

Focus on Classroom: An Overview of Teacher Education and Training Programme in Changing Scenario of Nepal

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Abstract

The article entitled, 'Focus on Classroom: An Overview of Teacher Education Programme in the Changing Scenario of Nepal' discusses the teachers' efficiency and capability through teacher education programme in Nepal. Teacher education is for the improvement of quality education. Thus, the quality education depends upon the quality of teacher, which is more possibly from teacher education. For effective and meaningful classroom teaching, teacher education must emphasize on discussion, demonstration and practice, provision of materials and practice on materials use during training. For the freshness of teachers, provision of refresher training, short term training, seminars, discussion and interaction programmes must be conducted by District Education Office (DEO) and class supervision from time to time is essential and indispensable for effective and meaningful teaching.

Key Words

Teacher education, Teacher education and training programme, Transfer of teacher, Training/ education skills, Quality of training

The Context

Teacher Education is a system of preparing individuals for effective educational transactions including classroom teaching. Teaching is thus a pivotal aspects of teacher education, unfolds a world of knowledge, information, experiences and values related to human beings. A teacher needs teacher education to be able to transmit knowledge, skills and attitude to the learners (the students) in a more meaningful way.

Teacher education is for the improvement of quality education. Acquiring, developing and retaining competent teacher is the key function of educational management. Thus, the quality education depends upon the quality of teacher, which is more possible through teacher training/ education, because a trained teacher can motivate the students to learn. In this reference, Shrestha (2007)'s notion was that the teacher is the foundation of education. Hence, teacher education programme has the greatest accountability. Teacher is the change agent of society. So, the quality of education mainly depends upon the quality of teachers. Teachers should be updated with the explosion of knowledge (Bhandari, 2068: 207- 208).

In this context, Sharma (1997: 17) opined his view that it is rightly pointed it out that the qualitative improvement of a society depends primarily upon good teachers and their qualitative teaching. The progress of a country depends upon the quality of teachers and for this reason;

२९७

Teacher Education 2072

teaching is the noblest among all professions.

In nutshell, for the improvement of classroom teaching, teacher education is most compulsory for those teachers, who are punctual and daily engaged in the classroom for the future career of the students. Hence, teacher education plays the pivotal role to teachers for the effective classroom teaching.

Development / An Overview of Teacher Education and training Programme in Nepal.

In general, the definition of teacher education is that it is the behaviour shaping, because it makes the teacher perfect in classroom teaching. The trained teacher thus can influence the learners (the students) through the delivery of effective as well as meaningful learning experiments to the students (Hada, 2065 B.S. : 109).

It is known from the previous history of teacher education that teaching is basically regarded as a temporary work for untrained people. The growth of public education was created as a critical shortage of trained teachers and was a need for more efficient as well as capable mechanism for training for teachers and measuring their effectiveness in standardized ways as it was required. In this scenario, the development of normal schools as teacher education institutions have served in most countries of the world to fulfill this need. Despite the expansion of teacher training, shortage of qualified teachers continue to be a serious problem in many countries of the world (Pandit, 2004: 39).

Nepal has moved through a myriad of teacher education system over the years since the dawn of democracy in 1950 A.D. In this reference the first teacher training institution was established in Nepal in 1949 A.D. to train teachers for Basic Schools (about 55 schools). However, the training programme was discontinued in 1953 A.D. In order to improve the higher education, the College of Education was established in 1956 A.D., a first degree granting college for teacher education programme was a milestone in the history of education in Nepal. The College of Education provided One year and four year B.Ed. courses to produce teachers for secondary schools and simultaneously, the Mobile Normal Schools (Primary Teacher Training Centers (PTTC) ran the 10 month primary school teacher training programme to train the primary school teachers of Nepal. In 1962 A.D. permanent Teacher Training Centers were established on replacing the network of the Normal Schools in the country (Kaffle and Aryal, 2000: 114—115). In this situation, the Normal Schools trained about 900 teachers during the years of 1956 and 1971 A.D. (Rana, 2007: 27).

Similarly, Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC, 1954) mentioned in its report that the teacher is a key stone to success and failure of education; it creates (or fails to create) the wholesome educational environment essential to success (Bhatt, 2007: 66).

Likewise, All Round National Education Committee (ARNEC, 1961 A.D.) suggested better salary and more primary training programme for teachers and National Education System Plan (NESP, 197A.D.) was the corner stone of the educational history of Nepal. NESP, 1971 made the teacher training mandatory and differentiates between trained and untrained teacher. Teacher training campaign has been launched over the country. Some of the teacher education

२९८

Teacher Education 2072

programme efforts of 1970's and 1980's were mentionable in the educational history of Nepal.

Regarding the issue of teacher education programme, in-service and pre-service certificate level and Bachelor level was imparted in lower secondary and secondary level teachers under T.U. Faculty of Education, short period, on-the spot programme is being run by Ministry of Education (MOE).

In spite of these developments, measures, and changes, management of individual schools at the local level remained basically unaffected in general. The schools established by people to be remained by the School Management Committees. The government maintained the policy of partial assistance for schools operated under private or community support. It continued to provide differential annual financial grants to schools. The SMC's had responsibility and authority to generate funds to operate schools to appoint teachers and fix payment of salaries (Shrestha, 1982, cited in Sharma, 2008: 192). At that time, the financial sources of schools were primarily the student fees and donation of land by some wealthy families or landowners.

In line with this, the NESP, 1971 brought noticeable structures as well as administrative changes in the educational system of changing scenario of Nepal, because NESP, 1971 was an outcome of experiences and recommendations made by various commissions and experts. Through NESP for the first time investment in education was officially recognized as an investment in national development.

After the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990 A.D., education system of Nepal was restructured according to the report of the National Education Commission (NEC, 1992).

Keeping in view with the concept of teacher education programme, National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) implemented teacher training policy in 2005 A.D. In-service teacher training of first and the third phases of 2.5 month duration in face to face mode and 5 month training from distance mode to primary teachers were offered through Educational Training Centers (ETCs). After completion of all three training packages through NCED, it provided 10 month teacher training certificate to the participating teachers.

Regarding the issue of teacher education, Faculty of Education (FOE) of the Tribhuvan University became the key provider of lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary school teachers through its constituent and affiliated campuses. FOE, T.U is producing B.Ed. and M.Ed. degree holder prospective teachers and M. Phil or Ph. D. level experts.

In line with is, Kathmandu University (K.U.) School of Education offers post graduate diploma, M.Ed. , M. Phil and Ph.D. in education and Purwanchal University (P.U.)also offers B. Ed and M.Ed. degrees. In the same way, Nepal Sanskrit University (N.S.U) has also been operating the Faculty of Education up to graduate level for producing the efficient and capable manpower in education (Bhandari, 2011: 212). On the other hand, Ministry of Education (MOE) started School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP, 2009 - 2015) and under it Teacher Professional Development (TPD) plan is put into effect.

३९९

Situation of Transfer of Teacher Training/ Education Skills

After the implementation of School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) by Department of Education (DEO), NCED has designed Teacher Professional Development (TPD) Module, which is expected that within five years, one month training will be given to all teachers. TPD Module training is of 10 days credit and is divided into three parts; the first part is face to face made for five days between trainer and trainees at TPD hubs. Similarly, the second is self study exercise, which operates for teachers in their working schools for three days credit. Likewise, the third part of TPD Module is instructional counseling run in its hubs by mentors and expert instructors. In addition, expert efforts are made to facilitate the teachers over the difficulties in their teaching learning activities. The third part is mainly focused on the issues or problems encountered by teachers during their self study exercise. TPD is thus taken as the demand driven training module and seeks / endeavors to address the teachers' day to day professional problems on the spot through the adaptation of bottom up approach as well (Upadhyaya, 2014 : 96). Various studies conducted by NCED (July 2000 a; July, 2000b; July, 2002a; July, 2002 b; 2005) ,CERID (July, 2000a), MOE(1997,and 1999) and PEDP (1993)have reported that the skills covered in the training are not transferred in the actual classroom teaching learning in an intended degree. The present article focuses what is teacher education? What are its benefits for present working teachers? It also examines the aspects that affect transfer of training skills in classroom.

Quality of Training

Quality of training is related to the trainer (provider) and receivers (trainees/ teachers). Training should be able to convince the receivers (trainees/ teachers) that skills covered in the training can help to make a change in the classroom teaching learning. Teachers need to witness and be convinced about what works and what doesn't during the training. Hence, demonstration and practice will provide such opportunity. It is also important to ensure proper and consistent practice of skill during training (Singh, 2007: 59).

Relapsing the old habits of teachers is also a reason for nonuse of the training skills. In this situation, old habit doesn't go away easily. The data published by DOE in different times shows that 98 % teachers are trained in primary schools of Nepal and they are teaching for a number of years. But they have not endeavor to reform their old habits. Hence, they might have reformed their own habits and ways as well as style of teaching what might not be compatible with the techniques / methods provided in the training . New techniques / methods pile up on the base of old ones that might be contradictory at times. This might create confusion and inadequate internalization leading to relapsing the old habits. Hence, training needs to help to unlearn old ones, learn new ones with the provision of relearning and teacher needs to be both convinced as well as confident about suggested techniques / methods (ibid. , 2007 ; 59). Similarly, self-reading materials and need based refresher training are often useful fo broader perspective and wider coverage to teachers for the effectiveness of classroom teaching. And it will also be conducive for the teachers to demonstrate the practice and internalize skills, if focus is on basic skills that are essential for the classroom delivery.

What Lessons can be Learnt? Some Major Solutions to be Addressed

It is known from above mentioned information that teacher education is essential and indispensable for the effective classroom delivery in the changing scenario of Nepal. In this situation, good and trained teachers are always required for the overall development of nation, they are the corner stone of education, future career of the students and the reformer of whole society as well.

In spite of all these things, following some major solutions are required for the amelioration of teacher education programme in Nepal:

- Teacher education must stress on discussion, demonstration and practice, provision of materials and practice on materials use during training. There is need to discourage the tendencies of ‘let us get the information and knowledge and we will do it later’. The provision of follow up and technical backstopping is thus equally significant (Hada, 2010: 154).
- School and classroom atmosphere have to be improved to ensure interaction among the teachers and students and to facilitate student engagement in learning activities with teacher taking the facilitation role. There must be availability of more instructional materials (Bajracharya, 2008: 150). In this situation, utilizing more instructional materials by teachers in the classroom may definitely lead to meaningful learning for the students.
- Regular parent –teacher interaction is needed to strengthen relations which in turn contribute to effective ways for meaningful teaching learning atmosphere.
- Teaching learning activity cannot take place in vacuum and it will not be fruitful in such place. The teaching performance is thus considered meaningful; when students learn what a teacher teaches in a classroom. For this, the teacher needs to use different evaluation techniques (tools) in the classroom. Hence, the effectiveness of teaching performance is assessed on the basis of evaluation techniques used by teachers in classroom along with the other aspects of teaching (Shrestha, 2004: 115).
- The classrooms should have a display of relevant learning materials posted at students’ eye level, so that students can use and manipulate them, when necessary. Having learning corners in the classrooms is considered as essential and indispensable (ibid., 2004).
- Provision of refresher training, short-term training and different educational orientation programme often refresh the teachers to enhance the quality teaching.
- District Education Office (DEO) has not taken up seriously to train teachers and upgrade their qualification. The monitoring of class supervision from DEO appears like mere formality. Hence, classroom supervision makes the teacher efficient and capable in his / her teaching. Teachers’ effective and meaningful teaching is thus the causal factors for ameliorating the educational quality.

From above information and discussion, it is concluded that teacher education is compulsory for teachers for the effectiveness of classroom teaching and it is required for the overall development of nation. Students can learn new facts, new techniques and tools presented by teachers, which may be crucial and fruitful for their daily life.

Concluding Remarks

Educationists say, teachers are the corner stone of education and reformer of the whole society as well. In the changing globalization scenario of Nepal, experienced and trained teachers are always required for overall development of the country. Hence, professional development of teachers is crucial feature of any country. The main responsibility of teachers is to create teaching learning environment and to dedicate his/ her efforts inside the classroom because students' future career only depends upon the teachers' capability and efficiency. For this, teacher education is a must to develop efficiency and ability. Teachers should also realize that students learning may be affected more by what teachers do and what they say (Pandey, 2008: 18).

Finally, the professional development of teachers is possible by teacher education and world's changing scenario expects from teachers' efficiency and capability.

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