

Issues and challenges of today's educational system in Nepalese context

*Raju Shrestha
English Trainer
ETC, Tanahun*

Introduction

Education which we everybody know is the empowering tool to human being. If any person not necessarily student receives real education, s/he should be able to adjust himself or herself in the society and becomes aware of what is happening around the society. Similarly, s/he will be aware of about what to do, what not to do, what is right, what is wrong. It gives light and energy to those who receive it. If we search its origination, we find its starting point from the time when human civilization started (Khaniya, 2005). This means it has long history as we human beings have.

However, the way education is imparting in our Nepalese education system either in school level or in campus and university level, we can't find what it should be in literature of teaching and learning. We do not follow the way what actually it should be done. For example, Shrestha (2013, p.4) has mentioned some of the points of good teaching and learning activity. They include:

- Setting up context/ situation in which students take a chance of their own learning.
- Presenting new vocabulary items/sentences/ concepts with appropriate support materials or context to enable students to draw their own meaning.
- Conducting practice activities on the presented materials to enhance mastery of the language.
- Conducting communicative activities in order to help students to communicate in English.
- Creating motivation/interests for learning to communicate in English by providing materials which they will find useful in everyday life.
- Training students in various skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Developing students' study skill because that is what they will need in their higher education irrespective of their specialization.
- Understanding learners, their needs, their learning characteristics and then addressing their needs by exploiting their learning characteristics.
- Providing them exposure to English (communicative English) and opportunities to use English they have learnt.

Instead of doing the above mentioned activities what our school level and campus or university level teachers lecturers and professors do is banking system of education. They always strive to transfer textbook knowledge from their minds to learners' minds. It is for this kind of dire situation, Freire (1970) has said that "teaching does not mean transferring knowledge but creating opportunities for...producing and constructing it." Freire further says that if teaching and learning activity is done in a genuine manner we should respect and appreciate for the learner and his or her knowledge, the acknowledgement of the learners' reality as the starting point for the teaching and learning process, then the importance of dialogue as a pedagogical tool, and even the invention of the terms such as exploration, innovation, generation, creation

should be done inside and outside the classroom in the name of teaching and learning process. When we critical review the education system in our Nepalese context and international educational climate in literature what we find is many wide gap between these two sides. It has been the time to bridge this kind of wide gap. If we don't be aware of this kind of gap, it vividly reveals to the fact that we Nepalese educationists, planners, implementers, and consumers are the inept education practitioners. Time is shifting in a rapid way and we educational movement is very slow. There is mismatch between these two sides as well. It is, therefore, what we can see is there are many more issues and challenges in our Nepalese educational system. There are many more things to be improved and many several things to be hotly discussed for finding out the future way of direction. The actual issues and challenges in Nepalese education system we discuss in the subsequent discussion but here it will be better to go for the direction of today's Nepalese education system.

Direction of today's Nepalese education system

Presently, Nepalese education system has not received any kind of fixed and exact direction to move. It is wondering here and there. The main thing is in today's education system there is professional and organizational control lacking. The policy makers and planners prepare a kind of policy and program, the implementers and practitioners do in another way. There is also mismatch. Nobody can say about the teachers' profession, accountability, responsibility, and duties. It is because of the facts that there is no performance-based appraisal program for the teachers. There is no punishment and praise system. Anybody can do whatever they prefer to do. Most importantly, there is lacking chain of command. If this kind of dire situation continues, this creates very dangerous result in near future.

When we put close critical eyes on the budget separated for the education, what we see is even government has not given due attention to improve the present education scenario. Budget announcement has also been neglecting education system in Nepal. What they think is there is no propositional relationship between the allocated budget and the outcome from that budget. It is, no doubt, that if result does not come as time and money invested, people will have no interest to add any more incentive scheme. It is, therefore, it has been the calls for voices with vision and mission for education improvement and development in accordance with the time and situation. For this, no single person can bring drastic change. We all concerned bodies should be directly and indirectly involved and engaged from our own sides. Otherwise, all the efforts revealed by some people will go in vain.

Crossing-cutting issues emerged in Nepalese education

Today is the time of globalization and industrialization. At this time everything has been changing. Therefore, it won't be wrong to say that today is the changing time, changing perspectives and changing schools, classrooms and teachers. In this global scenario of shifting of all aspects of education many cross-cutting issues have been emerging. Day-by-day many more cross-cutting issues are emerging and might be many more are in the process of emerging. This

has made teaching profession challenging job. This means if a teacher does not become updated with the recent emerging concepts of language teaching, s/he will be outdated and old fashioned. And coming new generation will obliterate his or her position. This means those who are old fashioned or outdated teachers they will be shadowed from the profession. Gradually, they will lose to see the charm-ness in the profession. In order to draw others' attention it is an essential matter to be updated with the recent emerging issues and challenges in the realm of teaching. To this day, we will find many several issues and challenges being applied in our education field. Some of them are:

- Issues about life-skill based education
- Issues about child-friendly education
- Issues about ICT-based education
- Issues about human value-based education
- Issues about right-based education
- Issues about multiple intelligences
- Issues about peace education
- Issues about civic education
- Issues about mother tongue based education
- Issues about local need based education
- Issues about alternative education
- Issues about impact of globalization in education
- Issues about student assessment and evaluation system
- Issues about quality and relevancy of education
- Issues about educational research
- Issues about teacher induction program
- Issues about non-violence education
- Issues about adult learning
- Issues about sexual education
- Issues about early child development (ECD)

When we see the above mentioned long list of issues being emerged and practiced in our education system we will feel fear with the subject matter to be familiar with. What all these indicate is that teaching profession is not such as our teachers do perceive it. It is really challenging task at the same time it is rewarding as well. Regarding this, Brown (2001, p. 2) says 'challenges await us at every turn in our professional path because the discipline of language teaching has only begun to solve some of the perplexing questions about how people learn foreign language successfully. At every moment, new and new ideas and concepts will be found and gradually teaching will be complex.

Future ways to improve Nepalese educational scenario

Undoubtedly, bringing change is one of the intractable tasks we human being confront. On the other hand, bringing destruction in the present scenario is one of the easiest tasks that everybody can do. Now, to be specific with the present educational system it is very difficult

situation to bring some kind of positive change in education system. There are some rooted reasons behind this. For example, one of the reasons is in one side teachers have professional and organizational control lacking, chain of command lacking and on the other side due to the impact of globalization day-by-day many several new cross-cutting are emerging. From these two sides' challenges it will be great wise to search a middle path which leads to the improvement or development of existing situation. Old teachers who are teaching at this level should be brought into the framework of retirement with certain provisions.

- Any teacher who is not enjoying in teaching *should be removed* from the profession.
- Young and fresh teachers should be recruited using the principle of '*meritocracy*.'
- Teachers should be strictly brought into the framework of *professional accountability*.
- Frequent *on-the-spot feedback programs* to the teachers should be launched.
- School Supervisors and Resource Persons should be made accountable to observe and demonstrate model classes *if teachers are in need of help*.
- *Professional and well competent trainers* should be developed to handle teachers and students.
- Educational program policy should be designed accordance *with the ground's voices*.
- Teachers' training should be introduced *in massive scale*.
- *Allowances* in teachers' training should be increased.
- Government should take initiation to *connect ICT* in every school.
- Any educational program should be designed not only from the *vision perspective* but also *mission perspective*.

Conclusion

Students' progress is the established benchmarks for the appraisal of quality education. If students have scored distinction position and can adjust himself or herself in the contemporary society, then at that time the education which he or she has received is called quality education. On the other hand, the education which students receive will be the reflection of teachers' education. This means students are the reflection of teachers. Therefore, if we are intended to bring change in students, we should take care of teachers. Then, only expected change can happen. It is because of this what I would like to conclude is teacher education program should be in accordance with the ground' voices.

References:

- Brown, H.D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. London: Longman.
- Khaniya, T. R. (2005). *Examination for enhanced learning*. Kathmandu.
- Shrestha, R. (2013). *Resource material for lower secondary English teachers*. Sunlight publication, Kirtipur, Kathmandu.