

TVET Teacher Licensing as key issue in Nepal

Anoj Bhattarai, 2014

Program Director, Curriculum Development Program, Training and Education Department,
Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI), Nepal

Abstract

Technical Education and Vocational Education (TVET) teacher licensing as an important educational quality policy issue has been emerging as a key issue in Nepal. Unlike in TVET sector, the government of Nepal has already established the teacher licensing system in general education at school level. The TVET policy-2012 of Nepal and now the strategic plan of CTEVT for 2014-2018 have highlighted this concern as one of the major strategies to address the quality issue of TVET in Nepal.

Currently, above 463 TVET providing institutions with around 10,000 TVET teachers produce about 30,000 graduates annually. The bitter reality is that, till date, there is no system to provide teaching license to these 10,000 above TVET teachers. Since the quality of TVET outcomes is determined by the role played by the TVET teachers, the government of Nepal should not delay to materialize licensing system for them.

Most of the developed countries have well established TVET teacher licensing system. Based on the licensing practices in the global context, the writer has suggested a simple but context specific TVET teacher licensing system so that the system could be materialized as far as possible without much hurdle.

Keywords: TVET teacher, licensing, technical education and vocational training

The Context

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) serving institutions of Nepal are contributing significantly for the sustainable development of the country. They produce skilled workforce for domestic as well as for the global market. On the other side of the coin, TVET sector of Nepal is always blamed for not producing competent and confident workforce who can easily accept the challenges of the 21st century; the workforce who can easily tackle the emerging problems related to their occupations, and who meet the needs of the domestic as well as global market or industry. In other words, TVET sector of Nepal is always blamed for not producing quality workforce who can meet the local and global challenges.

The quality of school graduates depend upon the quality of teaching and learning environment, the quality and relevancy of content, the degree of proficiency, the time allocated for learning, resources available and most importantly the quality of the teacher who imparts the knowledge, skills and attitude and provides a learning environment by applying different teaching methodologies. Ultimately, the quality of TVET outcomes is determined by the role played by the TVET teachers (Kurnia, 2013). Kafle (2001) also claims that the poor professional and pedagogical competency of TVET teachers is one of the major root-causes that prevents the production of effective and efficient workforce in Nepal. He has recommended for career-path and certification to enhance the professional and pedagogical competencies of TVET teachers.

The TVET policy of 2012 has also identified “Licensed trainers with industrial exposure” as

one of the major strategies to address the quality issue of TVET in Nepal. In addition, now the strategic plan of Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) for 2014-2018 has kept “Establish instructional licensing system by 2015” as one of the major strategies to achieve the goal “Ensure quality, relevant and efficient TVET system” (CTEVT, 2014).

Unlike in TVET sector, the government of Nepal has already established the provision of teacher licensing system in general education at school level. Teacher Service Commission (TSC) is mandated to provide the teaching license necessary to the candidates for the post of a teacher (Government of Nepal, 2010). National Center for Educational Development (NCED) Training Policy-2062 has also recognized teaching license as a pre-requisite for the teaching profession in the school system (ibid.). TSC has not covered the TVET sector in the present date and at the same time, the issue of TVET teacher licensing is taking impetus in Nepal. In this perspective, this paper scrutinizes the existing situation regarding licensing at both local and global context. In addition to that, the paper proposes a procedure to address the TVET teacher licensing issue in the TVET sector of Nepal.

Present status of TVET in Nepal

The Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) looks after both formal and non-formal TVET programs. CTEVT was constituted in 1989 as a national autonomous apex body for the policy formulation and coordination of the TVET programs in Nepal (Ghimire, 2013).

At present, apart from CTEVT, there are many other TVET serving organizations in Nepal. There are nine functioning universities in Nepal. Out of nine universities, most of the universities are producing middle to higher level technical workforce through their academic courses. In addition to these, there are three more academic institutions i.e. BP Koirala Institute of Health Science (BPKIHS), Karnali Swastha Bigyan Pratisthan, Patan Academy of Health Science (PAHS) and National Academy of Medical Science (NAMS) that run medical courses for undergraduate and post graduate levels.

Likewise, Department of Cottage and Small Industries, Department of Labor and Employment Promotion, other line agencies/ministries including national and international non-governmental organizations and private sectors are also providing vocational training programs and producing a significant number of graduates annually (Acharya, 2011).

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Among these organizations, CTEVT holds a large share. CTEVT caters both vocational and technical academic courses in Nepal (Khanal, 2013). Under CTEVT there are many private and public TVET providing institutions aiming to produce lower to middle level vocational and technical human resources (Karki, 2012). There are altogether 463 TVET providing institutions running in Nepal. 22 CTEVT constituted, 74 Technical Education Community Schools (TECS) schools and 367 CTEVT affiliated TVET providing institutions are conducting three years diploma programs, Technical School Leaving Certificate (TSLC) programs and a variety of market oriented short-term vocational training programs (CTEVT, 2013). These TVET providing institutions produce about 30,000 graduates annually (Lamichhane, 2013).

In addition to general stream, the government of Nepal has introduced a vocational stream

under the new system of school education as part of School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2015), which will enable students on a vocational track. In this vein, the TVET programs in Nepal are on full swing.

TVET teachers in Nepal

As a consequence of the aforementioned figure, the rapidly increasing number of TVET providing institutions obviously demand for qualified TVET teachers.

Adhikari (2012) claims that there are 10,000 TVET teachers in Nepal; out of them, 700 are working for CTEVT constituent schools, 300 for TECS schools, 8,000 for CTEVT affiliated private schools and rest for other TVET institutions.

Global trend on TVET teacher's licensing system

Teaching licensing also known as teacher certification is an important educational quality policy issue. It has the purpose of clearly differentiating between those who are “qualified” to teach and those who are not. It has implications for the stabilization and improvement of education workforce (World Bank, 2009).

As a result of a well structured TVET system, some of the countries such as Canada, Australia, Germany, Singapore, Japan, and Korea become global leaders in all aspects of their enterprise in a very short span of time. One of the key strategies used by these countries to foster their TVET sector is the establishment of TVET teachers licensing system (KOICA International Cooperation Agency, 2013).

South Korea

The South Korean education system follows a 6-3-3-4 ladder. The first nine years of schooling are compulsory for children aged between 6 and 15. Six years of primary schooling is followed by three years of middle school, three years of high school and four years of undergraduate education (Clark and Park, 2013). High schools split into three wings viz. general/academic, vocational, and special purpose such as foreign language, art, and science high schools. About 30 percent prefer to attend vocational schools (ibid.).

Vocational education is provided under the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Department as a formal education system. Vocational high schools provide secondary level education and junior colleges, the post-secondary level; whereas non-formal vocational trainings are carried out under the Ministry of Labor (Sinha, 2013).

The Korean government has made efforts to foster qualified teachers through various policies and support systems (Kim, Chung, and Kim, 2012). A person must acquire a teaching certificate in order to teach at a school. South Korea has established a number of degree granting teacher training institutions and non-degree granting teacher training institutions at national/public and private level. South Korea has set a policy to issue license or teaching certificate without examinations to those graduates who complete the prescribed graduation requirements from the nationally accredited teacher training institutions. The certificate specifies the school level for which the teacher is eligible to teach as well as the major and minor subjects s/he is authorized to teach (Ingersoll, et al., n.d.).

In my understanding, the Korean approach of granting teaching license automatically after the completion of prescribed academic degree or training may be adoptable in the TVET

sector of Nepal.

China

Formal education system in China is divided into three levels: primary, upper secondary and tertiary. Technical and vocational education takes place in upper secondary and tertiary level (Kurnia, 2013).

The requirements for vocational school teachers do not differ from those of general school teachers at the same level. Graduates from institutions of teacher education with Chinese language competencies at required standard are permitted to work directly in vocational schools. They do not need to go through licensing examination. On the contrary, the graduates from non-teacher-education need to pass some prescribed standard tests before joining the teaching force (ibid.). Korean and Chinese approaches are almost similar.

United States of America (USA)

Teaching license is mandatory in USA. Each state of USA is responsible to set the rules and provide certification and licensing to teachers through the state board of education or licensure advisory committee. Though the licensure requirements and certification vary from state to state, almost all the states agree that the candidates for teaching should at least have a bachelor's degree and completed an approved accredited education or training program (Roth and Swail, 2000). Teachers are required to complete a minimum number of hours of continuing education to renew their license (KOICA International Cooperation Agency, 2013).

Germany

Germany practices dual education system. Dual education system assures the availability of skilled workforce and reduces the financial dependency on the state by carrying out in two places of learning: workplace and vocational school (Adhikari, 2013). After completing the lower secondary level at the age of 15, students may choose general education stream or the vocational stream. Approximately two-thirds of an age cohort decides to go for vocational stream (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2012). Germany has two types of certified teaching professionals called teachers and trainers. University trained teachers are responsible to teach job-related theory and general education subjects, whereas master craftsperson or technicians are responsible to impart practical skills (Hensen and Hippach-Schneider, 2012).

State examination offices or Länder examination commissions are responsible to grant teaching license. According to Ordinance on Trainer Aptitude (AEVO), trainers in TVET are supposed to take an examination in order to become a certified trainer. Trainers must have a qualification in a subject area adequate to the training occupation (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2012).

One of the key policies mentioned in Nepal's TVET Policy 2012 is "sustainable financing" in TVET. Germany's model of dual system of education could be one of the strategies to obtain sustainable financing in TVET. Germany's education system gives due importance and recognition not only to formally educated workforce but also to traditionally and informally educated workforce. Nepal should learn from Germany.

Based on the aforementioned practices of different countries, it can be said that the

practices or the requirements for the licensing system gently vary from country to country. However, all the aforementioned countries are very much concerned with the quality of the teachers and have established teacher licensing system in their countries. On the flipside, unfortunately, some of the developing countries still allow teachers to enter the classroom without having pedagogical competencies, especially in TVET. In addition, most of the TVET teachers are fresh graduates who enter into the classroom without having sufficient industrial exposure. This situation fits especially in the TVET sector of Nepal.

In this regard, for the Government of Nepal, it could be wise decision to utilize its national autonomous apex body i.e. CTEVT before being too late to address the TVET teachers licensing issue.

CTEVT may develop a mechanism to issue TVET teacher license after the completion of a prescribed training from a nationally accredited TVET teacher training institution or some other means. One such nationally accredited TVET teacher training institution under CTEVT is Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI).

TITI is established in 1991 as a Nepali National Institute under the umbrella of CTEVT as a separate semi-autonomous institution mandated for the training and development of TVET teachers including principals, curriculum developers and community facilitators (Subedi, 2012). TITI is also running Bachelor Degree program in Technical Education (Government of Nepal, 2010), which aims to prepare individuals for careers in the private and public TVET sector at the level of TVET teachers in technical subject areas. TITI aims to contribute to the upgrading of quality standards in the entire TEVT system of Nepal. In this regard, under the guidance of CTEVT, TITI could be a fast-track destination to address the issue of TVET teachers licensing system.

Proposed procedure for TVET teacher licensing in Nepal

Based on the global trend regarding teacher licensing, the writer would like to propose the following simple procedure for TVET teacher licensing in Nepal.

After receiving legal authority from the Government of Nepal to issue the license to TVET teachers, CTEVT establishes a separate TVET teacher license issuing unit (TVETTLIU) or delegate an authority to TITI to work as TVETTLIU.

TVETTLIU forms a permanent TVET teacher license issuing (TVETTLI) committee comprises of the authorized representatives from the Ministry of Education, University, CTEVT itself and from other authorities as decided. The committee invites subject matter specialists as per requirement. The committee is mainly responsible to make necessary policies and guidelines, form different sub-committees, set criteria for licensing, and issue teaching license based on the recommendation made by TVETTLIU. TVETTLIU is responsible to organize and administer licensing tests, organize committee meetings and recommend for issuing license.

Figure 1: Proposed criteria for TVET teacher licensing

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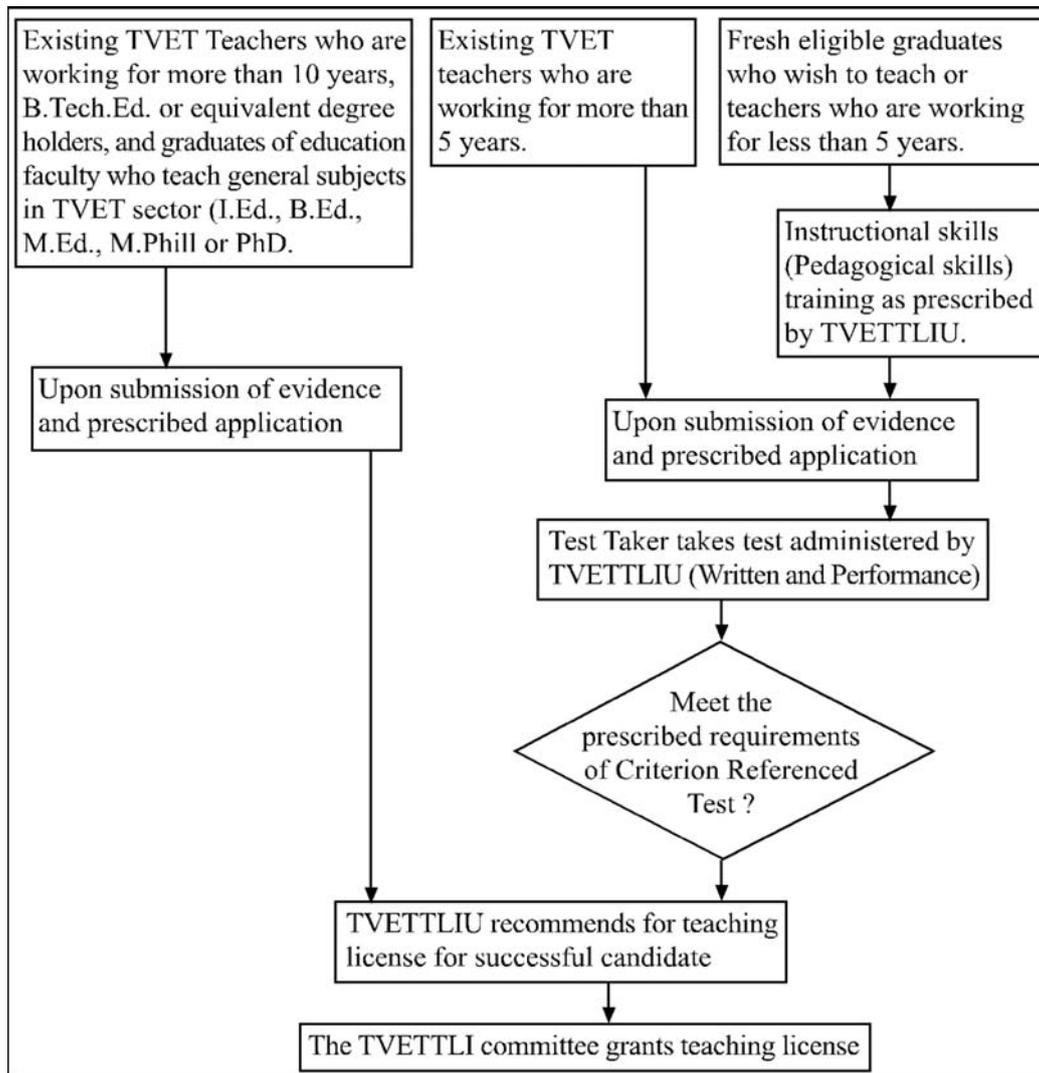


Figure 1 shows the proposed criteria for TVET teaching license for Nepal. Existing TVET teachers who are working for more than 10 years, Bachelor of Technical Education (B. Tech. Ed) or equivalent degree holders from the recognized university, and graduates of education subjects who teach general subjects in TVET sector (I.Ed, B.Ed, M.Ed, M.Phill or PhD) are simply granted subject wise teaching license provided that they produce required evidence with a prescribed application.

TVETILIU may apply the same procedure for all level of TVET teachers and issue the teaching license. This approach is based on the philosophy that the pedagogical competencies should be the same for any position or the level of the applicant. In this case, the test items should be designed considering the questions/performance related to pedagogical competencies only.

As an alternative approach, there will be four categories of TVET teaching license based on the level or position of the applicant. Teaching aids or equivalent of TVET providers are eligible for level I, assistant instructors or equivalent are eligible for level II, instructors

or equivalent are eligible for level III and senior instructors or equivalent are for level IV. TVETTLIU designs tests for various levels of TVET teachers covering both pedagogical and trade-wise competencies.

Existing TVET teachers, who are working for less than 10 years and more than five years, need to take prescribed test administered by TVETTLIU. The test will have two parts i.e. written and performance. Test taker needs to clear written test prior to performance test. In case of failure in tests, individual will be allowed to participate in licensing test only after 3 months.

Fresh eligible graduates who wish to teach or teachers who are working for less than five years should have to go through additional instructional skills (Pedagogical skills) training as prescribed by TVETTLIU prior to the test. Rest of the procedure will be same as for others. In the same way, all the categories of TVET teachers need to renew their license within one year of expiry date. The license will be valid for five years. Nevertheless, all the TVET teachers of all level no matter whether they are from private or public TVET providers must hold the teaching license.

One point to be noted here is that the licensed TVET teachers will be allowed to teach their own subjects only; and the level depends upon their qualification and position they hold in their own place. Licensing only ensures the competencies to teach NOT the level and position.

Closure

The TVET sector of Nepal is on full swing and contributing significantly not only to national but also for the global context by producing about 30,000 graduates annually. For this, the TVET sector of Nepal requires more than 10,000 teaching workforce. Despite this much contribution, it is always blamed that the poor professional and pedagogical competency of TVET teachers is one of the major root-causes that prevent the production of effective and efficient workforce. The bitter reality is that Nepal does not have any kind of licensing system for TVET teachers, so far and it might be one of the measures to ensure quality instruction. Most of the TVET teachers enter into the classroom without having pedagogical competencies. At the same time, less concern is given for career-path and certification to enhance the professional and pedagogical competencies of TVET teachers.

Some of the countries such as Canada, Australia, Germany, Singapore, Japan, and Korea become global leaders in all aspects of their enterprise in a very short span of time. One of the key strategies used by these countries to foster their TVET sector is the establishment of TVET teachers licensing system. In this perspective, it is obvious to raise the issue of TVET teacher licensing also in Nepal. Some of the donor agencies, for example, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) have shown its interest for the establishment of TVET teacher licensing system in Nepal. CTEVT, as a leading TVET provider can be authorized by Nepal Government for the establishment of TVET teacher licensing system in Nepal.

After reviewing the licensing practices of some of the countries, the writer has proposed a simple procedure for TVET teacher licensing system. Nevertheless, whatever the approach or the procedure will be, the establishment of the TVET teacher licensing system is the main issue that should be resolved as soon as possible for the betterment of TVET sector

of Nepal.

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