

Educational Wastage at Primary Education in Nepal : Some Major Ways to address them

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Abstract

The article entitled, "Problems of Educational Wastage at Primary Education System in Nepal; Some Major Ways to address them" presents the meaning of educational wastage of the education system. Promotion, repetition and dropout are the prominent indicators of internal efficiency of the education system. Students' high repetition and high dropouts are the burden for any nation, rich or poor. They are the stumbling block for every nation. These are the great loss of investment of government in the field of education. These losses are harmful for the educational system in the country.

The article presents the parents' influential role for creating children's education. Parents can motivate and encourage their children to go to school for their future career, because they are one of the key aspects of progress of their children. Promotion, repetition and dropout rates of primary education in 2011–012, are presented as the major indicators of internal efficiency and contributing factors to wastage in education. Some major ways are suggested to reduce the increasing repetition and dropout rates of students, because they are the main barriers of any nation, rich or poor, Decreasing promotion rates of boy and girl students are the burden for any developing country like ours. Hence, increase of promotion rates of students is a concern for any developing country like Nepal.

Repetition and dropout, are the educational loss, educational discrepancies and interruption at primary education system.

The Context

In 1990, a world conference on "Education for All" was held at Jomtien city of Thailand, which has been considered as a matter of human right in the changing context. In fact, education is needed for the formation of civilized society. It is known that to-day's children are tomorrow's pillars of nation. It is parents' accountability to make them capable, efficient and skill oriented by providing appropriate education. After completing education, they fulfill wills of nation in every field. But, in developing country like ours, parents do not send their wards to school because of economic, social, family and environmental conditions.

More specifically, students' high repetition and dropouts are the burden for any nation and both are stumbling block for every nation. These are the great loss of investment of government in the field of education. These losses are harmful for the educational system in the country, because they decrease internal efficiency of school system. Many children are bound to repeat in the same grade or dropout, for many reasons such as poor economic conditions, low family status, lack of geographical and transport facilities in the remote area schools. Thus, it is more challenging issue in how to keep children engaged in study up to primary level (Grade I- V).

It is collective responsibility of all to achieve satisfactory output/results from investment made in education. Hence, one of the major challenging issues seen in the field of education is educational wastage. Indeed, this problem is seen more at the primary level of education. Educational suggests that consists of dropouts, repeaters (Poudel, 1997: 12–13). The

implication of such wastage reflects the poor internal efficiency of a school.

Meaning of Wastage in Education

The investment of nation in education, if wasted without achievement of target, is called the educational wastage. In this reference, failure in examination from time to time, grade repetition and dropout are considered to be the wastage in education. They are the huge educational wastage of nation, rich or poor.

Despite heavy investment in education, the outcome is not seen satisfactory as expected by the nation. Nepalese students of three ecological regions i.e. Mountain Hill, Terai have different backgrounds, different culture, religion, caste and circumstances. In this vein, children are facing tremendous problems especially in rural and remote areas of developing countries like Nepal.

In connection to this, different studies and reports have corroborated that to complete primary level education, it takes 9- 12 years of schooling with the investment of Rs. 11510 for a student (1995/96). From this, we can conclude that the investment made by the government in the primary education seems not fruitful, productive and useful (CERID, 1999: 79 - 89).

Research reports and studies have shown that a large section of people are adamant, economically feeble and ignorant of value of education. In this perspective, parents hesitate to send their children to school, because of their economic constraints; children are also aupair (i.e. they are bound to work at others' home for their livelihood) and they are in miserable condition.

In such condition, due to economic and financial problems, parents use their children for their additional income and for the care of their younger siblings at the time of their absence at school. Consequently, number of students will be decreased. In order to focus the attention of students on their study, teachers should have to play pivotal and dynamic role. Hence, teachers can motivate them toward their students and engage them to do homework at home. In this scenario, teachers' efficiency is a must to help reduce the educational wastage in primary education, such as dropout, repetition and absenteeism. The Table 1 and Figure – 1 below show the promotion, repetition and dropout rates in 2011-012, which can also be indicators of internal efficiency of primary level education system in Nepal.

They also show Grade wise flow rate of students from school year 2011 – 012 to 2012 – 013 for primary grades. Those flow rates present the evaluation of internal efficiencies of the students as well as the overall effectiveness of the inputs provided. These figures illustrate that total students enrolled in the school year 2011–012 in Grade –1, 72.5 % were promoted to Grade two – 19.9% repeated the same Grade in the current school year and 7.6 % dropped out from the school education system.

On the other hand, altogether 27.5 % of the total enrolled students in Grade One of last school year could not continue in Grade Two. Although the promotion rate has improved as compared to the previous school year, it still demonstrates a huge wastage of the inputs provided. However, the promotion rates for upper grades (Grades 2 to 5) are better than for Grade One. It is also indicated that the promotion rates for girls, as compared to that of boys, are slightly better in all grades. This trend has been continued since the school year 2007. The average survival rate to Grade 5 is 84.1 with 85.0 for girls and 83.0 for boys.

This reveals higher than the previous school year (82.8), while the co-efficient of internal efficiency is 76.6 percent (compared to 75.2 %) of the previous school year) of this 77.1 is for girls and 76.6 for boys. Likewise, the cohort graduation rate at primary level is 75.0 % (compared to 73.6 % of the previous school year)with 76.0 %) for girls and 74.5 % for boys, which suggests that out of 100 new students enrolled in Grade One in the school year 2007-08, altogether 75. % of the students successfully completed the primary level in the school year 2011- 012)

Table 1: Promotion, repetition and dropout rates at primary level education in 2011-012.

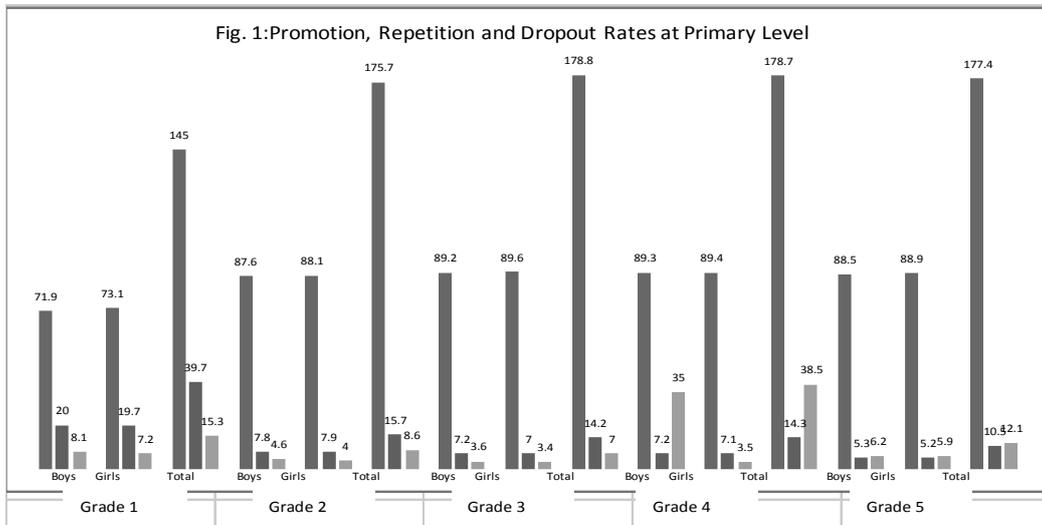
In percentage

	PRD	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Total of Grades 1-5
	Promotion	72.5	87.8	89.4	89.4	88.7	84.2
	Repetition	19.9	7.9	7.1	7.1	5.3	10.6
	Dropout	7.6	4.3	3.5	3.5	6.0	5.2
Total	Survival Rate to Grades					84.1	
	Co efficient of internal efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	76.6
	Cohort Graduation Rates						75.0
	Promotion	71.9	87.6	89.2	89.3	88.5	83.9
	Repetition	20.0	7.8	7.2	7.2	5.3	10.6
	Dropout	8.1	4.6	3.6	3.5	6.2	5.5
Boys	Survival Rate to Grades					83.0	
	Co efficient of internal efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	76.6
	Cohort Graduation Rates						74.5
	Promotion	73.1	88.1	89.6	89.4	88.9	84.5
	Repetition	19.7	7.9	7.0	7.1	5.2	10.5
	Dropout	7.2	4.0	3.4	3.5	5.9	5.0
Girls	Survival Rate to Grades					85.0	
	Co efficient of internal efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	77.1
	Cohort Graduation Rates						76.0

(Source: DOE, Flash 1 Report,2012- 013)

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(Source: DOE, Flash 1 Report, 2012- 013)

In nutshell, the above Table –1and Figure 1 reveals that girl’s promotion rates of Grade 1-5 are increasing higher than the boy’s promotion rate. On the other hand, girl’s repetition rates and dropout rates are also slightly decreasing boy’s compared to that of repetition and dropout rates. It indicates that boy students are behind the girl students in their promotion, repetition and dropout rates.

Similarly, Table 1 and Figure – 1 show the survival rate to Grade 5 boys as being 83.0 % and 85.0% for girl students. It indicates the girl students are ahead of boy students in survival rate.

Likewise, boys’ coefficient of internal efficiency is 76.6 % and 77.1 % for girl students, which shows boy students are behind the girl students.

The Cohort Graduation Rates of boy students in the year 2012-013 was 74.5% against that of girl students which was 76,0% in the same year, indicates the boy students are also behind the girl students in the question of Cohort Graduation Rates. This is an encouraging trend of a developing country like ours.

Present Situation of Children in Nepal

School is regarded as a holy place, a symbol of social civilization. In this way, primary school is the place where 6 –10 year old children get formal education. Primary school going children come from different cultural and economic settings. They belong to different castes/ethnicities and religious/language communities. In Nepal, children are facing several problems related to topography and transport. For various reasons, including this, students dropout and repeat the same grade. This is not an easy task to stop. Hence, teachers and community people should make the parents aware to send their children to school. They should have to provide different incentives and making environment students friendly come to school. In the same way, most of the parents in remote areas do not send their wards to school because they are unaware and unconscious about the value and significance of education. They send their children to earn for the family. Their argument is that if the child goes to school the family income level will slide down. Because of their poor family economy, parents are in busy meeting their basic needs, such as food, shelter and clothing.

In this scenario, they are compelled to engage their children in household works, e.g. take care of siblings and animal grazing (CERID, 1988).

Nepal is one of the poor countries. So, to meet both ends and means people are forced to labor. Unless and until the problems of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy are solved, educational loss will continue.

In addition, many children from poor families cannot afford to buy the basic materials they need for school and are in no case convinced that education will be of use to them. A most discouraging aspect of the whole situation is that a large proportion of those children who manage to complete their primary schooling are not up to much in terms of learning achievement at the end of five years (UNICEF, 1998).

The school hour is only at the day time. The grown-- up children, who are supposed to help their parents may feel uneasy to go to school. In the months of June–July and November–December, the students don't seem to go to school (CERID, 1999). To solve this problem, sponsoring of morning or evening classes will be better for their study. From this, wastage in education can be reduced to minimum.

The illiteracy rate of Nepal is higher in the castes, such as Damai, Kami, Sarki, Limbu, Magar, Gurung, Chepang, Praja, and Raute; they have their own native languages. So, they feel difficulty to study standard Nepali language. And hence, many students are forced to leave the school. If the medium of instruction is made into the native language for them, educational loss can be reduced.

Parents' Role in Children's Education

Parents are one of the key aspects of the progress of their children. In this context, parents are regarded as the children's first and influential teachers, because children spend more time at home than at school, and the parents wield a very strong influence over their learning.

Several studies support that the home is regarded as the child's first school; it influences as well as contributes greatly to a child in s/ her studies. Hence, it is very important that congenial environment at home be created that can help a child to learn and can make him/her inquisitive to explore the world's learning and knowledge. Likewise, a child can make more progress and that also in the right direction, if s/he gets all possible assistance in her/his study from home. Thus, there is a strong case for sensitizing the parents also to the need for assuming their role in supporting children's education at home (Malakar, 1989- 90: 143 –144).

Similarly, Malakar (1989–90 : 142–143) further states that the teaching techniques, the materials, the teaching time allotted to each pupil, and the parental level of awareness and their active involvement in child's teaching – learning at home are other equally important factors. The supply or the facility of having access to a large number of reference books and other instructional materials is yet another factor that exert a great deal of influence on the child's cognitive development and academic attainments. All these factors play their part in motivating or de- motivating the child to learn.

Likewise, children are more likely to attend schools regularly while their parents provide the kind of support that is needed to be regular in schools. They have to encourage and motivate children to attend schools. Families, which are involved in their children's schooling, tend to support children with their homework (Hada, 2004:153).

Lack of general awareness is also one of the strong factors in causing educational wastage in education. Poverty, on one hand, and illiteracy on the other hand, make the parents hardly aware of the importance of sending their children to school. Even, if the children are enrolled in the school, because of the provision of free primary education and free distribution of textbooks at least in the initial grades, the parents do not show any seriousness in having their children to go to school on a regular basis. Hence, such attitudes of parents results in school absenteeism, lack of punctuality, interruption in class attendance, and in most cases, eventual dropout (CERID, 1988: 33). Thus, parents can play very sensitive role for the future career of their children.

In connection to this, Mehta (1995:29) stressed the socio- economic system, which generates and perpetuates poverty as the most inhibiting factor in the universalization of education. It is futile to talk of parental and children's apathy towards education in isolation of certain important socio- economic variables, which really cause such an apathy. The same is true of parental fears and security as well as for the need of children to start work at an early period of life. A study has found that children withdraw from school so that they could do domestic and/or some other 'gainful' works. The apparent "causes" are therefore, not the real causes of school dropout. These can be understood only in a proper conceptual perspective. Hence, parents can play creative role to send their children to school.

For instance, Winters(1993) has viewed that positive neutral patterns in the children's education is one of the eight critical parenting skills. He further stated that every society ought to educate and care of their own children so as to make them fit for the society.

In this vein, parents can help their children to do their homework, talk with them about schoolwork and take part in class teaching or assisting responsibilities (Lyons, Robbins and Smith, 1982, cited in Bista, 2003:146).

In this, regard, parental involvement in education seems to be more an important influence, school environment and the influence of peers (Tripathi, 2010). The benefits of parental involvement in children's education have long been recognized. Parents play a crucial role in influencing the aspirations and achievements of their children.

Several studies and research reports have shown that most of the parents of urban area are better educated than the parents of rural areas of Nepal. Therefore, they play the role of a teacher for their children. Monitoring, school tutoring, effective use of time to study at home, creating positive environment, providing material facilities, participating in decision making committees, discussing with the teachers the progress and problems of children are the aspects that may be incorporated within level of parental involvement. Hence, educational wastage can be reduced to minimum through parental involvement.

In this scenario, Panda (2001:21) argued that parental involvement refers to the interest shown by parents in the studies of their children at home exhibiting positive attitude toward school and education, performing activities which are co-operating in promoting students' achievement, academic, non - academic and exuding genuine willingness to participate in the activities sponsored by school.

In this vein, students value their education, when they see the interest shown by their parents. From the above information, it can be concluded that parents 'influential role in educating their children is a must as they can motivate and encourage doing homework and playing sensitive role to reduce educational wastage in primary education system in the

changing perspectives of Nepal.

Factors Contributing to Wastage in Education

National studies have pointed out many causes and factors, both internal and external related to educational wastage in the country. Non –enrolment, absenteeism, repetition, dropout, low achievement and insufficient utilization of resources for education are some of the key factors contributing to the educational wastage in the country's school education system. For example, China's definition of external factors include levels of socio – economic development, cultural traditions and values, geographical conditions, family background and socio-economic status etc. Similarly, the internal factors include the philosophy of education, material conditions, pattern and distribution of schools, teaching force, teaching materials and methods and so on.

The wastage in this study is also reduce to high repetition and high dropout, parents' ignorance of value of education, unfavorable teaching learning environment, teachers failure to use the methods and techniques learnt in the training period.

Similarly, low enrolment, large majority of students lacking interest in learning and parents' poor attention toward their children's study are the other noticeable causal factors contributing to educational wastage in primary education system in Nepal.

Likewise, overwhelming majority (80 % and above) of children from poor families cannot afford to buy the basic materials they need for school and are in no case convinced that education will be of any use to them. A most discouraging aspect of the whole situation is that a large proportion of those children who manage to complete their primary schooling are not up to much in terms of learning achievement at the end of five years (UNICEF, 1998).

Political turbulence is elusive in Nepal. Differences and vested interests of the political parties and the government have badly affected the well functioning of the education system of Nepal. The primary schools have not remained untouched by political turbulence. Strikes, Nepal close, valley close, black out, torch rallies and other various forms of disruptive demonstrations have negated the efficiency of teaching learning situation of the primary schools (Hada, 2008: 180).

Major Ways and future direction to Reduce Wastage in Education

Many problems affect the educational wastage in our country, Nepal. In this scenario, poverty

and illiteracy are the major barriers/ enemy of educational wastage. Hence, Following are the some major ways to reduce the educational wastage are outlined as following :

- Physical facilities affect the teaching – learning situation in school. Primary schools are government oriented; because of lack of physical facilities, teaching learning situation will not be effective and meaningful. In order to reduce the wastage in education, school should well manage the physical facilities for the amelioration of teaching learning environment. In connection to this, local resources, such as no cost and low cost materials are also to be mobilized for effectiveness of learning environment.
- It is an absurdity in the society, that sons and daughters are looked from different angles. Daughters are regarded as a tool that must be handed one to somebody in the future. So, parents are not ready to pay a large amount to send their daughters to expensive

schools. The daughters are sent to the kitchen and other household works, whereas the sons are free. It is also one of the major issues behind dropout and repetition.

- Though it is said public primary schools are free of cost, the parents are compelled to pay extra fees, such as admission fee, examination fee, library fee, maintenance fee etc. The poor parents are unable to pay all the fees and eventually, the students' dropout. It has been a burning issue facing public primary schools. Hence, the government should adopt the policy strictly for the school. This will also enhance to reduce educational wastage to minimum.
- The incidence of students' absence in class is high, because of geographic and transport difficulties. On the other hand, due to flooded rivers and streams, small children cannot go to school in the rainy season. The major problem of rural and remote areas of Nepal is the lack of roads. Hence, Nepal government should pay serious attention in this regard to reduce the educational wastage in primary education (Hada, 2010: 41).
- Supervision is essential and indispensable to enhance effective and meaningful teaching learning situation. But in the context of Nepal, supervisors do not seem to supervise and give suggestions to the teachers. As a result, the effective and meaningful teaching learning environment can't be expected. And in turn, it increases educational wastages. In order to reduce it, to increase the percentage of literacy and to standardize the education, supervision is vital and indispensable. Monitoring and supervision from time to time from supervisors give the good results to improve students' teaching in the school education system. Hence, supervisors play the dynamic and commendable role to provide right directions to make classroom teaching effective and meaningful as well.
- Teacher plays a significant and pivotal role in the education system. But in the remote areas of Nepal, there is the scarcity of trained and qualified teachers. The efficient teachers prefer to teach in the cities. If the educational standard does not go in perfect harmony with developmental process of the world, the products of education will be unable to face the complex situations (Uprety, 1997: 03). So, providing special incentives, the efficient teachers are to be motivated to the remote areas.
- In the remote areas of Nepal, the books, other supporting documents and materials don't seem to reach on time. As a result, students lose interest in the study and may leave the school. To overcome this problem, the government should be conscious on time.
- Parents can do many things at home to help their children do well in schools. They do this through their daily conversation, household routines, attention to school matters, and affectionate concern for their children's progress.
- Parents should frequently visit the school where their children study and contact the head teacher or concerned teacher. This will help them keep on good track their children's condition.
- The home environment should be healthy and clean, and if possible, a separate quiet corner should be provided for the children to study at home (Malakar, 1989: 150-151).
- Distributing free textbooks, school dress and nutrition at interval will also encourage and motivate the parents to send their children in school and definitely educational loss can be reduced to minimum and enrolment of boy and girl students can be increased. Provision of incentives, scholarships and other facilities such as for the poor, Dalit and

Janajati students, hostel facilities for poor and bonafide and deserving students will help their study.

Concluding Remarks

Home- school communication is a key to children's academic success. There must be free flow of information between school and parents with all the activities. In this context, school must provide information on their children's learning or behavior to all the parents. When the problems arise in school or classroom, teachers should also involve parents in solving these problems through discussions and interactions with the parents. For example, some schools bring out bulletins or newsletter to inform parents about school activities. These formal means of communication are conducive to motivate the parents to send their children to school. From this educational wastage can be reduced to minimum.

It is known to all that Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) has conducted many awareness programs in resource centers and districts. In addition, we can activate School Management Committee (SMC), operate students' interaction programs, aid poor and intelligent students, do punctual teaching, provide students' report to the parents from time to time and operate attractive public awareness programs regularly.

The behavior of teachers and parents to the students should be moulded and friendly. Because of teachers' polite behavior, the students are motivated and or prohibited to go to school. If this situation is created continuously, it is certain that educational wastage can be reduced.

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