1. INTRODUCTION

Starting from 2011, March, Myanmar changed the political way to democracy. Now we are at the third wave, the first wave is the political wave, the second – the economical wave, and the third – the enhancement of government departments. Changes have been made in many aspects, such as social, health, education, etc.

In education sector, the first and foremost action is to develop the National Education Law. Education Promotion Committee has been organized and under this committee advisory board and thematic working groups are formed. There are altogether eighteen groups and teacher education group is one of them. Group members are from various sectors – Government Organizations, Non-Government Organizations, International Organizations, as well as from political groups and communities. In the recent moment, the National Education Law has been developed by the working groups and submitted to the Parliament. Under this Umbrella Law, we are going to develop sectoral laws, like, Basic Education Law; Higher Education Law; Technical and Vocational Education Law; and Teacher Education Law.

In recognition of the importance of teacher effectiveness, national efforts have focused on teacher education sector and the improvement of teachers’ life expectancy.

2. RECENT SITUATION

(a) Training: In Myanmar we have 21 Education Colleges and 3 Education Universities throughout the country. Among them one university, namely, University for the Development of National Races is aimed to train teachers (not only primary teachers but also lower and higher secondary teachers) for recruiting at the far remote areas. Most of the trainees are national races. Although B.Ed. and M.Ed. degrees are being given by all education universities, Ph.D (education) are being given by only one university – Yangon University of Education. Diploma courses – D.T.Ed and D.T.E.C – are being given by Education Colleges. All of these training courses are aimed for both pre-service and in-service.
(b) Recruitment: All trainees are recruited as a government service. Diploma holders will become primary and junior secondary teachers, and degree holders will become senior secondary teachers. Salaries are different according to their levels. Primary teachers’ salary is the least and senior teachers’ salary is the most. Promotions are based on their education level. Actually their salaries are not much high. Their life expectancy is low.

3. ISSUES

We have some number of interesting issues concerning teacher motivation and performance:

i. Teaching profession is unattractive especially for males.

ii. Heavy workload

iii. Shortage of trained teachers because of limited amount of student-teachers accepted by Education Colleges and Universities

iv. Lowering qualification requirements for entry to the profession, assigning teachers to teach in subject areas in which that are not fully qualified, increasing number of classes that teachers are allocated or increasing class sizes.

v. Low job satisfaction

vi. Deployment of teachers

4. FUTURE PLAN

Now we are going to develop teacher education law under the above mentioned umbrella law. Teacher Education Council will be developed and take responsible for improving teachers’ professional quality and life expectancy.

(a) Attracting the best into the teaching profession:

i. Improve salary - Low salary and low life expectancy are the challenges for the teaching profession to compare with other professions. In the future, the basic salary for primary, lower secondary and higher secondary teachers will be the same and equivalent with junior officers. Promotions will be based on education level, performance, experience and service.

ii. Teachers who work at far remote areas and at border areas can get twice the salary and also get extra support by regional/state

iii. Improve the image and status of teachers – Teaching profession is unattractive because of heavy workloads. In our country, the teacher student ratio is high. Teachers are
responsible not only for teaching at their schools, but for the many miscellaneous works, such as literacy campaigns, census campaigns, health campaigns, etc.

iv. Improve teacher-work environment – Communities be litter teachers. Society’s perception on teaching profession should be improved. Furthermore, there is always pressure for student achievement. Teachers should get enough support from community/government to focus on teaching and learning. They should be free from extra work burdens. They should get enough autonomy to make decisions about their classroom practice.

(b) Professional development:

i. Teacher training - We are going to plan to open two new Education Colleges (Kayar and Chin States). Some Education Colleges will be upgraded to Degree Colleges under long term plan and specialization courses (pre-primary education, primary education, lower secondary education, etc.) will be given.

ii. Special Trainings – In order to find the solution of teacher shortage, untrained degree holders are appointed as primary teachers. So we have short-term primary teacher internship program (6 months – Certificate in Primary Teacher).

iii. Improving teacher preparation – Pre- and in-service teachers’ training programs will be aimed to train qualified teachers. National Qualification Framework for teachers will be developed. Overseas studies, exchange programs, study visits, seminars, etc. will be expanded for teachers’ professional development.

(c) Teachers’ deployment:

i. Decentralization - Recently, decentralization is practiced in teachers’ deployment. In the past, teachers’ recruitment is made by central level. But now, not only teachers’ deployment but also promotion and transfer are made by division/state levels.

ii. Five teachers per school – At least five teachers are appointed for one primary school.

5. GOOD EXAMPLE OF CHANGING

Pre-primary teachers: Starting from 2001, school-based pre-primary classes have been opened and pre-primary teachers were appointed by community. Although they get pre-primary teacher’s training they have low education level. They got very low salary and low/no life expectancy. They did not get salary in school vacations. In some villages, community appointed teachers are difficult to get respect from their own community. Communities have low impression to pre-primary teachers.

Pre-school education working group, one of the thematic working groups under education promotion committee develops pre-school education policy and advocates pre-primary teachers to
be appointed as a government servant and now agreement is attained. Now they get regular salary (same as primary teachers’ salary), get promotion within pre-school, and get incentives like any other government services.

In the future, High-level Steering Committee for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Training will be established to guide for developing a National Plan and system for ECCD pre- and in-service training. In the mentioned policy, it was stated that those who can speak mother-tongue language will get favor in deployment of pre-primary teacher; all pre-primary teachers must have training certification; two teachers per classroom and the teacher student ratio should be one is to fifteen (not more than one is to twenty); and the class size will be not more than thirty students per class.

6. CONCLUSION

Teacher is the key person for quality education and education only can strengthen the sustainability of the development of Nation.