

Report of the workshop on the Role of Media in Education

2-4 December 2002

Dhulikhel

Prepared by

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Background

Basic and Primary Education Programme (BPEP) II is one of the major undertakings of the government in the field of education. The Programme is designed to contribute in achieving the goal of Education for All. In other words, it works for improving access to educational opportunities and participation in it, improving learning achievement, and, enhancing the management capacity of the Ministry of Education. In order to achieve these objectives, several programmes such as teacher training, community mobilization, decentralization, curriculum and textbook, early childhood development, etc. are being implemented. All these have made BPEP II a challenging programme from the viewpoint of implementation and management. As such, in order to make this Programme a successful endeavour, it is necessary that all members of the society participate and cooperate with it. In the absence of such participation and cooperation, there is a very high chance that BPEP II remains a failed attempt.

The success of BPEP II activities, thus, depends upon wider participation of the people of all segments of the society. For this, it is necessary that discussion forums be developed where goals and targets, programmes and achievements, and problems and strategies of BPEP II could be discussed on a regular basis. This requires effective dissemination of BPEP II activities so that more and more people get informed about reform initiatives, could take part in the discussions, and thus could contribute in achieving BPEP II goals. Hence, it is necessary that the Department of Education, which is responsible for the implementation of BPEP II activities, collaborate with the mass media in disseminating its activities and strategies and in bringing community support in the education system. Mass media is one such sector which provides direct means of communication with the people of different sociocultural and economic background and living in different parts of the country. Effective use of mass media will help in raising the interest and participation of the people, as individual and as group, in educational issues. Such awareness can be effective in making education relevant to the needs of the people as well as in ensuring accountability and transparency in the system. Thus, it is necessary that the BPEP II communication strategy realizes the diversification of Nepali society and addresses the issues accordingly.

In this regard, it is necessary that the Department of Education develop a close collaboration with the mass media so that the latter could play the role of mediator or linking agency between the public and the government. Such collaboration will help the government in informing people about its initiatives as well as in understanding people's concern on educational issues. In order to make the media capable to play such role it should be made well informed about the BPEP II activities and their status, strategies adopted to implement those activities, and challenges and problems of the particular activity as well as the whole sector. Similarly, it should have necessary skills in picking

up the issues of the public concerns and presenting them in an effective manner. On the whole, in order to be able to play the expected role of providing a forum for public discussion, generating public awareness on educational issues, informing people about the reform measures, and voicing the public demands and concerns the people working in the media should have necessary skill and information.

Realizing this fact, the Department of Education organized a three-day residential workshop on 2-4 December 2002 for journalists working on different areas of mass media. The main objective of the workshop was to initiate and strengthen the collaboration between education and the mass media so that the scope of such relationship could be further established in the future. During three days of workshop, education officials, journalists, donor representatives, education experts and communication and media experts interacted on different issues of education, relationship between education and the mass media, and the potentials and problems of collaboration in the future between the two sectors. The specific objectives of the workshop were as following:

Objectives

- disseminate information about the BPEP II to journalists
- sharpen the journalists' skill on reporting and writing about activities of the BPEP
- promote the BPEP II in the sphere of news media resulting into improved public understanding of the program

Scope of the works

The scope of the works of the workshop were identified as following:

- Roles and functions of the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Department of Education
- Education for all program (EFA)
- Basic and Primary Education Programme II and its programmes and components
- Implementation of the BPEP II activities and their status
- Gender issues in the BPEP II
- Secondary Education Support Programme
- Highlights of the Education Act (Seventh Amendment)
- Role of media in education
- Communication skill

Workshop modality

Apart from the opening and closing ceremonies, the workshop was conducted mainly on presentation and discussion mode. Several education officials including the Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports and the Director General, Department of Education, and education and communication experts presented their papers which were followed by the discussion and question/answer session. The topics of the papers were focused mainly in the areas as specified in the scope of workshop. Altogether, seven different papers were presented and discussed. Similarly, in order to give opportunity for in-depth discussion and interaction, participants were divided into seven different groups and were asked to discuss the issues related with access and participation, quality, and decentralization of education, strategies adopted to address those issues and the roles of different stakeholders in addressing those issues. Groups were asked to focus their discussion on one of the identified issues regarding access and participation, quality and decentralization of education. Recommendations of the groups were presented and discussed in front of the plenary. A detailed description of the discussions made in the workshop is presented latter in this report under the heading workshop proceedings.

Participants

Forty-eight participants from different parts of the country representing federation of journalists, newspapers, radio station, FM stations, community radios, television stations and magazines participated in the workshop. While calling for participation in the workshop, attention was given to bring-in people with specialization on reporting educational issues. Among total participants, six were women and 20 were from outside the Kathmandu Valley representing both the eastern and western parts of the country. List of workshop participants is included in Annex One.

Venue

The workshop was organized at the Mirabel Resort Hotel in Dhulikhel. Participants stayed in this same resort and got ample opportunities to enjoy the scenic beauty of Himalayas and mountains and valleys and the old town of Dhulikhel. Evening times were made live with 'social mobilization' associated with laughter, fire, drinks, music, songs, dance, jokes and poems and exchange of experiences.

Workshop proceedings

Opening session

1130 – 1245

The first day of the workshop began with the registration of participants and opening session. Devi Prasad Ojha, Minister, Education and Sports was the chief guest and Rabindra Khanal, Assistant Minister, Education and Sports chaired the session. The Minister inaugurated the workshop. At the beginning, Satya Bahadur Shrestha, Director General, Department of Education gave the welcome speech. Highlighting the objectives of the workshop, he stressed on the need for true reporting of educational issues as education is one of the topics of prime concern of the people.

After inauguration, expressing his opinion, Chuman Singh Basnet, Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports, said even after so many years of efforts with donor supports, 20 per cent of school age children are still out of school and 42 per cent of population are still illiterate, and wide disparities exist in terms of urban rural, gender, class, etc. The challenge, according to him, is how to raise the level of literacy in an equitable and efficient manner. He informed that the government is willing to collaborate with the civil society in the development of education in the country. Raising the present issue of school closure for indefinite period, as threatened by Maoist students, he expressed that this will only deteriorate the situations in the country. He also expected that the workshop will be meaningful for the participants and that the suggestions from the participants will help guide the government.

Speaking in the session, the Minister expressed that the workshop will be helpful both for the participants and for the government. Referring to the present insurgency he informed that presently the country is in a very difficult situation. He requested the participating journalists to cooperate with the government against attacks on educational institutes. He also requested the journalists to report the cases of corruption, malpractices and irregularities in education sector. Explaining the importance of education, in the life of the people he expressed that it should remain outside the sphere of politics. He also explained the importance of mass media in disseminating true facts and information to the people and informing them about the situations of the country.

Punya Prasad Regmi, Director, Department of Education, offered vote of thanks to all participants and called the journalists to assess the different aspects of education. Highlighting the importance of journalists' work in generating public awareness, he informed that the discussion on the third phase of Basic and Primary Education Programme has begun. In this context, according to him, journalists can play important

role in generating public discussion and identifying our priorities and by playing the role of linking agent among different class and groups.

Closing the opening session, the Assistant Minister highlighted the roles of journalists. According to him, education gives knowledge on aspects of life and communication gives sense to that knowledge. Hence, he stressed that the media has far-reaching role in disseminating education and its importance among the public.

Day one, session one

Roles of the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education

Presentation by Chuman Singh Basnet, Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports

1300 – 1400

The first working session of the workshop began after a brief tea break after the opening. In this first working session, Mr. Basnet explained the roles of the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education. Referring to the implementation mode of BPEP, he explained that in order to avoid the problem of programme continuity and sustainability, the second phase of the BPEP was implemented in the programme mode. Accordingly, the structure of the Ministry was changed and was given the role of policy formulation, programme approval and monitoring and the Department of Education was established with the main responsibility of programme implementation, he informed the participants. However, according to him, actual implementation of the programme is carried out by the District Education Offices and the Department of Education facilitates the programme implementation. For this, he said, 87 per cent of the total BPEP budget for this year is allocated to the districts and only the remaining 17 per cent is at the centre. Talking about the importance of people's participation in the management of school, he said that as long as people do not feel concerned about the situation of school we could not achieve our goal. Referring to this same point, he mentioned about the recent decision of the Ministry to expedite the formation of new School Management Committee (SMC) as per the Seventh Amendment of the Education Act. Requesting journalists to be informed about the role of different agencies in education and play the role of watchdog, he said, such role by media would greatly facilitate the performance of the Ministry of Education.

Taking part in the discussion, participants raised several issues. It was mentioned that educational rules are often quickly changed in Nepal because often these rules cannot be implemented in villages. Reference was made to the provision of Education Act which specifies minimum qualification for the Chairperson of the SMC. According to some participants, this rule is not applicable in many areas because at places it is difficult to find educated person who could qualify to become the Chairperson of the SMC.

It was also mentioned that getting information from the Ministry is rather difficult. Some participants talked about different provisions of Education Act and the Company Act, causing problem regarding the formation of the SMC of the private schools. Similarly, a question was put on whether educational plans are formulated on the basis of national need or on the basis of donors' will. Participants sought the government viewpoints regarding the disturbed educational situation in the country due to insurgency. Similarly, questions were also asked about the teacher licensing and on the future role of School Supervisor. This latter question was put in the context of planned school reform under which the headteacher will be empowered to manage and supervise the school.

Replying to the queries, the Secretary informed to the participants that educational acts and rules are formulated only after wide discussion with the concerned stakeholders. Information dissemination is a regular process and the Ministry is always trying to be transparent in its programme and budget. According to him, there should not be any legal problem about the formation of the SMC in private school and he was of opinion that the Ministry is ready to improve the provision, if there are any shortcomings. The Secretary informed to the participants that educational plans are formulated on the basis of needs of Nepali people. He mentioned, "however, it also depends upon the bargaining power of the Ministry with the donors. For this, we should have well trained human resource who would have the capacity to understand all related aspects of the proposed programme before entering into the dialogue with the donors." Informing to the participants that the Ministry is well aware on raising the quality of teachers he said that the teacher licensing was not the problem at all. He was also of opinion that by empowering the headteacher, the role of the school supervisor would not be minimized.

Day one, session two

BPEP II and its status

*Presentation by Satya Bahadur Shrestha, Director General, Department of Education
1500 – 1600*

The Director General gave a detailed description of the objectives and organizational structure of the Department and roles and functions of different Divisions under the Department. Similarly, he informed about the different donors and their contribution in BPEP II, past three years' budget allocation and actual disbursement, physical and financial progress achieved in the past three years, reimbursement from the different donors, and different educational targets and their present situation. He also explained about the strategies adopted to achieve the BPEP II goals, challenges and future directions of BPE programmes in the country.

Entering into the discussion, participants raised several issues regarding BPE sub-sector. They raised concerns about the quality of education, increasing gap between

public and private school, gender discrepancies, special education, teacher quality, and problems of educating child labourers, and teachers not attending the school. Participants most commonly raised the question of public private divide. Their concern was that such divide is increasing the gap between the rich and poor people of the society and eventually will bring deep social divide.

Replying to the questions raised, the Director General attempted to satisfy the participants. He informed that there are different programmes to raise the quality of education. Accordingly, the Department is trying to raise the performance of public teachers by providing training to them and by supervision and monitoring of their performance. Similarly, there are programmes to improve the physical facilities in the public schools. These will help, he hoped, to reduce the public private gap. He was of opinion that the present Education Act (Seventh Amendment) will also contribute in reducing public private gap because the Act has empowered the headteacher and the community by increasing their role in school supervision. This, he hoped, will contribute towards increasing teacher performance. He mentioned that problems of gender disparity and educating child labourers are challenging problems but, according to him, there are programmes to address these challenges. He also informed that there has been significant improvement in reducing gender disparity in the recent years.

Day two, session one

Experiences from the field

Presentation by Bhim Bahadur Thapa, Thompson Nepal

0900 – 1000

Bhim Bahadur Thapa from the Thompson Nepal presented experiences obtained in the field during the dissemination of the Education Act (Seventh Amendment). He informed the participants that the Thompson Nepal, an INGO, is carrying out the task of disseminating the Education Act (Seventh Amendment) among teachers and other public. For this purpose, according to him, they have been conducting workshops and seminars at the regional level for the teachers to disseminate the Act. His experience was that before attending their programmes people had little knowledge about the Act and its provisions and in some cases, there were even some confusions. He informed that people participated enthusiastically in their programmes which were very much useful in informing people about the provisions in the Act. He was of opinion that such programmes also provided forum for the teachers to express their opinion on different aspects of education.

Taking part in the discussion, participants commented on the need for implementing such programmes at the local level. They also wanted to know whether the question of educating ethnic/deprived groups, medium language in instruction, teacher licensing,

etc. were the issues of discussion in dissemination programmes. Similarly, queries were also made on how the local community radio stations were utilized in such programmes. Responding to the participants, Mr. Thapa said that local community radio stations are used in the programmes and that they are invited to take part. He also informed that local radio stations have responded well to the programme. According to Mr. Thapa, the question of teacher licensing is one of the most commonly raised issues by the teacher participants of the dissemination programme. In his experience, the question of educating ethnic/deprived groups is also commonly raised question by the people but he did not think that there is any debate on the language of instruction. Personally, however, he thinks that it would be better if the primary education could be given in mother tongue.

Day two, session two

Education for All

Presentation by Dr. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya

1000–1100

Dr. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya, Director, Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development, Tribhuvan University discussed about programmes related with Education for All in Nepal. Starting from the historical context of Jomtien goal set in 1990 at the world level and Nepal's commitment to achieve the goal, he informed participants about the Dakar Declaration and the new goal set for 2015. He informed participants about the programmes Nepal has been implementing and planning to implement to achieve the goal of Education for All. According to him, different committees and sub-committees are formed under the main committee, responsible to look after and coordinate programmes under Education for All, and that these committees are working on a participatory basis. He was of opinion that unless we regard the Education for All as a participatory programme of all concerned stakeholders it is difficult to achieve its goal. He also discussed about the challenges and constraints Nepal is facing to achieve the EFA goal.

Participants raised several concerns based on Dr. Bajracharya's presentation. Their main points of concern were why Nepal has been failing to achieve the EFA goal causing several shifts in the target year, gender gap in literacy, high illiteracy among deprived groups of people, etc. Similarly, concerns were raised about the role of media in supporting achieving the EFA goal. Participants' main concern was how the government intends to utilize or get the cooperation of the media sector. One other concern raised by the participants was while preparing the EFA programmes how the needs and aspirations of the people are taken care of or how to assure that the programmes are based on national needs.

Replying to the queries Dr. Bajracharya said that as the EFA programmes are being developed on a participatory basis with wide discussion among the concerned people it can be assured that programmes are being developed on the basis of national or people's need. According to him, it has to be accepted that there are a number of constraints in achieving the EFA goal. Addressing these constraints are today's main challenge. He was of opinion that there can be no debate on the need and importance of mass media in achieving the EFA goal.

Day two, session three

Secondary Education Support Programme

Presentation by Ram Swaroop Sinha and Raja Ram Shrestha

1130 – 1230

Ram Swaroop Sinha, Deputy Director, Department of Education and Raja Ram Shrestha, Project Manager, Secondary Education Development Centre jointly discussed about the Secondary Education Support Programme (SESP) which the government is planning to implement with support from the Danida and the Asian Development Bank. Discussing the broad objectives of secondary education, they explained that quality and relevance, access and equity and institutional capability are the main objectives of the SESP. They informed that in order to achieve these objectives four identified areas of interventions are: learning environment; curriculum development, evaluation and education materials; teacher education and development; and institutional management and capacity enhancing.

Participants raised several concerns on the situations of secondary education. These concerns were mainly focused in the areas of public private divide, SLC exams, plus two schools, curriculum and textbook, monitoring and evaluation, problems of lack of subject teachers in villages, retaining trained teachers, etc. Similarly, queries were also raised on procedures of getting loan, foreign involvement in policy formulation, experiences of previous projects, etc.

Replying to the queries, both Mr. Sinha and Mr. Shrestha commented that the SESP itself is one intervention to reduce the public private divide. They were hopeful that with the successful implementation of the SESP, such divide would be reduced substantially. Regarding SLC exams, they were of opinion that improving different aspects of education is a continuous process and the SESP will continue to support this process. They informed that the government policy is to consider grades one to twelve as part of the school system but there are some practical problems in transferring the intermediate level of the university system to the plus two system. However, according to them, plus two schools will also receive some programme inputs from the SESP. Similarly, as they have informed, the SESP has several programmes to address the question of different

other aspects like curriculum and textbook, monitoring and evaluation, problems related with teachers, etc.

Day two, session four

Status of girls' education and gender disparity

Presentation by Ram Pyari Shrestha

1315 – 1415

Ram Pyari Shrestha, Deputy Director, Department of Education discussed about status of girls' education and gender disparity in Nepal. Presenting different gender related indicators on students and teachers she showed that gender disparity is an acute problem of education in Nepal. Drawing examples from the proportion of women in educational bureaucracy, she showed that the problem of gender disparity is not limited among students and teachers. However, she noted that the government is committed to reduce such disparity at different level. Accordingly, BPEP has several programmes and strategies to address this problem, she added. While talking different educational programmes for improving the status of girls' education and reducing gender disparity, she referred to a recent gender study conducted in 2002 and which has recommended ten actions to integrate and mainstream gender in education.

Taking part in the discussion, participants expressed their concern mainly in areas of causes of disparity and why the government programmes have not been effective in reducing such disparities. Replying to the queries, Mrs. Shrestha said that our patriarchal social structure is largely responsible for existing gender disparity in education and in other aspects of society. She was of opinion that it will take time to bring change in such deep-rooted social practices. She disagreed, however, on the comment that government interventions have been ineffective in reducing gender disparities. She said that in the past years there has been improvement in the situation of girls' education in Nepal and as such gender disparity has been reduced compared to past years. She also added that the government has taken the issue of gender as one of the challenging issues in education and hence it has been one of the priority areas for implementing interventions.

Day two, session five

Relationship of communication with education, communication strategy and skill

Presentation by Murali Sharma and Dil Bahadur Shrestha

1415 – 1515

Murali Sharma and Dil Bahadur Shrestha jointly presented their paper on communication and education, communication strategy and skill in which they introduced the concept of communication as the fourth sector of the state. Briefly discussing the recent

developments in information and communication technology, they categorized modes of communication as print, electronic, and traditional. They were of opinion that whereas formal education is limited in classroom and in individual, education through means of communication can reach mass people in less time and expenses. They also presented main aspects of communication strategy, and talking about communication skills, they discussed points to consider while writing or reporting news and features.

Discussing on the presentation participants pointed out that the presentation did not give necessary attention on the forms of relationship between education and communication. They wanted to know how the media can contribute or what role it can play in the development of education in the country. Replying to the participants, Mr. Sharma and Shrestha said that they have mentioned, briefly, how communication can contribute in the development of education. Their point was that as the participants were experienced journalists they did not think they need to explain this aspect in detail.

Day two

Group work and presentation

1530 – 1830

As noted above, participants were divided into different groups and were asked to discuss and make recommendations on the theme assigned to them. The selected themes for the group discussion were access and participation in education, quality improvement, and decentralization. The groups were asked to focus their discussion on the issues, strategies adopted to address those issues and the role of different stakeholders in addressing those issues related to the themes assigned to them. Some of the issues under each theme and strategies adopted to address those issues were supplied to the participants in order to facilitate the discussion in the group. As noted above, the purpose of group work was to allow the participants an opportunity to have in-depth discussion and interaction. It was also anticipated that the group work would give participants deeper knowledge about educational issues so that they could anticipate the roles that can be played by different stakeholders. Another objective of the group work was to get the feedback from journalists on educational issues and strategies.

Participants worked for about two hours in their respective groups. They discussed on different aspects of the theme assigned to them focussing their discussion on issues, strategies and roles of different stakeholders. Finally, they arrived at some specific conclusions. Each group's recommendations were presented in front of plenary and were then discussed. Recommendations of each group are presented below, arranged under three different themes of discussion. Annex Two provides names of participants in each group.

Access and participation

Under this theme two groups, group D and group E, were formed. Recommendations of these two groups are presented below:

Group D

This group decided that the existing strategies formulated under the access and participation is not sufficient to accomplish the goal of access and participation. Thus, the group has suggested adding some more strategies, as following:

- Clear-cut education policy
- Effective implementation
- Co-ordination and partnership

Role of various agencies

The suggested roles for various agencies are:

The Ministry of Education and Sports

- Schools have to open in a common place, where almost all children can have easy access
- At least one class one teacher ratio should be maintained
- Formulation of non discriminatory education policy and the development of similar school environment
- Development of practical curriculum
- Provision of reward and punishment to the teachers
- Provision of a special education to the child labourers (working in transportation, industries, domestic sector, etc.)
- Expansion of non-formal education centres

The Department of Education

- Provision of an effective teacher training programme
- Development of partnerships with the INGOs and NGOs and initiation of various types of income generating activities to improve the economic condition of the poor parents
- Distribution of educational materials (copy, pen, school dress, and others) to the students of the poor and disadvantaged communities

- Creation of friendly and enjoyable school environments through creating working network with the INGOs and NGOs
- Provision of parent education
- Provision of incentives to the teachers who spends more time in school, teaching learning and school development
- Mobilization of female teachers

Local bodies

- Implementation of social awareness programmes at the local level
- Maintenance of the record of the school age out of school children and submission of it to the schools and school management committees on a trimester basis
- Provision of awareness and motivation programmes to the parents who are not sending their children to the school

Media

- Give priority to broadcast or print the educational issues in the media
- Publish the successful and unsuccessful events, story of the people in education
- Work as motivator
- Work as watchdog
- Emphasize to publish and broadcast the educational advertisement and other educational materials

INGOs/NGOs

- Act as motivator
- Play the role of pressure group
- Involve in implementing alternative education programmes
- Initiate community awareness programmes with some sort of income generating activities

Group E

This group has suggested initiating a number of activities in order to increase the access and participation of the people in education. The highlighted strategies are:

- Community based education
- A variety of scholarship scheme
- Attractive scholarship programme

- Change in teaching methods
- Priority to local community
- Special focus programme
- Female literacy

This group has proposed a number of activities and programmes. The group believed that unless the diversified package programmes are implemented, the access and participation could not be easier to those who are living in difficult circumstances for various reasons. In this respect, the following are the suggestions of the group:

- A variety of scholarship – there should be separate scholarship for dalits, girls, disables, remote area children, and poor and intelligent children
- Attractive scholarship scheme – parent education, income generation, low interest loan for some sort of small-scale industries (through governmental, non-governmental supports)
- Change in teaching methods – use of documentary, role-play, and parental involvement
- Priority to local community – emphasis on local language, local culture, local human resource development and mobilization
- Community based education – involvement of government, non-government and other stakeholders to initiate community based education
- Special focused programme – special education for targeted people such as caste, religious, language and cultural groups based education
- Female literacy – education for gender sensitization, and compulsory female education

Role of various agencies

The Ministry of Education and Sports

- The role of the Ministry will be to formulate policy, manage budget, and initiate monitoring and feed back programme

The Department of Education

- The role of the Department will be to initiate implementation activities through making a provision of task force for targeted groups on the one hand and, to coordinate all the responsible bodies such as local bodies, media, INGOs and NGOs and others on the other

Local bodies

- Local bodies will be responsible to mobilize local resources, establish certain funds for education, establish (develop) partnership with various institutions including government, follow up the educational programme and establish coordination mechanism at the local level

Media

- Media will be responsible in communication and dissemination of educational plans and programme, work as watchdog, implement educational activities and awareness programs in the community, and special programs for targeted parents

INGOs/NGOs

- These institutions should act as mediators, partners and change agents to bring educational change at the community level

Quality improvement

Under this area, two groups of participants were asked to discuss and suggest improvement measures and roles for various agencies. Their recommendations are as following:

Group B

This group has suggested following strategies:

- Increase opportunities to complete the primary education cycle
- Coordination with the Nepal Journalists' Federation
- Effective participatory planning
- Proper evaluation of teachers
- Change and reform on curriculum and teacher training
- Compulsory provision of the record keeping of out of school children in school
- Expansion of quality early childhood education
- Compulsory age specific enrolment policy
- Adequate supply of instructional materials
- Restriction of charging any types of fees
- Linkage of education with income generation activities

- Teachers' professionalism
- Provision of allowance for journalists (to those who are actively involved in identifying the reasons of not schooling and publishing/broadcasting their article, research reports etc)

Role of various agencies

To implement the above-mentioned strategies, this group has suggested different activities for the concerning agencies. They are:

The Ministry of Education and Sports

- Implement reward and punishment policy in an effective manner and formulate educational policies according to the changed context
- Make the education policies more effective
- Monitor the implementation of the Act and Regulation

The Department of Education

- Monitor continuously the implementation of the educational plans and programmes
- Conduct teacher training programme on a regular basis
- Initiate different programmes to discourage the politicization in education
- Encourage the media to identify the reasons of drop out and repetition

Local bodies

- Initiate various educational activities and programmes (emphasis on monitoring, evaluation, etc) according to the Local Self-Governance Act
- Work to make the School Management Committees more active in educational development
- Do not provide the services of the local bodies to those parents who do not send their children to school

Media

- Inform the MOES and the DOE about the important information obtained from the research studies and from other sources
- Publish/broadcast various educational information
- Provide suggestions on various educational issues

- Publish reports/news emphasizing the necessity of early childhood development programmes and drawbacks that might cause from the absence of such programmes
- Prepare and disseminate different types of educational awareness programmes on a massive scale

NGOs

- Provide emphasis to be more disciplined and effective
- Give priority to implement ECD programme in each VDC
- Initiate special programme to the targeted groups of people in order to attract them towards education

Group C

This group also worked in the area of quality improvement. The group has identified following reasons for the poor quality of education:

- Poor economic condition
- The existing phenomenon of social discrimination, malpractices in the society, and the lack of regular monitoring
- Lack of awareness in the parents, and lack of coordination with the schools
- Lack of instructional materials
- Geographical diversity and complexity

Following such identification, the group has recommended following measures to improve the quality of education:

- Provision of scholarship and compulsory education programme
- Regular meeting and discussion between the School Management Committee and parents
- Provision of regular assessment of students through developing and maintaining a special weekly, monthly, and trimester progress forms
- Increase participation of disadvantaged groups, girls, and ethnic groups in education

Role of various agencies

The Ministry of Education and Sports

- Formulation of long run effective education policies

The Department of Education

- Production of necessary and capable human resources and their mobilization
- Provision of finance and proper and adequate physical materials
- Regular monitoring of educational programme
- Provision of reward and punishment
- Transparency

Media

- Publish or broadcast the story of success and failure of people in education
- Be self-accountable and responsible to the nation in order to make the government adopting the participatory policy in educational planning and implementation
- Work as a watchdog
- Explore the abuse of authority and corruption in education sector

Group A

This group has also suggested adding some more strategies for improving the quality of education. The suggested strategies are:

- Planning and programming should be made through developing close correlation with various ministries
- Emphasis should be given towards the extensive use of media and the establishment of community based media

In order to ensure quality education in Nepal, this group has suggested some activities related to policy formulation, planning, strategy development, implementation and so forth. The main programmes suggested are:

Teacher training –

- Revision of teacher training package and make it to develop more responsible and accountable teachers
- Emphasis on practical skills
- Motivation of parents towards education

Training opportunity –

- Training should not be restricted on a quota basis
- It should be made open and liberal

Supervision and monitoring –

- It should not be limited as a formality
- It should be scientific
- It should be carried out in collaboration with the local committees, school supervisors and regional supervision committees; formulating a triangular mechanism for it

Improvement of curriculum and textbook –

- The level and educational needs of each society should be taken into consideration while preparing curriculum and textbooks
- Provision of life related skills
- Reform of curriculum and textbooks according to the changing time
- Provision of continuous assessment system
- Provision of vocational skills
- Integration of psychological elements in extra co-curricular activities
- Provision of direct involvement of the parents in schooling activities. Meetings of parents, SMCs and teachers should be organized at least once a month to discuss about education

Role of various agencies

The Ministry of Education and Sports and the Department of Education

- Emphasis in implementing the educational policies and plans in a more responsible manner
- Collection of the statistics of various types of child labourers and taking initiation to prepare a bill to formulate an Act of providing compulsory education to them

Media

- Major priority should be given in publishing or broadcasting the educational news, programmes, and problems

NGOs

- Taking initiation to launch various types of educational programme
- Emphasis towards the integration of total funds and implementation of different educational programmes in an integrated manner

Decentralization

Two groups were assigned to discuss under the theme decentralization. They came up with following suggestions as strategies:

- Remove the provision of academic qualification to be the Chairperson of the School Management Committee
- Increase the number of representation in SMC from the social workers and intellectuals
- Make the provision that only the parents whose names are stated in the birth certificate of the child could take part in the election of the SMC Chairperson
- In the process of handing-over the public schools to the community, besides their applications, their should be other conditions as well
- Authority should be given to the District Education Committee to form the Village Education Committee
- Make a provision of representation from the Nepal Journalists' Federation or from the senior journalists in District Education Committee
- Make a provision of representation from the non-governmental organization in Village Education Committee
- Make an alternative provision of representation in DEC in a condition of the dissolution of democratic institutions

Role of various agencies

The Ministry of Education and Sports

- Authority should be given to the local level in order to make them an autonomous body in monitoring the implementation of plans and programmes so that the monitoring could be made effective

The Ministry of Local Development

- The Ministry of Local Development should be involved in the development of education at the local level through taking part in developing physical facilities of the schools and providing various types of scholarships to the students

The Department of Education

- Initiation should be taken to involve the local media in order to disseminate, communicate, publish or broadcast the educational plans, programmes, news, policies, etc. at the local level

Local bodies

- District Education Committee, Village Education Committee, and School Management Committee should contribute their efforts in order to ensure better educational management, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

Media

- Production of joint educational programme with the government, investigation of the authority abuse, corruption and many other crucial issues of the educational institutions, initiation of awareness programmes to the parents about the educational management process and publish or broadcast the educational news

NGOs

- Involve in the formulation of participatory planning process and facilitate in implementing such programme at the local level

Group F

This group has recommended following strategies in order to ensure decentralization and community participation in school management:

- The Chairperson of the School Management Committee should be the parents only
- The pre-condition of the academic qualification to be the chairperson of the SMC should be removed
- The guardians should not be eligible to be the candidate of the Chairperson of the SMC
- The representation in the SMC should be made from those who have provided significant contribution in school development
- The nomination of the SMC members should not be on the basis of election but on the basis of the services they have provided in school development
- The schools should be made academic institutions by developing a partnership among all the institutions (government and non-government) working at the local

level. Only then the participatory educational planning, management, and implementation can really take place at the local level

- The Village Education Committee should mobilize the local resources by initiating various educational activities at the village level. They should develop and implement educational plans in their area

Role of various agencies

The Ministry of Education and Sports

- Take an initiation towards the amendment of Education Act and change the regulation in order to correct the weaknesses and difficulties
- Take such initiation based on findings from the research and studies
- Provide direction to the Department of Education towards the improvement of education by developing and implementing proper educational plan as per the changing context
- Supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the educational programmes
- Make provision of proper budget from the government and the donor agencies
- Make prioritized programmes for the development of sports

The Ministry of Local Development

- Facilitate the district and local bodies, that is, District Development Committees and Village Development Committees to take active part in making educational plans and their implementation

Media

The media at the central and local level should involve actively disseminating:

- The educational policies of the MOES
- Monitoring and evaluation of educational programmes
- Various provisions of education Act and Regulation
- Implementation of the programmes and their progress
- The plans of DEC, VEC, and their implementation status

NGOs

- The nongovernmental organizations should initiate their educational activities without making any duplication with the government activities

- Emphasis should be given to those areas where people are facing the problem of educational access
- Initiation should be taken to develop partnership with the government at the local level in order to implement educational programmes in a more effective way

Day three, closing session

0800 – 0930

The final or the closing session of the workshop was held in the morning of the third day. Speaking at the occasion, Satya Bahadur Shrestha, Director General, Department of Education, said that from now on the Department will work with a new approach and that this workshop is an example of such new approach. He expressed the belief that collaboration between the education and mass media will help solve many of problems in education. He stressed that this workshop is just the initiation of the collaboration between the two sectors and that such collaboration will be continued and expanded in the future. He was of opinion that this workshop has given new enthusiasm to the Department to work towards achieving its goal. He also advised to the journalists first to discuss with the concerned agency or individual before making any reporting. According to him, such discussion will help enhance the quality of reporting.

Tekendra Karki, Department of Education, thanked to all the participants and other concerned agency and individual for their contribution in making this workshop a successful one. He wanted cooperation from the media in disseminating educational policies and programmes and in finding the answer of 'how' question in education.

Speaking at the occasion, participant journalist Indira Aryal from Lumbini Radio took this workshop as an example of the beginning of working relationship between education and mass media and expressed her satisfaction on such beginning. But in her experience, the workshop could not focus on the main issue – the relationship between education and the media. She suggested for more such programmes in the future as well in the districts. At the same time, she also cautioned not to limit the outcome of such workshop just in this workshop and demanded roles for media in educational policy formulation process. Prakash Silwal from the Himalayan Times expressed satisfaction on the initiation of dialogue between education and media and wished that such dialogue be continued in the future as well.

Speaking from the Chair, Bishnu Nisthuri, General Secretary, Nepal Journalists' Federation, explaining the importance of education in human life said that the media is one very effective means to reach the mass people. He assured the government that the media sector is ready to collaborate for the development of education in the country.

Like other previous speakers he also took this workshop as the beginning of dialogue between education and media. Advising his fellow journalists, he said that a new approach or working style has been seen in education and thus, taking benefit of such new vision, journalists should bring educational issues in public debate in the new context and should give priority to focus on educational problems.

Literary competition

In the first day of the workshop, participant journalists were invited to take part in a competitive writing programme under which they were requested to write something – poem, story, essay, etc. on any topic of their interest and were asked to submit their writings in the morning of the following day. Accepting such requests, 21 participants submitted their writings in the morning of the following day. Results of such competitive writings were announced during the closing session. A poem by Rajendra Parajuli titled “Red book, parliament and child education” was announced first. The second award was given to a story ‘Father, daughter and me’ by Tribhuvan Chandra Wagle and a poem by Krishna Raj D. C. titled “Dialogue of Albert Einstein with Gautam Buddha” was given the third prize. Similarly, a story titled “Ram Bahadur” by Bishnu Chhimeki was given the consolation prize. Prizes were distributed to the winners during the closing session.

Workshop evaluation

During the closing session, a one-page workshop evaluation form was distributed to the participants requesting to provide their opinion on different aspects of the workshop. Overall, participants evaluated the workshop highly. Most positive aspect of the workshop, according to them, was that with this workshop the government recognized the importance of media in national development and they gave the credit of beginning such recognition to the Ministry of Education. Some of them even expressed a feeling of satisfaction on the recognition of importance of their profession. Many participants hoped that the workshop would set an example to other Ministries and agencies also.

Some participants found the workshop very much beneficial in the sense that it provided them an opportunity to understand different issues of education, its problems and constraints as well as achievements made so far. Some participants also felt that they are now more informed about educational issues and hence, were feeling more confident on their capability to report or raise educational issues more realistically. Some participants were happy that they have now personal relationship with education officials. They were hopeful that they would have now easy access to educational

information. Participants also praised the facilities and other logistics support provided to them during the workshop.

Some participants, however, noted some weaknesses of the workshop. Some of them noted about the weak management of the workshop indicating the fact that senior journalist Bharat Dutta Koirala's presentation could not be organized even when it was in the programme and Mr. Koirala was there at the scheduled time for the presentation. Some of them were of opinion that as Mr. Koirala's presentation could not be organized they missed a great opportunity to learn something from the celebrity like Mr. Koirala. Many expressed dissatisfaction on the fact that they were not given papers well before presentation and thus they were unable to prepare themselves to take part in the discussion. Some participants found some presentation too simplistic and not well prepared. Some of them also noted that the workshop was not well focused in the sense that too many topics were tried to cover. According to them, it would have better if the workshop had focused on the relationship between education and media.

Despite such weaknesses as noted by some of the participants, they evaluated the workshop as a very successful one and many of them hoped that more such workshops would be organized in the future and at the regional as well as at the district level.

Annex One: List of participants

Annex Two: Participants in group

Group A

Resham Birahi
Rajendra Parajuli
Yubraj Shrestha
M. D. Kulung
Bishnu Chhimeki
Kamalesh D. C.
Priya Thapa Adhikari

Group B

Bhoj Raj Timalisina
Bhim Gautam
Bhola Thapa
Mankaji Suwal
Krishna Raj D.C.
Mahesh Das
Bishwabandhu Bhandari
Khagendra Bhandari

Group C

Group D

Deepak Bhattarai (group leader)
Bhuvan K.C.
Amrit Dahal
Mandira Dhungel
Dilip Kumar Nepali

Group E

Bitu K.C.
Renu Chhetri
Suvash Kumar Darnal
Madhav Gairhe
Janardan Bista
Tribhuban Chandra Wagle

Group F

Chintamani Dahal

Indira Aryal

Sunita Ligel

Luxman Dhakal

Deependra Chauhan

Group G

Prakash Silwal

Bhagwan Bhandari

Pradeep Pokhrel

Suresh Prasad Humagain

Nityananda Timsina