whereby the schools opened and managed by the very people became foreign to them. The teachers' attention, instead of being focused on the communities they were working for, was drawn away to district headquarters and then to the Central Ministry, Keshar Mahal. As a result of student movement of 1979, when the government controlled mechanism on teachers failed, the state started becoming indifferent in managing the educational sector that resulted in anarchy and breakdown of the public education system. It has become worse, when teachers were allowed to participate in party politics indiscriminately which has resulted in loss of everyone concerned except for some political party leaders, who have mobilized them as state-paid but free-for-them volunteer workers. This is the reason, why they are getting into cross-fire during the last few years of armed conflict in Nepal. As a result of which some teachers have lost life, many have been mutilated and/or displaced, and many schools in the countryside are going without teachers.

State and its responsibility

The Russian Revolution and its initial success in social transformation attracted many of the newly independent countries in the third world. Many of the third world leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru of India tried to adopt mixed economy by bringing into certain elements of Soviet socialism in the socio-economic sphere into the super structure of the western liberal democracy. The state corporations were

established under this scheme. Many elites of Marxist orientation were also drawn to support the Panchayat Regime in Nepal by the idea that it is only through the authoritarian system egalitarian principles can be implemented. This could be one of the premises of the New Education System adopted in Nepal in the seventies. Although such attempts in the beginning have demonstrated some success no doubt both here in Nepal and elsewhere, their sustainability has been questioned mainly because they are found to clash with the long feudal traditions. Even after the restoration of democracy, no matter what the principles the party leaders carry on their party manifesto, they are found to be domesticated themselves in feudal traditions. The rule of law has been quite far from practice. Instead, it has given birth to worse form of corruption, nepotism and neo-authoritarianism. As said by the world famous educator Paulo Freire, oppression does not end just by replacing the seat of an oppressor by an oppressed.

When the Soviet Socialist System, claiming state security of everyone from the cradle to the grave, collapsed after only seven decades of practice, many of the 'egalitarian' programs based upon authoritarianism following the same principle, have gone down the drain. This has raised the question on the very definition of the state and its responsibility. What do we mean by the state? What should be its structure? What should be its responsibility? By not being able to answer these questions adequately at the operational level and at the same time the emergence of corrupt and neo-authoritarian practice of the leaders in power even after the restoration of democracy has created such an immense pain and alienation in Nepali society, which is unprecedented in the country's history.

Redefining the state: A paradigm shift

It is true that the value '*state as being the benevolent benefactor as operationalized by the government alone as the doer*' is a dead notion. For this reason, in the name of socialism such a dead notion cannot be carried for ever. In fact 'socialism' as a tool for social transformation needs a new definition, which requires redefining the state as well. Unless one can come up with a clear operational definition of the state and its functions and responsibilities, one cannot think of community school, community irrigation, community forest, community road or community water tap and so forth. It is where there is an urgent need for 'paradigm shift' in our thinking process. This 'paradigm shift' dictates us to change our perception

of the state as a mono-centric model of governance to poly-centric model of governance, where community based organizations, local elected bodies, civil societies, political parties and trade unions, governmental/para-statal/non-governmental/private organizations have their specific roles to conscientize and empower the people, who are both the subjects and focal points of social transformation. All these are the institutions of people themselves, which have their precise roles and responsibilities and should be guided by the principles as mentioned below.

Guiding principles

1. People are sovereign, who are responsible for their own social transformation (development). They are not mere recipients of some benevolent benefactors. Rather they are the main actors and the focal point of all the development programs including education and health, which are meant to enable them for their social transformation. Obviously those people, who are not active on their own, need to be activated for which, participation of different institutions with clear roles and responsibilities is required to organize, conscientize and empower them.

2. The role of the community based organizations like users group, teacher-parent organization, school-management committee is to conscientize the local people and organize for their social mobilization in collective action and manage the specified tasks.

3. The function of the student and teacher unions is to see that teachers have kept themselves up-to-date through their professional development and that teaching is relevant and of desired quality to meet the students' and societal needs.

4. The role of the national and local civil societies is to draw attention of the citizens, government and other collaborating partners to see that equal opportunities are provided to all communities and wherever necessary act to conscientize and facilitate the concerned people and the service agencies.

5. The function of the elected local government is to facilitate and coordinate relevant agencies to mobilize the related resources, services and opportunities.

6. The role of the district based governmental/para-statal/non-governmental/private organizations is to support the people through mobilization of the needed human and material resources.

7. The role of the political parties and trade unions is to bring all concerned together in one platform so as to facilitate their collective action.

8. The role of the national and international donor agencies is to assist the people indirectly but through the above mentioned intermediaries.

Thus all the people's institutions have their own roles and responsibilities to support for people's action for social transformation. For this reason, any development program, education, health or anything else becomes the synergy between people's humanistic political activism and technocracy that transforms their praxis. This way mono-centric state in the form of government as the sole doer gets transformed into poly-centric state in the form of various institutions of people, which have their specified roles and responsibilities to support people to transform their own reality through their own active participation. Here the government becomes the facilitator of development process.

People's activism as a practice of liberty

The old notion that the government is the state and as a benevolent benefactor, it has the responsibility to provide the entire needed social and development services to its people, who are mere beneficiaries, is very simple and appealing to subscribe. But this notion is authoritarian and paternalistic and as it is, it never allows people to be independent and free. It makes people as objects totally dependent upon an abstract body called state and hinders them to take their own initiatives for change. This is the anti-thesis of democracy and liberation, where people as subjects are expected to take their own initiatives to act freely and independently, so that they take the responsibility to change their own praxis. If one views education or development as a process needed for liberty of people not only from the fulfillment of their basic needs but also from psychological and philosophical ones, then this notion of the state as the only authoritarian benevolent benefactor has to be rejected. No matter how much appealing the authoritarianism is and threatening the liberation is, from the holistic point of view of liberation and democracy, the mono-centric authoritarian sectarian state

has to be transformed into poly-centric pluralist democratic one. Internalization of this assertion is a must if Nepal has to live together with the family of nations in this changing and competitive world of globalization.

This author does not see much difficulty to internalize the above assertion as Nepalis have already demonstrated that they have the capability to reverse the process of desertification through community forestry program. The ill doing by the authoritarian state through the nationalization of forest has been corrected by the people, as the community forestry program made efforts to utilize the internal capability of the people. There are many other examples of success in Nepal. The green-road construction approach has demonstrated enormous internal capability of people to construct community roads, which are not only cost effective and environment friendly but also deeply engraved upon people's ownership of the whole process. Here the people act as active subjects to engage themselves in transformation of their reality and take not only to construct the road but also its maintenance. It is very interesting to observe this process as a very high degree of informal education takes place among them while they engage in dialogue while participating in the process of situation analysis and planning, which in itself is a conscientization and empowerment process. The education sector, which is being totally destroyed since last three decades by government's nationalization drive can only be corrected if the community is trusted to manage their own schools. In fact every educational institution right from the primary to university should be managed in an autonomous manner. For this first of all, one should be sincere enough to internalize the notion of poly-centric governance and demonstrate the political will to operationalize it.

Conclusion

It has already been discussed above that people are the actors themselves and are at the center of the social transformation process. It is also being discussed that the various institutional frameworks within the poly-centric state have their active roles and responsibilities to support the people in the process. Despite the fact that the majority of Nepali people, especially in the rural remote areas are illiterate, one cannot undermine their innate capabilities for their own social transformation and treat as if they are the empty cans and waiting for someone away from the Center to pour the wisdom of water to fill them up. One should

not forget that the people who took initiatives to open and manage schools in rural Nepal during the 1950's and 1960's were the illiterate ones. It is their intrinsic motivation and desire for social transformation, the educational movement in Nepal had taken place. It is for this reason, it is essential for every educator, political leader, administrator, foreign advisor, social worker to internalize this and act accordingly.

The gaps and shortcomings in the above is the common problem for many countries like Nepal in the world today. Nobody is an empty can nor anybody, can claim to be a full one. Everyone is half filled as nobody is perfect. It is only the cooperation of all concerned that can bring about a change which should not only be desirable but also realistically achievable, sustainable and equitable. It is only through the collective practice that can challenge the repressive authoritarianism so as to liberate everyone concerned from its domestication, to transform the praxis for liberation of all by adopting pluralism and democracy. Those communities who have adopted this notion have demonstrated success, which seems not very easy though but definitely possible. It is only from this point of view community school makes sense not only for education development as such but also to act as a vehicle for liberation from all kinds of suffering—ill health, ill-habitation, hunger, unemployment, etc.

Education and the Challenges for National Development

Dr. Radhaber D. Khati[1]

Introduction

For many years before the emergence of democracy education was considered as a distinctive feature of public honor, and it was defined an upper-class constituency. It was definitely a luxury for a few elite, but could not be craved for by the rest of the others. Provision of education was there, although to a very limited extent and that was only for the study of Hindu and Buddhist classics. It was only after the national awakening that the country began its drive for social and economic development. Then, education was begun to be perceived as a means to expand the number of skilled manpower and raise the level of trained personnel. Thus, with the inception of Trichandra College in 1918, and mainly after the incorporation of a national university in 1959 that the country made a remarkable stride in the field of education at higher levels.

Educational development does not have a very long history of its own in our country. The geophysical and sociopolitical factors are to a greater extent responsible for this delayed realization of the importance of education. This had made us wait for long to unveil the gloom of ignorance, which

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actually was uncovered with the emergence of democracy in 1951. Till then, education, especially higher education, was considered something to be a luxury for a few higher ups, but for the greater masses it was something hard to crave for. It was only since 1951 that the country actually launched a drive for educational development.

After the advent of democracy the nation was, all of a sudden, exposed to the varieties of social and economic challenges that were stockpiled for centuries. Challenges that are linked to educational development are emphatically dealt with here. Challenges that education in Nepal has to face are due to factors that are divided into these three categories; Social, Cultural and Economic.

Box 1: Selected factors linked to educational development

1. Social factors
   i)   Lack of access to educational opportunities
   ii) Historical perspective
   iii) Social discrimination
   iv) Rural urban disparities

2. Cultural factors
   i)   Female dependency
   ii) Traditional ethnic, caste diversity
   iii) Traditional belief system

3. Economic factors
   i)   Class background
   ii) Problem of inequality
   iii) Traditional agricultural profession
   iv) Education and unemployment

Lack of access to educational opportunities

Education system and policies will have regressive character if they favor only the urban population and middle and upper-income groups. Equalizing opportunities for the access to education is a necessary pre-requisite to ensure social mobility through education. Amount of disparities among the people at large, due to unequal distribution of educational opportunities

basing on sex, socioeconomic status, and different regional, rural, and urban backgrounds, could only be decreased by adding more realistic approach to educational planning. But, the things were not what they were supposed to be. Efforts to expand and equalize, particularly, higher educational opportunities have been facing many constraints in our country. Lacks of financial, physical and human resources are some such restrictions that make the construction of buildings, supply of books and equipment, and the provision of qualified teachers the difficult and costly tasks.

Educational opportunities may be equalized to a certain extent by adopting appropriate methods of selection and promotion, such as 'quota system' or by improving the methods of educational finance. Broadly expanded educational facilities are simple but effective means of ensuring mass participation, particularly, in lower levels of education. This is, especially, where physical proximity is a major factor in determining the number of school goers. At the higher levels decentralization of educational opportunities is an imperative in the sense that it will control rural-urban flow of population, narrow down regional gaps and lessen disparities caused by low socioeconomic status. Therefore, in order to face the challenges of improving the access to education, improvement in the necessary mechanisms to meet certain level of educational needs, like the mobilization of national and local resources and working out effective planning in setting up education center, must be taken into serious account.

Historical perspective

Up until the very dawn of democracy (i.e. 1951) there was virtually no any central office to administer and supervise nation's education system. As late as 1953 a national inspectoral system was established to maintain some records of schools, even if there were not any uniform system of records and record keeping as far as education is concerned. As a matter of the fact there was no any national system of education in Nepal prior to democracy. Even the census of 1952 does not have to say much about it. Later on Nepalese education began to be organized and controlled by the central level administration instituted nationally. Curricula of some of the schools were framed in accordance with the system adopted by the schools of Patna. Higher education in Nepal itself was, to a sufficient extent, an offspring of the

system of Patna University, itself. Gradually, new schools began to be opened at various places of the kingdom. Initially, the schools were divided in three categories:

1. Government schools, or those supported and administered by the Central Government

2. Government aided schools, or those started independently, but receiving various amounts of financial aids from the Central Government after meeting certain standards put by the government;

3. Independent schools, or those operating independently, both financially and administratively.

Not only that the schools in the initial stages after the emergence of democracy were very few in Nepal and that too were only in the urban areas with relatively denser population, the teachers were also very scarce to be employed. In the case of the unavailability of any Nepalese teachers for the schools the teachers were recruited from India. Since the schools were localized in the towns and were catering the children of the elite, the poor masses of the people and also those residing in the villages were utterly devoid of the opportunities of education. Educational equipment was very rare in schools. Schools themselves were not adequately built. Most of them were thatched and were equipped with bamboo mattresses. Schools were closed when it rained or when it was too hot. First schools were opened in the open rest houses nearby the temples.

Of all the most serious shortage of educational equipment were the textbooks, especially, those written in Nepali. Initially, Nepalese students had to read books written in Hindi and produced in India for the school children of India. Gradually, some chalk-board entered the schools, but charts, maps and globes were still rare.

Curriculum of these schools varied considerably. Curricula of some of the English schools were patterned after those schools in India, which in turn is patterned after the schools in Great Britain. Therefore, the English education in Nepal is termed as the third-hand version of a system that was originated in Britain, came to India and, then, through India, came to Nepal.

One of the things that the country was able to obtain as an outstanding gift of democracy was the growth of educational awareness among the people in general. This wave of educational awareness, which gradually increased after the advent of democracy, had an important impact on the overall development of education and the country itself. Consequently, a number of schools and colleges were opened in a rapid succession. The swift expansion of higher educational establishments throughout the country is demonstrated by the fact that there were as many as 14 colleges with 915 students in them in a matter of just three years from the advent of democracy in 1951. The number rose up to 61 TU constituent campuses, 122 affiliated campuses under TU, and four other full-fledged universities.

Public demand for greater access to higher education is still rising. With an increase in the number of colleges within the country, the government, which was taking the total financial responsibility of higher education, thought to introduce a policy that would divert certain portion of higher educational expenses to the private sector from it. But, the major higher educational policy decisions were still in the hands of the government.

Social discrimination

Traditional concept, "*education has a limited benefit and that is too to the upper class of people*," was a widely accepted belief among the people in Nepal. Children who by birth happened to be of certain castes or class of family could profit more than those who were not. Education carried potential risks to the lower caste children, in almost the same way, as it was a threat to the upper and the ruling class. It was a risk for the lower and the working class because it would drive them to active dissatisfaction leading to much higher expectation, rather not normally achievable, to result frustration in the mass of the people. But it was a kind of threat to the upper class of people, especially, for the reason that if education benefits the lower masses they would forget their traditional lower status and would try to snatch the power, luxury and comfort of the upper and the ruling class. The reason behind the upper class people's wish of education for their children was basically lying on the belief that if education is made available to everybody equally, their monopoly in the access to better opportunities in the future will be lessened or even lost. It was not

133

customary for the upper class children to compete the lower or suppressed class who could be the counterpart for the same opportunity. The upper class or caste of people always wanted some kind of social discrimination or segregation to exist in their favor.

Rural urban disparities

The problem of education in the rural areas still persists even after the emergence of democracy when the people in general need to be getting increased awareness about their rights and the consciousness about the role of education. People in the rural areas, where majority of them reside, still seem to prefer education lesser than anything else. The reasons for all these could be the following:

- Centralized educational administration system
- Lack of modern means of transport, easy physical inaccessibility, poverty and unaffordability among the rural masses for education
- Traditional social beliefs of the rural people
- Lack of qualified teachers and their reluctance to go and be there as depute
- Absence of physical facilities and comfort in the schools to attract teachers
- Regular mobility of the remote-rural and highland people

Due to having schools concentrated in the urban areas in the beginning people got misguided by the very concept of education. For them to give education of the secondary level was something like giving their boys a status to leave the traditional parental profession and the village itself. It was also for this reason why qualified teachers were not easily available for the village schools, when required. Therefore, due to the causes like the lack of educational awareness, unaffordability on the part of the parents to meet their children's educational expenses, bleak job opportunities for those who graduated and also due to the long prevailed belief of supremacy of destiny, the rural people could not get benefit from education.

Since, the country's financial resources were so limited that it was very difficult for the government to provide school facilities to the villages. It did demand greater financial and moral commitment on the part of the government to sufficiently run even the primary schools in the rural areas. Not only the educational logistics were to be supplied to the village-schools from the towns, the qualified teachers also needed to be made available to those schools from the towns with 100 or more percent of extra allowances, in addition to the regular salaries. An extra effort is needed on the part of educational administrators to make sure that the teachers stay where they were deputed, on top of evaluating their job performance. The financial burden to the family, when youngsters go to the school, is far greater than most families in the rural areas could adequately afford. This is the money that the student could have saved. Not only the tuition is saved, but, expenses on books and stationery are also saved. Besides, the rural boys could earn while at work. So the huge economic back-up measure is needed to be adopted if to send rural children to schools.

Cultural factors

Female dependency

Females are more adversely affected members in the family structure than males in the traditional male dominated family system. This was because the males coming from higher or the wealthier classes of society already get some sort of education inside the country or outside it. At least they could get education in not so expensive educational institutions in India, like those at Allahabad, Calcutta or Banaras. The educationally equipped males get jobs relatively easily and are more capable to earn their fortune. But, the females having restrictions on all these frontiers have to remain all inside the home. Thus, they happened to be under the financial dependency of the males. Besides, males are the owners of parental property and the earner of bread, women only share the expenses at the pleasure of her male partner. This makes her to yield to the pressures at this male dominated familyhood. So, the more the women are uneducated the more they are under

the pressures of the males and lesser they enjoy their equal position and power with her male counterpart.

Traditional ethnic caste diversity

In a nation like Nepal with lots of class and caste divisions, several social and ethnic problems arise calling for conflicts between the opposite concepts. They may range from untouchables to inter-caste-marriage and from polygamy to slavery. These things are so heavily merged into the society that merely one or two slogans, however radical they might look, seem not to drive them away. In Nepal where racial differences based on caste corresponding to socioeconomic status exist, it is hard to find the ideal of equal opportunity to educational development practiced in a form of equal access to the social and economic opportunities to be provided by the nation. As the socioeconomic status was the base of what social and educational opportunities one would get and what social position one would obtain, it is very difficult to completely root out that tradition just with one or two strokes or even within a short time like this. The real feeling of equality in the field of education is still a distant phenomenon even half a century after the emergence of democracy in the country. This may be the lasting impact of the traditional social system and the traditional social norms that have been carried on in our society till today.

Traditionally, the number of children from the upper class and castes like Brahmans and Chhetriyas always remained to be high in the schools, whereas, those of the poor common peasants scatter around. Even if they attended the schools, they generally got discouraged by their peers, parents and the family to continue education after two or three years of schooling. In this way, they leave the school before completion and join family profession, i.e. work in the farm, herd cattle, or do other similar labors that the rest of the people in that area do to contribute to the family income. Thus, the dropout rate was much higher than it is now, among the peasants' children in the schools where they attended. However, those few still fortunate enough to continue the school show their attendance that is quite often interrupted by numerous family demands.

Traditional belief system

Another important problem that education is facing in the rural Nepal is the traditional belief system that was at the root of every village community, "*what is lotted cannot be blotted*." This belief still plays a prominent role in the life and the activities of most of the Nepalese. This has led the Nepalese to be satisfied with the status-quo, since they believe that "not a single leaf is shaken without the wish of God." Any miracle could happen if He wished, and man does not have any control over his own destiny. Origins of these beliefs probably lie deep in the Hindu-Buddhist influences.

The class and caste-based norms are further backed by the religious influence on the society. In a country like Nepal, where people are so much devoted to religion and that devotion is so deeply rooted to the life of the general people that they cannot even imagine to raise their voice against this culture. They, rather, tend to blame themselves for being so fated, because of their own sin probably committed in the past life. Their belief that the sin committed in the life before must have revisited them now for their being born in such a poor society that is made to suffer all hardships. Just on the contrary to it, the well off people might have felt that their relative rich and comfortable life must have been due to some virtues that they had done in their respective past lives. The basis of this belief is that whatever they sow they reap.

Economic factors

Class background

The socioeconomic background of a student's family appears to be a very significant challenge negatively influencing public participation in the development of higher education in Nepal. The financing of education is a powerful policy tool to determine the distribution of financial burden of education. Schemes for expanding educational opportunities, improving the quality of education, building national capacity of educational management and educational planning and research are often hampered by limited

resources devoted to education. Financial resources allotted to education are not only restricted to public revenues. They include expenditures of parents on their children's' schooling- for fees, books, clothes and so on-and contributions from local communities. In spite of all these, an adequate government subsidy in the form of aid is essential to encourage the participation of unprivileged groups in education. Anyway, it has become quite evident that the rate of government subsidy is high in the development of education, particularly, that in higher education. It is with this reason that the burden of financing the regular and development costs of all national educational institutions, especially, those of higher education has in most cases, till now, fallen upon the government resources.

Problem of inequality

In a country which is so impoverished that neither the government can facilitate every locality, rural or urban with schools free for children, nor the schools can run without government subsidies and without fees raised from the students, nor even the children or their parents can pay fees. In Nepal where the basic needs are still the food, shelter and education, the general masses have still to stay satisfied at a lower key. The poor peasants living in the rural areas having no regular resources for income can hardly afford any money for the education of their children, and the children themselves in the schools have to sacrifice their time to be used which they could have used in family or the farm related works, otherwise. Therefore, besides, regional disparity, poor peasant's inability to financially afford to the educational expenses of their children further emphasizes the issue of inequality already present in the country.

In addition, financial inability among the poor peasants leading to the unequal distribution of education in the country, there is another big factor that is hindering their children from being admitted or retained to the schools for long, without being dropped out prior to the completion of a certain course or the level. The question whether our course contents taught in the schools, so far, are practically useful or relevant to the real world demands in the society to boost its economy and, thus improve the status of the people socially suppressed, still need answers. Often times, it is being expressed by the parents that the foreign looking and heavily

academic centered education, as if imported from the rich and the highly developed countries of the West, is made to be imparted to the students in schools and the colleges. They are not only costly to the normal Nepalese purse, but almost impractical for the solution of the real life problems in this country. Parents have raised doubts whether it is reasonably appropriate to invest their hard earned capital on their kids in schools, since they see no special prospects of their kids to get employment to earn at least the comfortable living even after years of expenses in such type of schooling. This wide spread dissatisfaction on the present education system gives enough room for our system of education for an appropriate change. In keeping with this, steps have been taken to revise the old policies of education in the recent times, especially, after the revival of democracy in 1990.

Traditional agricultural profession

The continued dependence of people on agriculture is mainly due to the slow development and the bare expansion of non-agricultural sector activities in the country. Opportunities for the diversification of the occupation are quite limited in our context. This is truer, especially, in the rural situations where people have very few or almost no alternative occupation to take that would replace agriculture. The situation for the common people in these places is that either they get involved in the traditional and less sustainable agricultural profession or get themselves unemployed. Due to this very reason that the people go to agriculture, even knowing that this will not give any lucrative return. One more important problem with the rural society is that neither the youth are equipped with the skills that are required for any technical or vocational professions, nor do they have any convenient opportunities to acquire them. Quite meager attempts were tried in order to produce lower level manpower. Provision of facilities for skill training was thought to be introduced earlier in order to produce vocationally trained manpower well within the locality where they are needed. But that job was initiated only in the 1980s by the opening up of technical and vocational schools in some of the remote rural areas like Jumla, Jiri and Dhankuta. Although, the full impact of this scheme is yet to be seen, but the initial results is not too satisfactory.

Education and unemployment

The term equality is very nice to hear, but the true spirit of it is rarely practiced in the modern time, even in the developed world. The matter of the fact is that some are close to it; while others are not so closer. Until the recent past, education's intrinsic value was not a part of habitual Nepalese conception about it. For a considerable time in the past it was conceived to be the property of the western world. Since, the people are living in the traditional agricultural life in the rural society, they rarely require any advanced educational expertise and degrees to perform their agricultural professions, which they take from the parents, thus, making the role of education not very starkly apparent. For them it was a waste of time, money and the energy, with virtually no practical financial benefit. For most of the poor rural boys it was better to remain uneducated and with work than to spend rarely earned money for an educational degree and get frustrated for not being suitably employed.

Educated unemployed people are more of a problem in the rural society than the uneducated unemployed. The return that the parents want from their educated boys is somewhat different and somewhat extra than the benefit that they get from the uneducated ones. Since, those uneducated do not incur any extra expenses on the part of their parents, the parents are satisfied with whatever he earns or do not mind even he does not earn unless he supports the family's traditional agricultural or pastoral works. It has commonly been seen in the villages that the secondary passed and unemployed son is more a burden for a poor family than a boy who did not have any educational diploma or a degree, whatsoever, but does the farm or household works. The reason is that the former hesitates to take up the traditional jobs of the family, whereas the later does not mind it.

Now it is already a high time to overcome this challenge for national development. If education were to be seen as the very foundation for sustainable national development, which is what it is, a national level commitment needs to be made by those national leaders occupying different crucial sectors. They also need to garner wide and constructive support from the general public who might be divided into so many pockets now. A general awareness among the common people about the benefit of education and how it

could bring about a lasting development in the country must be generated by those who have more exposures than many others. Even if it is not that easy to overcome all the above challenges that the present educational endeavors are facing, but, if all of us are sincerely effortful towards it and work with greater enthusiasm no challenge is too difficult to overcome.

Depoliticising Education

Dr. Raman Raj Misra[1]

Introduction

The acceptance and verbal importance given to universal education after 1950 by the State has not produced the desired effect up to date. Hence, this paper deals primarily with one of many causes that seem to adversely affect the education system in the country. The problems in the educational sector, both public and private, are no doubt many. Scarcity of good teachers, financial limitation of subsidised education, problems associated with management, lack of requisite infrastructure, scarcity and cost of textbooks, etc. do provide many hurdles. However, politics in education have had more a damaging effect than the restrictive effects from other constraints within the education sector. Hence politicisation of educational institutions is considered here as the primary problem not only restricting the growth of quality education in this country, but also retarding the whole education system.

Currently, national politics have not only disrupted education from time to time, but now threats are being made to completely paralyse the entire educational system in the country. In such unfortunate circumstances, the capable will have no alternative, but to seek educational services from foreign countries, mostly

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India. Those hapless students who may not be able to get the benefit of foreign education will no doubt be contributing to the future menial level of manpower in our labour force. As the latter type of students will be more numerous, this will no doubt adversely affect the quality of human resource in this country and hence our long-term development. Hence the focus of this paper is directed towards politicisation of education.

Growth of education in the country

Religious institutions from earlier times had undertaken to impart education in the country. However, it was not based on the principle of universal education. Select caste and groups were catered to by such religious institutions. Even then the paucity of such educational institutions had made many to go to India particularly in places like Banaras (then known as Kasi) for higher education.

Later, the government during the Rana period established few schools and a college, specifically in Kathmandu. Such schools catered primarily to the children of the elite. After 1950 the expansion of schools and colleges was facilitated both by the government and private (including missionary) and community efforts. Such expansion catered to the eucational needs of lager segment of the population beyond the confines of Kathmandu valley. However, the coverage was not uniform throughout the country.

Nationalisation of educational institutions after 1971 enabled the establishment of schools in many remote districts. But this tended to discourage private and community initiatives. The 'educational reform' of the seventies, with generous technical and material aid from the United States of America, tended to be more disruptive, particularly because of the dearth of technical (educational) manpower well-versed in the American system of education.

After 1980, the State began to relinquish to some extent its monopoly and control over the educational system. Private schools, particularly with the initiative of foreigners from Darjeeling (India) were being established. And after 1990 private schools (commonly referred to as boarding schools) have expanded considerably. Similarly, private colleges and universities have come into existence.

Consumer demand in education

Education has been perceived as a means of improvement of one's life, particularly as it enables employment and earning. Education among the general populace was never perceived as the means for the pursuit of knowledge per se. Ancient Sanskrit adage associates education as a means to wealth. Education, patronage, wealth, dharma and happiness are said to be causally related.

Today, it is generally believed that education enables one to get better employment. And that better or quality education entails better employment. Hence the consumer demand has been for quality education. The assessment of quality education are made by the consumers of education (that is, those who seek to be educated or to educate their children), by their preference or choice of the type and place of the educational institutions in which they seek to be enrolled.

It has been the tradition for Nepalis to go for education outside of the country. The trend initiated, in the beginning, due to lack of sufficient educational institutions within the country, especially for higher education. However, this tendency has been maintained in spite of the growth and availability of educational institutions in the country, indicating the preference of those who seek to receive quality and useful education.

Hence the first consumer preference has been for education in foreign countries. Within the country, the preference has been for private education. The public (government) educational institutions receive the least priority. This is attributed to the lower quality of education within the country, and particularly in the public education, even though the cost, heavily subsidised, is lower in the public educational institutions.

Politicisation of education

Politics have been seen as one of the greatest hurdles in the development of education in this country. Prior to 1950 the education was coveted by the high castes and selected elite. The masses were systematically discouraged from acquiring general education. After 1950, the State undertook to expand

education and also private and community initiatives were discerned to contribute in enhancing education in the country.

After 1971, the State took the sole responsibility (or burden) for education, but eventually began to relinquish its total control by the eighties, as the limitation of monopoly without civic participation were beginning to be discernible. The educational committee report of 1980 did recommend gradual encouragement of private initiatives in education. During the thirty years prior to 1990, political parties opposed to the system began to infiltrate the educational institutions and covertly began to mobilise teachers and students for political purpose. At the same time, the State also attempted to use the educational institution to indoctrinate and to counter the moves of the political parties by creating its own student union.

With the advent of democracy after 1990, the earlier trend towards politicisation of education received further impetus due to open and free atmosphere. The unions within the public educational institutions, whether of the teachers, workers or those of the students, openly declare themselves to be affiliated to the main political parties. The fact that there are many teachers, educational workers and students organisations instead of just one indicate that they are formed not to protect and further their professional interests, but to cater to the interests of their respective political parties.

The political parties have thus infiltrated and vitiated the public education institutions to use them for political purpose. They have been successful in utilising the teachers, professors, and students to further their partisan interests. Thus degradation of public sector education due to politicisation has naturally lowered its quality, as is seen from the recent SLC results. Had it not been for the private schools, the percentages of those passing the SLC examination would have been very much lower. The growing percentages of failures among the public university students also seem to indicate the falling quality in institutions of higher learning.

The dereliction of duty by the partisan teachers and professors in the public educational institutions precludes any possibility of improvement of such institutions. The public sector education in Nepal has thus been successfully sabotaged with no discernible possibility of improvement. It is no wonder that

the people seek to educate their children in private schools and colleges even though the cost is much higher than those of the public educational institutions. (see also, Dr. Purna Kanta Adhikari: Kantipur Daily: 31 July 2003, pg. 6.).

The private sector, however, had remained impervious to such political machination. Perhaps this is why the private schools are being targeted today by the political parties. Disruption of education has already begun. Political parties via their student organisations in the public educational sector and the activities of few economically incapable parents have targeted the quality schools of this country and are likely to continue to do so. Such systematically and periodic disruptions have made many to prefer educating their children in foreign schools. This, in turn, is bound to restrict if not retard the growth of quality education in the private sector within this country.

Those not associated with the private educational institutions make political onslaughts on the private sector educational institutions. And such organisations rationalise their violent actions purportedly on the grounds of their high cost. Such dictatorial demands will, if actually implemented, deprecate the quality of private sector education to the level of the public sector educational institutions or force them to close down completely. In either case the educational system of this country will be successfully damaged even more.

However the actual motive of political parties in targeting private as well as public sector educational institutions seems to be guided solely by their desire to create difficulty to the government. As Keshab Sharma had observed (The Kathmandu Post: 22 August 2003, pg 7.) the seemingly justifiable demands of the politically affiliated unions in the public educational institutions are raised only when there respective parties are not in power and not while they are in power.

Cronyism

The practice of cronyism, or to use the Nepali word, *afno manche* (one's person) is also intimately related with politicisation of the educational institutions. As Dor Bahadur Bista in his book entitled *Fatalism and Development*, had clearly explained that cronyism has been an inherent and well-entrenched practice in Nepal. At least in the Rana period the practice associated with cronyism was openly declared

without qualms and the system was designed to accommodate such practice overtly. In the post-Rana period, hypocrisy prevails and admission associated with the practices of cronyism is generally camouflaged, and yet still practised.

Nevertheless instituting one's party-men and cronies in positions of vice-chancellors or deans or as teachers and lecturers prevail. This struggle for coveted positions in the educational institutions generates its own political dynamics within our educational institutions. Qualifications and performances are subordinated in favour of cronyism. At times student unions of the related political parties are mobilised to coercively oust or retain or install certain individuals, purely on the basis of cronyism.

When the qualification, performance and experiences are ignored in favour of partisan and cronyism then naturally the quality of education is depreciated. When considerable energy is consumed in politicking for positions of favour, the concern of academic performances is ignored. Lack of transparent criteria and establishment of durable criteria for selection and positioning precludes the possibility of improvement of quality of the professors and teachers. Durable criteria or rules and regulations are rare because in Nepal the rules are not made to be broken as much as they are made to be frequently changed whenever one's vested interest requires.

Babu Ram Neupane has pointed out (The Kathmandu Post: 22 August 2003 pg. 7) how politicisation has also brought about tussle between teachers in the Tribhuvan University. The practice of hiring instructors on contract basis was postponed some two years ago, apparently due to "conflict between the central and the local leadership. The seats supposed to be filled up by persons close to central authority were duly or unduly allocated by campus chiefs to their sycophants." This had its own ramification in that some 4000 part-time teachers throughout the country are said to be agitated.

This state of uncertainty of the part-time teachers will naturally affect the education of the students. Making rules, suspending rules or postponing their implementation or altering rules is a practice guided by political consideration associated with cronyism. Facilitating and conducive atmosphere for quality education can never be created with such practices when uncertainty, is promoted by contorting rules and regulations in an ad hoc manner.

In recent times the various unions and organisations within the educational institutions have not only been utilised for disruptive purpose. The students have been used to vandalise public properties including the educational infrastructures. Further, students have also been used as agents of extortion. Now education does not consist of the content of the curriculum. Such activities will contribute towards their practical education. What sort of future citizens are we unwittingly producing when coercion, violence, vandalism and extortion are shaping the minds and character of our students?

Conclusion

Given the present scenario one can not but be pessimistic regarding the products of our educational system mediated by political parties. In this age of globalisation and competition, it seems we will not be able to produce capable human resource for the future. It is said that education is the means of long-term development. If our education is of sub-standard quality this country cannot even hope for any bright future. A slight hope exists, however, due to the fact that not all students will be adversely affected by the politicised education. Those who have and those who will be receiving education in foreign countries at least will be saved. But then the proportion of such students may be too small to have sufficient impact. Hence one must explore the possibility of improvement within this country.

The remedy lies in depoliticising our entire educational system. The other physical, financial and managerial constraints can be managed with time and persistence. But in order to facilitate such capacity one must get rid of the political influence in the educational sector.

The private sector has shown to be relatively free of such harmful political involvement. They should be promoted. Further, as recent onslaught on private educational institutions has shown that they need protection. Protection of property, protection from harassment, and protection from extortion are needed. Such protection is the right of every citizen and organisation. And therefore the private educational institutions should not be deprived of such protection. Though it is the duty of the State to grant all such protection, its incapacity today to do so has been glaring. Hence, civil society, intellectuals and human rights organisations should contribute towards this end.

The myopic and irresponsible behaviour of the political parties may not be easily corrected. Hence, gradual reduction and replacement of public education by private ones or, as it is already being done, by community school system may be the only option to save the education system from the evil effects of political parties.

The long entrenched practice of cronyism, which has persisted in all the types of political systems we have historically adopted, needs more frank and honest attention. Standard and criteria of eligibility for posts and positions must not be more stringent, unambiguous and transparent. Rules and regulations should not be changed, for a stipulated time, and above all altered by those who are in the executive positions. Here again the pressure from the civil society seems necessary. And the media could function as a watchdog against any breach.

The focus of public sector education should be oriented towards results. Perhaps, political parties can be made to be responsible and not to exploit the various unions and organisations for their partisan politics. Let, as many have already said, the educational institutions be declared a zone of peace. For this public opinion must be created to make the political parties responsible. Here again the roles of intellectuals and civil societies have scope for action.

Managing Paradoxes: Education for the Sustained Future

Dr. Bidya Nath Koirala[1]

Paradoxical context

State, society, and school nurture each other. In the process of nurturing each other conflicts occur at the individual and institutional levels. These conflicts are highlighted at different levels. At the traditional level it is a destructive force. At the behavioral level, it is the natural occurrence. And at the interactionists' level it is an inevitable output. In each level of the conflict, individual and institution develops logic of practice (Bourdieu, 1990), sets of values, and beliefs. Because of the contextual differences, paradoxes occur in their values, beliefs, and practice. This global phenomenon has been highlighted, questioned, and answered many times. And still paradoxes occur. For example, traditionally Hindu school systems taught caste hierarchy. At the same time it taught human being as equal. How these two contradictory ideas sustained each other in Hindu society (Parish, 1993). So is the case with Buddhism which was stood against idolaters and caste hierarchy. But Buddhists constructed biggest idols and maintained caste hierarchy. This problem of paradoxical belief lies with Islam and Christian believers as well. This discussion implies that theological Gurus have to manage religious paradoxes. And as a teacher s/he has to do the same thing in the classroom.

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State is divided between the idea of homogenization and decentralization. In the process of homogenization it promotes national integration and in the process of decentralization, it accepts pluralism (Parajuli, 2003, Valentin, 2001). In this paradox, school is cut-off and teachers are supposed to manage these paradoxes. This continued paradox is a subject to be understood and issue to be dealt with for all the prospective teachers.

Society demands disciplined graduates. Media on the other hand reiterate capitalist order and at the same time manufacture discontents (Chomsky, 1992). Where do social order and media discontents fit? The answer is that they end up with lived paradoxes. In these paradoxes children learn to be docile in the society and hostile in the school or the other way round. It is where teachers blame society and society blames teachers. This paradoxical situation demands sustained Gurus at both ends.

Everyday life and school differs in many ways. The demographic change of the students over the years has made this issue even clearer. Schooling occurs at the both end. In the society students learn social truth through everyday living. And in the school they learn universal/global truth through textual learning. Children cannot match the learning of these two settings. Because of this mismatch, children learn to be liar or live in paradox. Question comes, who is there to be a Guru for the management of these lived paradoxes? This question requires a sustained Guru at different locations.

Modernization labeled people in terms of the per capita income, share of GDP, and literacy status as developed and underdeveloped (Hoogvelt, 1982). Many other indices are developed to divide and label people (UNDP, 2002). This objective division of the subjective people yielded socio-psychological tension – functionalists blaming nonfunctional and underdeveloped people and developmentalists throwing their anger against the advocators of the capitalist order. Here the question arises, where is the meeting point between modernization and indigenization? Moreover, what is our identity at the cultural and social level? This identity crisis is to be managed somewhere by someone for ever. But who is that "someone" at school level and how can we ensure the perennial occurrence of the "someone" (a) to protect agricultural land from exhaustive chemical fertilizer that has been promoted under the name of green revolution (b) to ensure "equal exchange between center and periphery" under

the name of development and underdevelopment (Frank, 1969), and (c) to protect world culture against national culture

Critical theorists taught students to question against the taken for granted knowledge. In this process, the interpretive theoreticians are sidelined. In the words of Margaret Mead, "generalized others" are ignored under the structuralists' dominant knowledge. Here the question of values/realities comes (Chamber, 1994), the electoral value of majority over minority or pluralist's value of multiple identities. The learners are cut off where we need bridging knowledge.

Students study for exam and teachers also prepare them for exam. But the society and the workplace expect more than what the teachers and students did for exam. In other words, education system demands rote learner students and rote learner producing teachers. But the society and the outer world look for competitive students and teachers. This is where paradoxes emerge.

At large, knowledge factories differ from people to people. Because of these differences there has been a gap between two generations, two nations, two caste groups, two religious faiths, and many other "twos". These differences have created social paradoxes, each generation justifying its practice as "perfect". This generational reality is to be addressed at some points by some one. But who is that "someone" at school, at home, and how can they be instrumental in learning from each generation's realities.

The above discussion implies that paradoxes are everywhere. These paradoxes require educational interventions at school, at home, and at media. The first step is to unveil these paradoxes, the second step is to incorporate them into curricular and extra-curricular activities of the school, and the third approach is to make a part of cultural movement for change at the familial level.

Question of accountability in addressing the paradoxes

Accountability lies with "knowledge generating and receiving factories" to address paradoxes. This implies that school alone is not the place to be made accountable and oriented. There are homes, media, fellow groups, and recipients as well who can be made accountable to address these paradoxes. But the problem lies

with the compartmentalized structure. For example, school, if conceived from functional sociological frame, is an institution for "social good". If school by design is a good place to be and its contents are already well and good, how can we address these paradoxes? In fact, its "take away" approach to content selection, teaching, and evaluation procedure do not help us address these paradoxes. At this point question comes, can we think of school as a place to address the above paradoxes? From the critical Marxist frame, school is understood as jail, teachers as jail-guard, and students as prisoners (Illich, 1971) in the capitalist and "conditioned capitalist states" (Carnoy,1990), then again the same question comes, can we think of ways to address paradoxes from this capitalist order? Even if we go for transformative education as socialist and communist countries advocate, is there any room to address paradoxes under that political regime? In both the situation, these paradoxes remain to be unaddressed because of their political supremacy over education. The third set of knowledge is generated from the interpretative educators. These educators, because of their orientation, always look for individual and collective interpretation. In each interpretation, a person provides his/her logic of practice (Bourdieu, 1990). For example, a Hindu because of caste orientation learns to be hierarchical (Dumont, 1980). At the same time s/he has to be equal for all. How a teacher can do both at a time? This question itself demands two answers, answer for the home and the community and answer for school and in other public places. Here Giddens cited in Haralumbos (1995) seems to be worth citing who brought the idea of duality over agency and structural view of leadership. The duality view demands two way communications between agency and structure. In the field of education, it can be loosely translated as teachers and community interactions. In the context of Nepal, this interaction has been a "cry in wilderness." A recent report (CERI, 2003) conducted process impact study of a School Management Committee (SMC) and found that parents and guardians of public schools are not taking interest in school. And experience of the teachers and principals of private schools (speech of the teachers and principal of private schools, at Galaxy Higher Secondary School of Kathmandu, July, 2003) helps understand that very few parents visit their children's' school. This implies that both rich and poor parents rely on teachers and teachers themselves are either unaware of the above paradoxes or ignore them for good.

The discussion above provides a clue that home has been working as a creator of paradoxes and school has been an institution which is ignoring them for good. The media and fellow groups are the other forces to be accountable for addressing these paradoxes. But the analysis of media broadcasted knowledge over a year presents different story to tell. In fact the media, in many cases paint wrong picture. For example, "the only tooth paste in the world…; the only machine for the farmer..." What does a child understand by these media messages? The answer is again paradoxes, because s/he might have been exposed with other options as well. Media violence (Chomsky, 1992) and moral education in school curricula can also be taken as paradoxical example. The fellow groups, in many ways serve in both ways. In one way, teaching will take place among the fellows about media messages and on the other hand the same fellow will be teaching moral education as well. Again the child may learn paradoxes.

The pessimistic statements of the above paragraphs look for optimistic approach to address paradoxes in a sustained way.   For example, if teachers have developed "paradox blindness" teacher training, orientation sessions, and reflection forums can be the remedial measures. And if parents are paradoxically blind, Parent Teacher Association could be the venue for such discussions. Reading circle of the students can be another venue for the students and the non-formal education classes and investigative journalists of the media group can also be a forum for sustained discussion over the issues around paradoxes.

School effectiveness thesis and sustained paradox management programs

Traditional schools are managed under small management system. The present total quality management (TQM) thesis of school improvement programs probably came from that knowledge. This is where Paton (1994) argued that none of the authors is to be credited as TQM Guru. But the quality education thesis has brought five contending perspectives, viz. zero defect production perspective, stakeholders' satisfaction perspective, self determined normative perspective, just in time perspective, and suppliers' partnership perspective. In each perspective, one can find hope to address paradoxical knowledge. For example, if we expect zero defect products, paradox can be a defect. This realization provides a room

for dovetailing the idea of defect free product or paradox free product. The same argument can be applied with other perspective as well.

All forms of globalization (Held, 2000) opened doors for globalizing paradoxes. Playing with globalizing idea, children find contradictions with traditional beliefs and value systems. For example, individualism, competitiveness, and "money culture" are alien to the traditional society. At the same time they are the integral part of the developed society. Here the question arises, where does a child should fit? What is his/her limit? These questions help address the "imported source of paradoxes". But again, where is that place to begin with? The decentralized political system and privatization seek answer at the individual school and the individual community. The media on the other hand manufacture message from the apex. The two message manufacturing agencies need meeting point at different levels. Equally they seek sustained management to continue these bridging messages.

The above discussion implies that a single forum cannot resolve paradoxes that have different roots. Here again question comes, what is the horizon of school to work for? This question helps capitalize a "learning web" of the deschoolers and advocators of open school system. In both the cases, there is a role of private agencies as well to create, use, and sustain paradox management learning forums. In other words, these conflicting themes can be the area of the studies for learning web users and open school program beneficiaries.

Implication of this paper

In the process of learning, we gather paradoxes. These paradoxes are spread everywhere. In school, they are living under a constant battle between traditional and modern knowledge system. With teachers and students, these paradoxes are growing with their values and belief systems. Parents also hold these paradoxes in the form of their everyday life. This implies that the field of education is full of paradoxes at the individual and social levels. Individually it has been perpetuated in the form of duality. In the society, the same thing has been nurtured in the form of culture. In all these knowledge generating, distributing, and controlling sources, there is a need of sustained education system. Individual reflection, questioning to oneself, social reflection, and group reflection are some of the

implications of this paper. At the individual level, children can be taught to be reflective at home, at school, and at public places. At the social level, they can be asked to undertake reflective research. And at the group level, they can be encouraged for discourse analysis.

How things are different? Why they have different perspective? What are the commonalities? Where is the point of departure? These are some questions that can be taught to the children at home and at school to narrow the paradoxes if they are not eliminated. The answer of these questions helps ensure sustained education for a child. For example, Hindu mythology taught that God created plants and human beings. Some of the other mythologies mentioned that God showed his first and second incarnations in the form of fish and tortoise, i.e. as aquatic beings. The third incarnation was shown in the form of a terrestrial animal, boar and the fourth one in half human and half lion. The fifth incarnation was a tiny person called Baman. The fifth incarnation was a half-brained devotee. And in the next incarnation, the God manifested him in the form of a person with all kinds of knowledge. The mythologies go on explaining about incarnations. Teachers on the other side draw Darwin's theory and claim that life began with jelly fish on water. Gradually human being evolved out of the aquatic animal. A child by now has three sets of paradoxical information about the origin of species. The first set of information leads the child to divine theory which can be understood from its point of departure. But the second and the third set of information provides room for common understanding between science and myth. For example, both of the knowledge system believes that life started in water. And both of them are indicating that human being came lately through evolutionary process. Individual reflection and the search for commonality and search for the point of departure help learner bridge between paradoxical knowledge systems. This is also an approach to ensure active peace in the field of education (Toh, 1993). This process to generate, distribute, and control knowledge can be replicated at individual, group, and societal levels. At all levels, what we need is an understanding that there are commonalities and point of departures. And we have to respect them as a product of a knowledge factory. Schooling at different points to inculcate this realization is the only approach that should be promoted at various levels of knowledge generating, distributing, and controlling factories. These practices produce Gurus at school, community, and home. Following their individual, group, and community reflections of students, teachers, community leaders, and

parents, we can address paradoxes which can be considered as an approach to ensure education for sustained future.

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Reorienting the National Policies and Plans in Nepal

Laba Prasad Tripathee[1]

Nepal at a glance

The population of Nepal is nearly 23.1 million and the area is 147181 square kilometres. About one third of the land is higher mountain with snow all the year round. About 86% of the population lives in rural areas, of which 13% live in remote areas. The census shows 92 languages and 101 different castes /ethnic groups including Dalit. The Nepali language is the lingua franca and the state language of the country.

Nepal has almost a dozen world heritage sites. It continues to sustain the culture of celebrations that combines spiritual values, mythology and the wonders of nature. Because of this, many social groups in Nepal have been living spiritually and culturally driven lives even in the difficult circumstances of economic hardships and topographical challenges.

The per capita income of Nepal has reached $240 per annum[2]. Human Resource Index (HRI) of Nepal is at the 146th position.

Nepal is predominantly an agricultural country. About 40 % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from agriculture and about 80% of the population earns their living from agriculture. Some 38% of its population is estimated to be living below the poverty line[3].

The growth of school education as reflected in the Net Enrolment Rate is 81% at the primary level. The network of primary and secondary schools has considerably increased throughout the country facilitating easy access to children.

The natural resources of Nepal are the Himalayas providing water resources, the mountains with the possibilities of developing hydropower and tourism industries. The climatic belts like tundra in the mountains, sub-tropical in the hills and tropical in the Tarai are favorable for growing all kinds of grains, fruits, vegetables, flowers and cash crops all the year round.

Nepal is signatory to national commitment to EFA objectives as articulated in the Jomtien Declaration of 1990. Following the Nepal's commitment on EFA in Dakar, Nepal has prepared an EFA National Plan of Actions 2003.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal is committed to the right of every child to quality basic education. The Jomtien Conference and the Dakar Framework of Action highlight the commitment of governments to provide basic education of good quality to all children by 2015.

The Constitution of Nepal (1990) and the Child Rights and Welfare Act (2048) have made clear provision to safeguard the rights of the child to education. The 10th Five Year Plan, the three-year Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and the NPA for EFA address the need to continue basic and primary education.

Current policies

The seventh amendment of Education Act (2002) has spelt out the provision of pre-primary education for children of age 3-5 years. Under this Act the government can provide grants to the child development centers established in collaboration with VDCs and municipalities.

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[3] UNDP, 2002

The Education Regulation (2002) spelt out the structure, modalities and community involvement in managing and implementation of the early childhood development (ECD) program in the country. The vision of ESD is: Provide stimulating and child friendly learning environment to enable every child to develop up to their optimum potentials through well managed services and supported by national policies, community participation and backed up by professional support services within the frameworks of child right. Some important national policies and plans are briefly mentioned below.

The 10th Five-Year Plan

The Plan gives high priority to develop human resources, as its one strategy to eliminate poverty. Its objectives to develop human resource are as follows.

- To produce such citizens as are aware of nationality, democracy, human rights and social responsibilities, and are dedicated, responsible and sensible.

- To help improve the living standard of illiterate people, especially women, by conducting functional literacy program.

- To prepare children for enrolment to the primary level of education emphasizing their physical, mental and attitudinal development.

- To make the quality primary education accessible to all.

- To develop and expand quality secondary education in consonance with the development of the nation.

- To produce moderate level manpower by developing and expanding qualitative higher secondary education and prepare them for higher education.

- To supply the technical manpower with basic and middle level skill for the nation.

- To produce high-level manpower that can compete at the international level and support national economy for the all-round development of the nation.

The EFA National Plan of Action

The EFA National Plan of Action has been developed according to goals set by the Dakar Framework which is to be achieved by the year 2015. The goals have been adapted to suit the national contexts with one additional goal to cater to the

ethnic, social and linguistic needs of the country. The added goal is: ensure the rights of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to quality basic and primary education through their mother tongue.

The policy framework for EFA (2004 – 2009) has also been developed. The key policy objectives are:

•   The 20 % children currently out-of-school will obtain access to basic and primary education.

•   The retention of the 80% children already within the system will be met with a strong emphasis on improved norms and standards for quality in education and predictability of schooling, through improvements in central, district and sub-district educational administration as well as management.

Programs like inclusive education will be scaled up during the program period and systematic action will be taken to ensure the right to education for all disabled children. Alternative schooling provision will support access to children at remote areas, which are beyond the reach of the formal schooling system. Open learning approaches will be employed to foster access to relevant educational opportunities for working people and others who are constrained from attending formal schooling.

Basic and Primary Education Program II (BPEP II) (1999-2004)

BPEP II has been designed with the following objectives in order of priority.

•   Ensuring access and participation to primary education.

•   Enhancing learning achievement of the students.

•   Strengthening management capacity

After the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of 2002, BPEP II has shifted its focus towards the child. However, BPEP II also emphasizes that it is necessary to have visions for schools, teachers and local institutions. The Mid Term Review[4] identified a number of changes necessary to BPEP II such as revising its goals in line with the 10th Five Year Plan and the EFA National Plan of Action focusing on the child and the community, giving a more holistic view of education, importance of

Grade One, etc. BPEP II suggests that the future support for stakeholders must be flexible and responsive to change. Under this project, teachers have been trained and the physical environment expanded and improved.

Enhancing quality

The primary focus is to help children develop their potentialities to the fullest so that they develop into inquisitive persons and contribute to the development of the society. Teachers will have a key role – in closest collaboration with the parents – to develop and maintain quality of education. The key policies are;

- National minimum norms and standards will have to be developed for quality educational response in all situations of teaching-learning.

- Curriculum will be designed to cover aspects of local life, educational materials and manuals reviewed and strengthened.

- Schools will have a choice of textbooks and be well-equipped with all instructional materials.

- Teachers will be trained to manage a teaching-learning environment, focusing on generic skills like working in teams, solving problems and having self-esteem.

- Efficiency in schools will be met by increases in the actual schooldays and instructional hours.

- Early Childhood Development (ECD) and pre-primary schooling will be expanded to contribute to the achievement of universal primary education and acceptable quality of education.

- The Continuous Assessment System (CAS) will be linked to the school-based recurrent teacher training to help teachers regularly evaluate the progress of their children and provide feedback for constant improvement.

- The Human Resource Development (HRD) Plan will be in place to help teachers and education managers to develop their competencies for effectively implementing educational reforms.

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[4] The Mid Term Review, March 2002

The training of teachers emphasizes the inclusion of disabled, displaced and disadvantaged children to ensure that they have a full school life expectancy. The educational system is affirmative towards female and local teachers.

Education in basic and primary education will be responsive not only to local needs but also take into account that delivery of educational services is made in difficult circumstances. The educational administration and management will be run in close collaboration with civil society.

Improving efficiency

Approximately 60,000 teachers are being trained annually but with little effective impact on classroom practices. Schooldays are guesstimated at an average of 90-100 days annually. The level of instructional hours is low. Thousands of scholarships do not have any tangible impact on the retention and/or the completion of cycle. The key challenge in improving the internal efficiency is to benefit the poor through coherent and responsive policies and strategies to implement the programs.

Decentralization of basic and primary education will provide momentum to increase efficiency through transparency, participation and accountability. Dialogue and partnerships are promoted through decentralization of authority and responsibility to the levels furthest away from the center, thus strengthening the credibility of basic and primary education locally. Decentralization creates new tasks and responsibilities at all levels. The key policies for improving the internal and external efficiency are:

- Involvement of civil society, through participation and social contracts in general and partnerships in particular

- Administrative governance with transparency, accountability and participation is a characteristic of activities at all levels.

Educational governance – at individual, institutional and systemic levels – will make certain that educational deliveries are being made throughout the system at the agreed time and quality. Indicators will be used to monitor and document the progress of the performance of basic and primary education as well as staff performance, inclusion of people at the local level and governance in general

(transparency, accountability and participation) supported by a solid computerized education, monitoring, information system (EMIS).

Development of programs should take place at the local level, using local resources whenever possible.

Partnerships between state, local authorities and civil society expressed and established in the District Education Plans and social contracts between authorities and communities will facilitate the implementation of the program components.

Some policies on higher education

The Government has formed a Higher Technical Education Promotion and Monitoring Committee under the chairmanship of the honorable Minister of Education and Sports. The main responsibilities of the Committee are to streamline the private technical colleges affiliated to the university by coordinating the Nepal Medical Council, the Nepal Engineering Council, the Nepal Nursing Council, the Higher Secondary Education Board, the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training, Universities and the University Grants Commission. The Committee is authorized to issue the certificate of registration for running the colleges.

The Government has also formed a Higher Education Evaluation and Monitoring Committee to streamline the private colleges, which are affiliated to foreign universities and Boards, and are run in Nepal. The Committee coordinates with the different institutions related to the higher education and technical education. This has opened the door to establish institutions to provide education of the foreign universities in Nepal.

Summaries of major programs

This section gives a summary of major program components that are the part of the Annual Strategic Implementation Plan, the District Education Plan, the School Improvement Plans and the Village Education Plans. These are:

a)   Expanding early childhood development

b)   Ensuring access for all children

c)   Meeting the learning needs of all children

d)   Reducing adult illiteracy

e)   Eliminating gender and social disparities

f)   Improving all aspects of quality education

a) Expanding early childhood development

Main policies: The two types of early childhood development (ECD) programs– school based and community based –will be designed and implemented on the principle of cost sharing.

The pre-primary schooling program will be a school-based option, offering one year schooling to children of 3-5 years of age. It will basically prepare children for entering into primary school. The pre-schooling program will be targeted at schools and is based on demands of the community. In case the stakeholders support the pre-schooling program, then the school will be allowed to find ways of sharing costs.

The ECD-program will be a community-based facility, aimed at creating an enjoyable learning environment for children between 3-5 years. Communities will be empowered to manage ECD centers with authority to generate resources for meeting the expenditure of their operation. The following efforts will be made.

•   The program will support and evaluate the effects of ECD activities on enrolment, retention and learning achievement of primary education

•   A number of ECD centers will be established with program assistance in the areas with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

•   The program will facilitate partnerships with private and business enterprises to establish and run centers outside the mentioned districts

Comprehensive IEC (information, education and communication) programs for ECD will be designed and disseminated through the mass media targeting the parents at rural and remote areas.

The ECD program is expected to have a pro-poor effect as it frees parents to pursue income-generating activities and prevents underage enrolment in schools.

The program will also have a positive impact on the attendance and retention of older girls as well.

b) Ensuring access to education for all children

Main policies: In order to make basic and primary education free and accessible, parents of the deprived and disadvantaged children must be assisted, reducing or eliminating direct and indirect cost of education.

Free distribution of textbooks including relevant learning materials, scholarships and incentives, providing uniforms and serving meal in selected pocket areas of disadvantaged communities will be undertaken for meeting the opportunity cost of the disadvantaged groups. The following principles will guide educational activities and management:

- Inclusive education will be further developed and scaled up to a national level during the support period including to the disabled and deprived children.
- Social contracts between educational authorities and communities
- Testing on a large scale of new and improved scholarship and freeship programs, especially for girls and children from the disadvantaged groups.

Increased emphasis will be attributed to the process of decentralization in general and especially to the planning processes in particular. School improvement planning/village education planning will be scaled up to all schools and VDCs/municipalities and District Education Plans will be as the main educational vehicle for educational administration and planning.

Norms and standards will be revised for financial and activity planning. Performance based financial allocations for districts, schools and communities will be designed and tested.

In order to improve efficiency, analysis of distribution of education facilities on an equitable basis (school mapping) will be undertaken in a scientific manner on a national scale.

The program framework would prioritize alternative schooling facilities as a mechanism for streamlining remote and isolated hamlets within the access of basic and primary education.

c) Meeting the learning needs of all children

Main policies: This program includes developing a learning environment sensitive to the needs of girls, disadvantaged and displaced children. The framework for the institutional management and capacity building will be operationalized through the involvement of communities to the extent possible and gender issues will be fully integrated. The principal policy vehicle of the framework is to intensify decentralization by establishing local control in the management of their own schools, with assistance from and under the supervision of the center.

Life skill education will be provided to the young generations to earn livelihood. Elements such as developing critical thinking, balanced emotional development, taking critical decisions, managing conflicts, etc. are the essence of life skills that should be taken into account. The curricula will be revisited to include civic education perspectives such as

- Develop school curriculum that is more civic, practical and relevant to the lives of children, youths and adults.

- Use of new communication technologies for expanding learning opportunities and diversifying ways of learning.

- Enable all the children, youths and adults to live safer, healthier and economically and socially active and productive lives.

- Learn generic skills such as information gathering, problem solving, critical thinking, team working, negotiation, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, assertiveness, handling emotions, conflict resolution skills, living in harmony and peace with neighbors.

- Design and disseminate programs to prevent and combat HIV/AIDS.

- Provide alternative and flexible schooling.

The process of decentralized planning and management will be intensified as an effective means of ensuring good governance and sustainability of program. The government will provide financial support and allocate more funds for ensuring universal access to quality basic education.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) shall involve key stakeholders extensively to make the process fully participatory for accountability. Partnership on a broad basis at local, national and international levels with local bodies, CBOs, GOs,

NGOs and other private agencies will be the main strategy for bringing additional resources and expertise for implementing program activities.

d) Reducing adult illiteracy

Main policies: Primary education is the main contributor to an improved literacy situation. Hence, in order to improve the situation of literacy programs, non-formal education and primary education will be made supplementary and complimentary to each other. The literacy program consists of three elements - basic literacy, updating skills and continuing education.

Non-formal education will cover both literacy and alternative schooling programs, like out-of-school, flexible schooling and school outreach programs. The main principles behind the non-formal education will be:

- The non-formal education programs will be focused in the very low literacy areas like mountain and hills from mid and far western development regions and the middle Terai.

- The programs will mainly focus on women and girls in general but especially from ethnic minorities and poverty stricken areas.

- The non-formal education programs are linked to programs like the ECD, scholarships, income generation, etc. which mean that an integrated and need based literacy policy will be developed to support the implementation of the activities.

- Expanding community learning centers (CLCs) and, where possible, fostering greater coordination between CLCs and Resource Centers with a focus on continuing education.

Political, professional, social and religious groups along with their sister organizations will be mobilized for implementing literacy programs. Each VDC/VEC (Village Education Committee) will target for literacy programs under its Village Development Plan (VEP) as per the needs of the village. The central institutions will provide technical backstopping with learning materials, training and adequate funding. Funds will be increased, as share of national education budget. VDCs will be empowered to seek partnership with other CBOs and NGOs for additional resources and expertise.

The Community Learning Centers (CLCs) as an effective means of providing continuing education will be established in each electoral constituency of the country in order to provide the opportunity for the neo-literates and the young people in the community.

e) Eliminating gender and social disparities

Main policies: The Gender Audit of 2002 will be regarded as the main guideline to achieve the ambitious targets.

Massive community mobilization campaigns involving CBOs, NGOs and others; incentive packages for subsidizing opportunity cost; contextualizing the curriculum and text materials will form the main policy for mainstreaming these groups

The policy of fulfilling at least one female teacher per school will be scaled up to make 50% of the total teaching force in primary education. Recruiting teachers from other disadvantaged and indigenous groups will also be prioritized. In order to achieve gender parity, enough attention would be paid to make special provision for girls and children with disabilities as well as for female teachers. Girls' friendly environment in schools and classrooms along with gender sensitized curriculum and text materials will be given the topmost priority.

School extension program in areas of low enrolment of girls and disadvantaged groups will be targeted for improving the access of these groups. In some of the remote districts residential schools will be opened as affirmative actions in favor of this group.

f) Improving all aspects of quality education

Main policies: Universal access to basic education without acceptable quality carries little meaning. In order to keep our future generations abreast of the global knowledge and technology developments, improving the quality education delivery is a must. Quality education builds competency among the future generation so that they are not lagged behind in the global competition. This will require setting of standards and norms for basic education and implement appropriate management measures.

While designing appropriate strategies for addressing the issue of quality enhancement, following considerations need to be taken into considerations.

- Availability of adequate number of qualified teachers for teaching children enroled in the schools.

- Active learning requires an interactive teaching-learning environment, motivating and challenging with adequate facilities.

- The teacher staff of schools must reflect the composition of gender and ethnic groups in the area of teaching.

- Additional teachers' posts will be created on the basis of the size of enrolment in order to meet the increasing requirement.

Building teachers' capacity is one aspect and helping them to implement the acquired capacity in the classroom practice is another. The mandatory provision in the Education Act requiring teacher's licensing will be linked with effective mechanism of competency based in-service and pre-service teacher training programs that address the classroom needs and demands of practicing teachers. Teacher support systems, including Resource Centers, will be strengthened in order to provide support for teachers in implementing newly acquired experiences and expertise.

Regularity of teachers and community satisfaction with performance of teachers will be taken as priority area of educational management. This will require revision of legal provision requiring the working conditions of teachers.

The focus of teaching-learning methodology will be on student centered active learning with teachers being aware of each students' level at all times through using a wide range of formal and informal child-friendly techniques. Successful experiences from the continuous assessment program will be incorporated into the recurrent teacher training to support the child centered learning approaches for the improvement of the completion rate of primary education.

Low completion rate of primary education has been and will be the main challenge of any basic education policy framework. A liberal promotion policy combined with an appropriate mechanism of quality control will reduce dropouts and repetition rate contributing to the improvement of the completion rate of primary education.

g) Secondary education development program

The Secondary Education Development Plan has been developed according to the approach paper presented to the 10th Five-Year Plan. The Plan will be implemented during the 10th and 11th Five-Year Plan periods.

The strategic goals of the Plan are to increase access to secondary education especially for the educationally disadvantaged groups, ethnic minorities and girls; to decentralize educational management to the school, district and regional levels; to develop an integrated curriculum and assessment system for the school sector, to develop an integrated teacher development and management system and to prepare for a compulsory 8 year basic education cycle and a sound secondary cycle.

Poverty, gender and minority considerations are taken into account across all components of the Secondary Education Development Plan.

Community school improvement plans play a primary role in the implementation of the Plan.

The current institutional arrangements have been modified at central, regional and district levels. An enhanced role for regional education directorates is included. At the central level the amalgamation of teacher development centers is built-in while the National Center for Educational Development will become a separate institution focusing on management and planning.

The rationalization and re-orientation of the school curriculum into a national curriculum from Grade 1 to Grade 12 is a much-needed over-arching activity. A participatory development of a national curriculum for schools is being planned.

Based on the curriculum changes an integrated central and decentralized assessment and examination system will be further developed from the current range of assessment practices at the school, district, regional and central levels.

Strategies are developed to recruit, train, and retain secondary school principals and teachers within an overall sector strategy that will establish a single comprehensive source of policies related to teacher recruitment and training; improve capacity for implementing policies related to teacher training;

create an agency with overall responsibility and capacity to carry out strategic planning and management within the teacher training programs throughout all sectors; improve the targeting and internal efficiency of training and co-ordinate or integrate teacher development delivery institutions.

Monitoring and data collection methods will be reviewed, streamlined, and modernized wherever possible.

Implementation strategies

The commitment of the Government to provide free primary education is further reaffirmed by its adherence to the EFS Dakar Framework, 2000, the 7th amendment of Education Act, 2002 and Education Regulations, 2002. Presently, the Government is providing grants-in-aid to cover teachers' salary and a very small amount for administrative cost. There are very few funds for non-salary recurrent cost, which is very critical for improving quality in primary education. The Government also supports social welfare expenditures i.e. on providing free textbooks, scholarships to girls and the Dalit children and the nutritious food program.

The Government has prepared the EFA National Plan of Action to provide quality basic and primary education to all primary school going children. It has envisaged allocating 3.7% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education sector in 2009 and it is also envisaged that 55 % of the total education sector budget will be allocated to basic and primary education sub-sector.

The programs will be managed by the Department of Education. A Management Committee, headed by the Director General of the Department of Education, and including chief executive managers of all central line agencies, will coordinate the management. The Government will manage the co-ordination of the development partners. Biannual meetings will be carried out for co-ordination. Joint donors-HMG review mission will be organized yearly during March in order to jointly review and appraise the annual strategic implementation plan (ASIP) and the annual work plan and budget (AWPB) including the status of the program implementation. The co-ordination will be executed through the central line agencies.

The implementation strategy of basic and primary education will be as follows.

Pro-poor

Special programs focused on the poor, marginalized and the ethnic minorities for mainstreaming their children will be prioritized so that their capacity to choose appropriate socio-economic opportunity and bring new meanings to their life are increased.

Incentives and scholarships for children to attend schools and the income generation packages to subsidise the opportunity cost for the parents for sending their children to schools will constitute the main strategy for ensuring universal and free basic education.

Gender focused

The elimination of the persistent gender disparity is one of the main targets of the Government in basic and primary education. The revision of curricular materials and the teacher training materials for gender sensitivity, gender integration in the entire management for optimizing female participation will form the core of the strategy for gender parity. Creation of gender friendly environment in the schools (both physical and pedagogical) and the classroom practices will receive high priority. Special programs focused on the education of girls, especially of the disadvantaged and marginalized communities will be prioritized. Special efforts for generating a larger female teaching force and increasing their availability will be targeted so that even the remote areas will have female teachers. Affirmative initiatives with respect to salaries, accommodation and other factors will be launched. The policy of prioritizing the recruitment of female teachers in the vacant positions will be strengthened.

Holistic approach

School education will be addressed in a holistic manner, with a strong coordination between ECD, primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. The continuity of learning experiences will be ensured across all levels.

Good governance

Ownership, equity, transparency, accountability and efficiency are the indispensable elements of good governance, which form the main strategies for implementation of education programs.

The program will discourage all kinds of discriminations - ethnic, religious, ecological, cultural, socio-economic or of any other kind. The interest of even the voiceless people with multiple disadvantages will be well-taken into account and equity to all will be ensured. It will be guaranteed that no child and youth would be denied of quality basic education due to their inability to afford the cost of schooling.

Mechanisms for transparency and accountability will be imbedded in the program to ascertain that the resources are being spent under well-defined procedures for the right cause and are yielding the intended results. The implementation process will be simplified to the extent that the program is carried out with minimum cost, time and effort possible to deliver high quality service to the people.

New provisions will be implemented to strengthen management and administration of human resource, emphasizing performance, merit and competence as the main vehicle for development.

Decentralization

Decentralized planning will be the main implementation strategy for basic and primary education. A line of responsibility, authority and relationship between and among different administrative levels of government and the community level institutions such as the DDCs and DECs (District Education Committees), the VDCs and VECs, the schools and their SMCs (School Management Committees) including the roles of NGOs and CBOs will be clearly delineated.

The stakeholders will be empowered with knowledge, skills and resources in order to facilitate their genuine efforts to plan, manage, implement and monitor education activities.

An information-based planning and monitoring system, comprising an Annual Strategic Implementation Plan, District and Village Education Plans as well as School

Improvement Plans and Status Reports, will be the main vehicles for implementing and monitoring activities.

Support systems

Appropriate systems to support classroom practices and school management will be strengthened. This will include alternative modalities for the resource center system to allow innovative monitoring and support activities. Ownership of the resource centers by the school clusters will be prioritized. The actual learning and development of the child takes place in the classrooms and schools. This makes it obvious that funds to implement educational programs should be made available to the communities in order to ensure their control over the prioritization and utilization of resources.

Annual strategic implementation plan (ASIP)

ASIP will be the overall vehicle for planning and administration. ASIP is meant to be a compass for educational managers at all levels to plan, implement and monitor their activities guided by a clear insight into the policy framework and major strategies. It will take into account the total scenario of socio-economic, political and educational contexts, assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the past, threats and opportunities ahead.

ASIP will be providing guidelines continuously to the stakeholders at all levels by giving the long-term visions and missions, medium term goals and objectives and short-term targets. It will also deal with main strategies to be taken, detailed action plan to be followed, an overview of the resource requirement and the monitoring and procurement schedules. No activity will be undertaken unless it is required by ASIP. The expected outcome of the program is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Expected outcomes of the program

SN	Indicators	2000	2008/09
1	Gross enrolment rate of early childhood / pre school	13	51
2	Percentage of new entrants at grade 1 with ECD	11	60
3	Gross intake rate at grade 1	141	110
4	Net intake rate at grade 1	53.7[a]	95
5	Gross enrolment rate	120	104
6	Net enrolment rate	80	96
7	Percentage of gross national product channeled to primary education sub sector	1.8[b]	2.3
8	Percentage of total education budget channeled to Primary education sub sector	56.7[b]	60
9	Percentage of teachers with required qualification and training	15	99
10	Percentage of teachers with required certification		99
11	Pupil Teacher Ratio	37	37
12	Repetition Rate:		
	• Grade 1	42	10
	• Grade 5	11	3
	• Survival rate to Grade 5	63	85
	• Coefficient of efficiency	55	83
	• Percentage of learning achievement at grade 5	40	60
13	Literacy rate		
	• Age group 15-24	70[c]	82
	• Age group 6+ years	54[c]	73
	• Adult literacy rate (15+ years)	48[c]	76
	• Literacy gender parity index (15+ years)	0.6	0.9

Source: a, 1997, b. 1999, c. 2001 census

Problems and issues

Experience from BPEPII suggests that any future program must be responsive both to changing contexts and to lessons learned. Future support should adopt a flexible rolling budget, which nationally covers a five-year period corresponding to the 10th Five-Year Plan and MTEF (Mid Term Expenditure Framework). Outcomes for the education sector will be explicitly specified, based on a realistic assessment of the Government and local capacity, and these will be used to construct a program of activities. This program will be specified in a one year ASIP and Annual Work Plan

and Budget (AWPB), with annual reviews to monitor progress against outcomes and adjust strategy as necessary.

The human resource development plan prepared under the BPEPII and SEDP will be implemented. It is expected that the plan will be the best instrument for capacity building at the national, district, resource centers (RCs), and school levels. The capacity of the personnel at the different levels will certainly support the programs to bring changes in the achievement of students.

It is expected that the process of the bottom up planning with the involvement of the real stakeholders and the resources made available at the implementation side will have tremendous effect on the development of education in the country.

Partnerships between state, local authorities, civil society expressed and established in District Education Plans and social contracts between authorities and communities will facilitate the implementation of the program components.

Despite all these efforts, there are many issues (such as topographical situation, shortage of resources, and low capacity of the community) that need to be negotiated before moving ahead for the coming decades.

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