CREATE LIFELONG LEARNING SOCIETIES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC: CASE OF NEPAL

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INTRODUCTION

• Education - means of speeding up the economic growth, income distribution, facilitating social mobility, reducing poverty
• It also improves the quality of life for citizens - longer life expectancy, lower fertility and infant mortality rates, and a more cohesive national identity.
• Opportunities created due to globalization and knowledge economy
• Equipping people to meet the demands of markets
• Requires a flexible lifelong learning model
• Nepal is experiencing
  – inadequacy in education.
  – Coverage is insufficient,
  – access is inequitable (especially in tertiary education and in employee and adult training), and
  – the quality of education is poor.
  – Adult literacy rates are low, and too few children complete basic education.
  – Rote learning, exam-driven schooling, and the soaring cost of private education
• lifelong learning can be important for individuals of all ages and holds an array of benefits for them and society
• This paper has attempted to discuss the importance and explore the ways of systemic development of more flexible and user-friendly lifelong learning system in Nepal.
• The written literacy education started from 1947
• Formation of Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) in 1954 and report was submitted in 1956
• The need for adult literacy in Nepal was recommended and the government of Nepal started adult literacy program from 1956.
• To link the adult education into lifelong learning process, functional literacy program started from 1965
• A separate branch was created in ministry for adult literacy program in 1980.
• From 1981 as a SETI project the focused was given to women and female adolescent in the name of Chelibeti Program
• Improvement in literacy rate is observed (2 Percent in 1950; 65.9% in 2012.
• The government of Nepal has announced the year 2015/2016 as the “Illiteracy Eradication Year” (NFEC, 2015).
Broad based economic growth and poverty reduction remained to be the development agenda of Nepal over the years (ILO, 2013). The current TYP which has expressed Government’s commitments to a long-term vision of ending “all forms of discriminations and inequalities such as legal, social, cultural, linguistic, religious, economic, ethnic, physical, gender and regional”. (United Nations Country Team Nepal, 2012).
ECONOMIC CONTEXT

• In spite of the several development efforts, the poverty appears to be one of the country’s major problems
• Poor economic performance, the country is not being able to generate adequate employment opportunities.
• Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remained stagnant (an average of 4%) between 1990 and 2009.
• Due to slow growth in non-agricultural sector, GDP went even below to 3.4 as compared to the target of 4.5% (ADB, 2013).
• Currently ranks 157th out of 187 countries in terms of Human Development Index (UNDP, 2013).
- Education and skill levels of labor force are essential predictors of labor productivity.
- Increased in individual income (poverty reduction) and economic prosperity. Moreover, their relevance to the needs of the labor market is also important to facilitate employment and economic productivity (ADB, 2011).
- Existing employment situation and economic growth patterns also suggest that education and training curriculum should include enhancement of entrepreneurship skills.
Low levels of education and skills of economically active population also contributed to the under and unemployment among them.

Labor force survey (CBS, 2009) has depicted that about 47% of the total 15 years and above population (14.4 Million) has never been to school.

Majority of the working population who had no secondary levels of schooling have fewer chances to receive vocational training or engage in gainful employment.

Nepalese workers are compelled to work as unskilled labor with lower wage in the national or international labor market.

Nepal has tremendous potential for development and subsequent job creation through sustainable utilization of country’s natural and human resources.

Systematic approach to lifelong learning provisions for young and adults focusing on knowledge and skill development connected with the expansion of natural resource-based enterprises is one of the measures for increasing employment opportunity for unemployed youths.
DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

- area of 147 thousand square kilometer
- 26.6 million people of over hundred casts
- speaking as many languages and practicing diverse cultures and patterns of life.
- Nepal is country having low per capita (US $706) experiencing stagnant growth rate ranging from three to five percent in recent years (MOF, 2013).
The country is relatively young with 40% of the population below 15 years of age; 30% between 15 and 49 years of age; and 56% of the population of people 20 - 40 years of age (Parajuli, 2014). Considering existing growth pattern, the existing demographic trends is expected to remain over several years.
Nepal experienced two major political shifts in 1990 and in 2006. In 1990 a popular movement overthrew the Panchayat system and the country returned to parliamentary and constitutional monarchy as its political system. This political system could not sustain long. In 1996, the Nepal's Maoist Communist party launched a violent campaign to replace the royal parliamentary system with a people's socialist republic. Maoists were successful in cashing peoples’ dissatisfaction against the existing status quo and expand and strengthen their bloody and destructive insurgency. The situation culminated in 2006 with a Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the government and Maoists which eroded the age-old monarchy from Nepal and the country became a republic. In 2008, a Constituent Assembly (CA) was established. These political events have greatly influenced educational processes in the country. With every political change the curriculum is changed, but such changes have contributed little to improve aspects like quality, equity, relevance, efficiency in education.
Learning does not always take place in the classroom: it also happens on the job, at home, and in the community—through hands-on experience, volunteer work, independent study, travel.

Knowledge and skills gained through such self-learning approach can be assessed and recognized in a country like where majority of youths enter into the labor market (Sharma and Kholier, 2008).

Lifelong learning emphasizes that people are able to learn throughout the whole of their lifespan and that they need to keep on learning in order to keep abreast with the developments in contemporary society (MOE, 2007).
CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF LIFELONG LEARNING

• Working population with low levels of education, out of school youths, people aspiring further education but unable to join conventional schools or educational institutions may utilize open and distance modes of learning and engage in lifelong learning.

• We require a national policy and a system of lifelong learning.

• Such policy and system will provide a new space in our learning environment for all learners regardless of their prior qualification and location where they are
Lifelong learning system utilizes the following three principles:

- (1) the continuum of the different forms of lifelong learning,
- (2) the interaction and integration of formal, non-formal and informal modes of learning, so that learning is extended in every space of life—school, workplace, social and personal life; and
- (3) the new framework of lifelong learning utilizing open and distance education should be implemented as an essential part or sub-system of main stream education with national assessment, certification and recognition of learning.
CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF LIFELONG LEARNING

• *Lifelong education* at different levels (from schools to the university level) is integrated through:
  – a system of qualification framework,
  – recognizing prior learning and
  – a clear pathway for education and training regardless of learners’ level of prior schooling.
  – Provision for bridge course to facilitate mobility

• Integration of the multitude of education and training provisions and the harmonization of various learning outcomes (skill training outcomes and standards) has been realized in Nepal as necessary and to bring them under National Qualification Framework with provision for recognition was attempted for a long time.
LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE NEPALESE CONTEXT

- There is no official definition of Lifelong learning;
- Based on the government policies and plans of Nepalese government lifelong learning is learning throughout life by means of informal, non-formal and formal modes of learning.
- LLL is acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for human performance at any time in the life span by study, experience, or teaching is lifelong learning (Jarvis, 2009).
- Lifelong learning is not only for adults, but it is for people of all ages regardless of gender, sex, class, caste, ethnicity, or geographical location to enhance knowledge, skills and competence for personal fulfillment, active citizenship, social inclusion, knowledge economy, community development, employability and adaptability (Laksamba, 2005).
- The life-long learning framework in the Nepalese context emphasizes that learning occurs during the entire course of individual’s life.
- People learn from non-formal and informal means as they do from formal education and training.
LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE NEPALESE CONTEXT

• life-long learning in the Nepalese context is literacy development,
• It is promoted by:
  – (a) providing career guidance to potential learners,
  – (b) assessing present state of occupational competence (as the baseline),
  – (c) opening up entry or re-entry into general education if needed through a bridge course,
  – (d) opening up entry or re-entry into formal education, TEVT and skills development, and
  – (e) promoting a skills and knowledge upgrading market with a multitude of short course and informal learning offers.
  – Assessment of competence, awarding qualifications and recognizing them
• Nepal’s efforts towards making education available for the masses only after 1951;
• Nepal National Education Planning Commission 1956 made provision for adult education or lifelong learning thus:
• “A citizen in an enlightened state should be given an opportunity to secure the type of education suited to his (her) taste and requirements so long as he (she) is capable of receiving it. Even those who have not had good fortune to receive education in schools should be equally entitled to receive adult education of the type that they seek.” (p.153).
CURRENT LIFELONG LEARNING POLICIES

- All Round National Education Committee (ARNEC, 1961),
- National Education System Plan (NESP, 1971),
- National Education Commission (NEC) in 1990 and its report (NEC, 1992), and the formation of the High Level
- National Curriculum Framework (MOE, 2006)
- Education for All National Plan of Action (EFA NPA) 2001-2015, - Goal #3 and Goal #6
- All of these policy documents emphasized universal literacy and lifelong learning as the foundation for democratic process and overall national development
LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE NEPALESE CONTEXT

- Recent policies supporting Lifelong Learning:
  - Non-formal education Policy (MOE, 2007),
  - Technical Education and Vocational Training policy 2012 (MOE, 2012) and
  - School Sector Reform Plan (core document) (MOE, 2008)

- These policies are endeavouring to expand access to Lifelong learning for workers and people who had little or no access to education and training opening them new avenues to advance their education and training.

- People are expected to be made aware of the new provisions, encourage them to undergo counselling and discover their present state of occupational competence and plan for the future learning.
National Legislative Frameworks and Government Strategic Intent

- Education regulation 2002 come up with a number of strategies that include
  - (a) education to be provided through adult literacy education, post literacy, continuing education and alternative primary education,
  - (b) the curriculum and textbooks of NFE to be approved by the national curriculum development and evaluation council, and
  - (c) any agency could be made liable to run NFE with approval of the district NFE committee.

- Interim Constitution: literacy has become the constitutional right of Nepalese people. To translate the constitutional intent into reality, the GON declared “National Literacy Campaign” in 2008 and issued implementation directives in the same year.
• Overall responsibility of Ministry of Education
• Department of Education: Formal School education
• Non-formal Education Center: Non-formal education, informal education, integrating with formal education; lifelong learning
• Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training - formal, non-formal & informal TEVT and skill development, NVQ
• Non Formal Education Center, an apex institution for NFE
  – Offers literacy, post-literacy and awareness raising programs.
  – Implements the programs related to lifelong and continuous education,
  – Offers skill development and income generation programs
  – Provides alternative schooling opportunities to the out-of-school children and school drop-outs through open education mode.
  – NFEC helps the out-of-school youths by providing training and support for developing technical and vocational skills useful for earning livelihood at the local level.
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS PROVIDING LIFELONG LEARNING

- Major Providers/ Education Institutions
  - Schools offering LLL
  - Community Learning Centers offering LLL
  - Non-governmental organizations
  - Local government bodies
  - Community groups or Community-based organizations
THE ROLE OF CLCS IN LIFELONG LEARNING

• CLCs are multipurpose institute of the people, by the people, and for the people;
• They can promote learning new knowledge, skills and behaviors to improve people's quality of life and living standard.
• At present many countries in Asia have set up such Community Learning Centers (CLCs).
• CLCs in Nepal are also gaining popularity in the community,
• A recent national assessment of CLCs revealed that CLCs can offer various programs as per need of the people, (UNESCO, 2011)
• It is a powerful venue for lifelong learning, open learning and a venue for supporting learners to earn recognized qualification(Sharma, 2014).
• If a national system of qualification is in Place, CLCs can be instrumental in integrating various modes of learning leading to qualifications
Theoretical Framework

Community Wealth

Self Sufficiency
- Capability Theory

Community Learning Center

Participation
- Theory of Social Transformation
- Theory of Participation

- ECD
- Lifelong learning
- Literacy development
- Vocational Skill

- Information service
- Infrastructure, Productivity
- Cooperatives
- Income generation

- Leadership
- Inclusion
- Ownership
- Empowerment

Lifelong learning
- Literacy development
- Vocational Skill
Literacy and post-literacy non-formal education are main programs of lifelong learning provisions

Non-formal education center is taking lead in these programs

Legal base is needed

An independent national authority is needed to integrate various modes of learning and pathways.
**Adult literacy**
- conducted for illiterate adult men and women of 14 to 45 years age
- the curriculum and textbooks are based on the theory of adult learning.

**Post Literacy Programs**
- three-month program conducted after the completion of the adult literacy
- Only the men and women who completed the adult literacy course successfully are eligible for this program
Women Literacy I and II

- In response to low literacy of women
- literacy programs throughout the country in order to empower women
- women of 15-45 age groups had missed formal schooling due to several reasons are the target group.
- is conducted for six months, and is followed by other six month’s course as the advance course
PROGRAMS AND DELIVERY MECHANISMS

- **Alternative Schooling Programs (ASP)**
  - it is to ensure that all children in Nepal have quality basic and primary education- EFA
  - non-formal education has executed targeting bringing school leavers back to school again,
  - school targeting to the children of 6 to 14 years socially, economically and geographically disadvantaged,
- **School Outreach Programs (SOP)**
  - children of one to three grades of 6-8 years who are failed to attend the school
  - These children are taught according to non-formal education techniques based on the curriculum and text books of primary education
Program for School Dropout Children

- Open Schooling Program (OSP) for school dropout neo-literates with an objective of providing lower secondary level education through contact sessions.
- Participants are eligible to appear in the grade 8 examination.
- There are two levels which cover Grades 6-8. These are level I and level II
open educational provisions
- Open education in Grade 9-10 are managed by the Guidelines approved by the Government
- National Center for Education Development (NCED) has been looking all the technical aspects of open education

Income Generating Program
- people of different groups of neo-literates are organized in a group and mobilized for income generating programs by the facilitators
- NFEC provides skill training on income generating
Target Groups Served

- include illiterate people living in remote areas
- those living below poverty line
- the wage laborers working in factories and farms.

Focusing programs mainly the following groups:

- Illiterate people of the remote and interior area such as underserved and hard to serve,
- As an opportunity for second chance education NFE target groups are out of school children and youths with its open school and vocational/technical education programs, As a career education program,
- NFE target groups are offered awareness and counseling services, to motivate to continue education and earn qualification - inclusive and equity
Informal learning, embedded in the Nepalese society,
- Traditional Apprenticeships

**Potentials for development**
- Work-based learning- learning from practice
- Use of ICT -Web-based learning, Distance learning;
- Learning portal and self learning
LIFELONG AND LIFE-WIDE LEARNING

- Use of in print and digital materials
- Use of media
  - Radio education
  - Instructional Television
  - Difficult lessons disseminated by the print media
  - Self-learning and assessment provision
This is where the problem lies
We do not have unified structure for Lifelong learning, - National Qualification Framework
Three institutions under MOE are involved in Lifelong learning: DOE, NFE, NCED
CTEVT is responsible for TEVT
Need for a national authorized body to coordinate formal, non-formal & informal learning
FUNDING MECHANISM

- Lifelong learning receiving less priority in terms of funding,
- Review of the funding trends in Non-formal education which is the initiator of LLL receiving about 1% of total budget of Education

Sources:
- Government fund
- International Partners
- Local communities - CBOs
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Multiple layers of stakeholders
- Schools and Colleges
- Teachers and Students
- Children, Youths, Adults and Aging population
- Community Groups
- Community Service Organization
- Local government
- Sectoral Ministries
ISSUES

- Gap between Policies and their Implementation
- Institutionalization of Literacy/NFE Delivery
- Low priority given to Non-formal Education and Adult Literacy Programs
- Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education Ignored
- Inability to Develop NQF
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide Career Guidance to Youths and Adults
- Create opportunity for Re-entry into formal general or technical education
- Provide Opportunities for Working Population for Skills or Qualification Upgrading
- CLCs - offer programs for all ages
- Integrating Various Modes of Learning Pathways
  - National/regional standards - National Qualification Framework
  - Assessment of Qualification
  - Recognizing Prior Learning (RPL):
  - Bridge Courses to facilitate mobility
WAY FORWARD

- Promote lifelong learning
  - Raise the awareness of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
  - Make RPL affordable through a system of subsidies
  - Expand the provision of RPL services
  - Expand open and distance learning opportunities
  - Ensure the access to self learning facilities and materials to all who wish to learn or progress in career and education through open learning