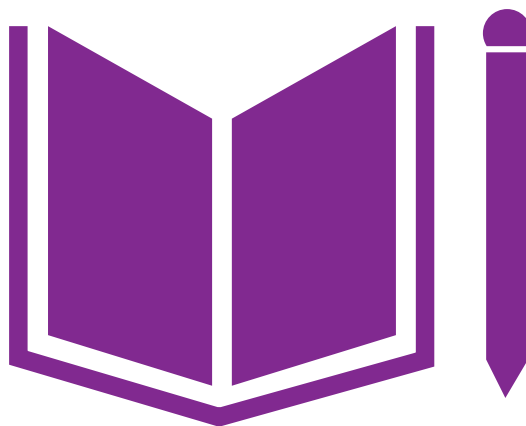# EDUCATION BEYOND 2015

Report Prepared with the inputs from stakeholders engaged in EFA and SDG process.

Goal 4 : **Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization   Kathmandu Office

unicef

NCE NEPAL

EDUCATION BEYOND
2015

ADVISED BY:
Mr. Tap Raj Pant
Mr. Raj Kumar Gandharba
Mr. Ram Balak Singh

PREPARED BY:
Mr. Hemanta Dahal

EDITED BY:
Mr. Dilli Ram Subedi
Dr. Narayan Kafle
Mr. Kumar Bhattrai
Mr. Rajendra Pahadi
Mr. Ram Gaire

PUBLISHED BY:
National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE-Nepal)

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COORDINATED BY:
Ms. Herina Joshi

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FOREWORD

National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE Nepal) is a civil society movement with mandates to lobby and advocate for ensuring access and Right to Education for all. It has been playing coordinating roles among civil society, media and public sectors within the education system in Nepal. It critically engages with government for ensuring equitable quality education and monitors the status of implementation of Government's commitments to education. NCE-Nepal from its initial phase has been engaging in policy advocacy, networking, campaigning and participating in national, regional, global debates to influence children's rights to education for all. The organization also engaged in the EFA assessment and collection of CSO voices for post 2015 education agenda and implementation and monitoring of EFA and National Plan of action on the behalf of Civil Society networks.

As a leading civil society network in education in Nepal, NCE Nepal has been also engaging in the Sustainable Development Goals development processes in Nepal. It has carried out stakeholder consultations at the various levels. Therefore, the advocacy in the SDG process has been very much imperative for NCE Nepal especially in 2015. Over the year, government has committed to the Incheon Declaration and Framework of Action 2030. Therefore, NCE Nepal has created the forums to critically engage with government and other stakeholders in the education 2030 agenda and make them accountable in their commitments at the various forums.

Discourse on Education 2030 started when the United Nation proposed 17 Sustainable Development Goals including education as standalone goal in goal 4. These helped to further debate and prepare the country agendas and make them well prepared for the United Nation general assembly. Therefore, NCE Nepal carried out stakeholder consultation prior to the United Nation General assembly aiming to sensitize them in the education 2030 agenda and prepare them for their discussion. The stakeholder consultation emphasized more on recognizing the role of education for development, urgency of education for holistic, ambitious and inspirational societies and leaving no one behind. Besides, it sensitized to reaffirm that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and an equalizer for achieving other goals of SDG. In addition to this, it also helped to prepare the position of NCE Nepal especially in SDG goal 4. Hence, NCE has published this position to widely sensitize the stakeholders including civil society organizations.

In the above backdrop, the people directly or indirectly involved for preparing this report need to be acknowledged. Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude towards education experts Prof. Dr. Bidhya Nath Koirala, Prof. Dr. Basu Dev Kafle, Prof. Dr. Tanka Nath Sharma and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sushan Acharya for their valuable inputs and contribution in the issues like Inclusion, Equity, Quality and Lifelong Learning. Besides, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the partners who joined hands with NCE-Nepal financially and technically particularly Ministry of Education (MoE), UNESCO and UNICEF. Similarly, all the participants, education right stakeholders, government and non government organizations, UN-agencies, CSOs and academicians are also key actors of my thanks for their valuable views and opinions in the discourse. Likewise, I am very thankful to Mr. Hemanta Dahal for his continuous effort to shape the document. In addition, I would like to thank NCE-Nepal's members and secretariat staff for their support in preparing the report.

Thank You

Raj Kumar Gandharba
President
National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE-Nepal)

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the Human Development Report (HDR-UNDP, 2013), the countries with a composite index measuring average achievement are categorized among four groups: very high human development, high human development, medium human development and low human development. Nepal, with an HDI of 0.463, is categorized among low human development countries and is ranked at 157 among 187 countries. The mean years of schooling are merely 3.2 years against 8.9 years of expected schooling years.

Nepal joined the international community to plan and express its commitments for the development of education with the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand on 5-9 March 1990, followed by its participation in the World Education Forum on EFA, in Dakar, Senegal on 26-28 April 2000. Nepal also adopted the Dakar Framework for Action (DFA) for Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments, with six major EFA goals along with twelve strategies to achieve fully by 2015. The collective pledges of the rich countries to support the resource-poor countries to achieve the EFA goals not only inspired Nepal but also provided a financial ground for its development of education, resulting in the adoption of the six EFA goals, along with a seventh goal on mother tongue.

NCE started its intervention from the time of EFA National Plan of Action, followed by an EFA Mid Decade (2007) Assessment through the civil society perspective. In 2014, the organization engaged in EFA assessment and collection of CSO voices for post 2015 development agenda, and then after in the implementation and monitoring of EFA, National Plan of Action on behalf of the civil society networks. The central level consultations take place with the collective participation of indigenous groups, disabled groups, third gender people, journalist, guardians, and the NGOs' action. NCE submitted Universal Periodic Reports (UPR) against privatization in education.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTATION

- To stimulate wide-ranging discussions among education stakeholders and sensitize them about education related sustainable development goal,
- To prepare a position paper and submit it to the head of Nepal delegates of the UNGA.

3. GLOBAL CONTEXT

It is important to reiterate tremendous progress achieved since the Dakar Conference in 2000. The Open Working Groups of the UN General Assembly proposed 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) after its 13th Session concluded in July 2014. Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

It is estimated that there are 84 million fewer out-of-school children and adolescents and 52 million of these are girls. 34 million more children have gone to school with the intensive efforts of EFA movement. Two-third more children are enrolled in pre-primary education.

However, despite these efforts, just a third of countries reached all of the EFA goals with measurable targets: ensuring universal primary education, reducing adult literacy by 50 percent, and achieving gender parity in both primary and secondary education. The aim of ensuring that every child is enrolled in, and completes primary school by 2015 has not been achieved. Only just over half of countries achieved universal primary enrolment. There were 204 million children and adolescents out of school in 1999, which declined rapidly until 2008, when 127 million were out of school. Since then, the decline has become slower and in 2012, 121 million children remained out of school.

In addition, a third of countries did not achieve gender parity in primary education, and a half of countries did not in secondary education, even though this goal was meant to be achieved in 2005. One of the main messages to come through the GMR 2015 is that major inequalities still remain and act as a powerful obstacle to educational progress. The poorest are four times more likely to be out of school and five times more likely not to complete primary education than the richest.

3.1 Global Education for All Meeting, Muscat, Oman (12-14 May 2014): Muscat Agreement: Setting Targets for Education 2030, SDG 4

Target 1: By 2030, at least x percent of girls and boys are ready for primary school through participation in quality early childhood care and education, including at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

Target 2: By 2030, all girls and boys complete free and compulsory quality basic education of at least 9 years and achieve relevant learning outcomes, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

Target 3: By 2030, all youth and at least x percent of adults reach a proficiency level in literacy and numeracy sufficient to fully participate in society, with particular attention to girls and women and the most marginalized.

Target 4: By 2030, at least x percent of youth and y percent of adults have the knowledge and skills for decent work and life through technical and vocational, upper secondary and tertiary education and training, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.

Target 5: By 2030, all learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to establish sustainable and peaceful societies, including through global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

Target 6: By 2030, all governments ensure that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers.

Target 7: By 2030, all countries allocate at least 4-6 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or at least 15-20 percent of their public expenditure on education, prioritizing groups most in need; and strengthen financial cooperation in education, prioritizing countries most in need.

3.2 Incheon Declaration: Implementing Agenda

- Participatory governance: Establish legal and policy frameworks that promote accountability and transparency.
- Strong global and regional collaboration: To monitor the implementation of the education agenda based on data collection.
- Financing: International and regional benchmarks of allocating at least 4-6 percent of GDP and/or 15-20 percent of total public expenditure for education.
- Development cooperation: Target of 0.7 percent of GNP for ODA to developing countries.
- Global coordination mechanism: UNESCO and the other co-conveners to develop global coordination mechanisms, recognizing Global Partnership for Education.
- UIS & GEMR: Support capacity development in data collection and report to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR, previously GMR) to be continued as the mechanism for monitoring and reporting.

Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO reiterates through a press release, "This Declaration is a huge step forward. It reflects our determination to ensure that all children and young people gain the knowledge and skills they need to live in dignity, to reach their potential and contribute to their societies as responsible global citizens. It encourages governments to provide learning opportunities through life, so that people can continue to grow and develop. It affirms that education is the key to global peace and sustainable development."

The UN Special Rapporteur on education, Kishore Singh said, "Governments must safeguard education as a public good, and urgently end the commercialization of education. Building an inclusive education system requires governments to strengthen public education, as is their obligation under international human rights law."

4. THE NEPALESE CONTEXT

With the country priorities in education, Nepal has been addressing the on-going and unfinished agenda on Education for All (EFA) and beyond. After Nepal adopted EFA core strategy for access, quality, equality and inclusion, the number of girls has been increased more than the number of boys in primary and secondary levels, with the increased primary NER to 95.3 percent in 2012 from less than 80 percent before the year 2000. The number of female teachers in all levels of school education has also been increased significantly. Nepal is spending around 4 percent of its GDP on education. However, the aid to education fell by 29 percent between 2009 and 2013.

The changes in education in Nepal started becoming visible after the Ministry of Education was established in 1952, and the National Education Commission was formed in 1994. The latter one suggested the government for education policies and strategies, and considering the extremely low literacy rate of approximately 5.3 percent only (6 years and above; 9.5 percent for males and 0.7 percent for females) at that time, to ensure financing for providing primary education access to all children. Furthermore, the National Education System Plan (NESP), initiated in 1971 had a focus on reforming school curriculum with vocational education. The gender focused programs in education stood up in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and the educational development needs of disadvantaged communities came under the purview of policies and programs since late 1980s and early 1990s.

The NLSS 2010/11 revealed that approximately 39.1 percent people in the age group 6 years and above and 43.5 percent people in the age group 15 years and above were deprived to be literate. Nearly 55.5 percent females compared to 28.4 percent males didn't have the skills to read and write even a simple sentence. The targeted intervention couldn't adequately address the needs for balancing the male-female literacy ratio with over 27 percent gap between male-female. Therefore, the critical issue of female literacy appears to be a challenge before and beyond EFA 2015. People (6-24 years) living in remote rural areas, females, ethnic minorities, Dalits and the poor are the main disadvantaged groups for educational attainment.

4.1 Institutional Arrangements in Nepal
The following structures of educational arrangements are made in Nepal:
a. Pre-primary education (PPE) or early childhood development (ECD), for children reaching 4 years of age,
b. Primary level of grade 1 to 5, the minimum age of children for admission at grade 1 is 5 years old,

c. Basic education level of grade 1 to 8, including five years of primary and three years of lower secondary,

d. Secondary level of grade 9 to 10; There is also a provision of higher secondary level technical education under the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) for skill training courses either to tenth grade, 12 pass students or to those having Technical School Leaving Certificate13.

e. Higher Secondary level of grade 11 to 12,

f. Bachelor degree in general stream 3-4 years, professional/technical programs 4-5 years; Master degree 2 years. The universities also run MPhil and PhD programs. The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Nepal co-ordinates the universities with the national plans and programs.

4.2 Non-formal Education

Nepal has provisions of non-formal education at primary, lower secondary and secondary level in order to provide access to all the unreached, particularly to the adolescents, youths and adults join the Out-of-school program (OSP). Moreover, provisions of flexible school programs with condensed courses are the other opportunities for those who could not join regular hour schools and School Outreach Program. Non Formal Education Centre (NFEC) offers basic and functional adult literacy and open school programs for adults with the provision of equivalency to school education up to secondary level (grade 1-10). According to the national census 2011, the contribution of non-formal education in the overall educational attainment is 4.15 percent.

4.3 Alternative Schooling Programs

The School Outreach Program (SOP) is a 3-year program for 6 to 8 years of age group children who are not able to attend school due to geographic remoteness and socio-economic reasons. After completion of the program, the child transits to grade 4 in formal school. In addition, the Government implements flexible schooling program for 8 to 14 years of age group children, who are out-of-school, poor, disadvantaged, street dwellers, labourers in rural, urban and semi-urban areas. Children complete primary education in three years through condensed courses. After completing the program, the child transits to grade 6 in formal school. These provisions have helped improve the literacy rates, especially youth literacy rates (15-24 years age group).

4.4 Open School Program (OSP)

The OSP, a two-year program is planned for the school dropout children and the neo-literates for providing them a lower secondary level education through contact sessions, after completion of which the students shall be eligible to appear in the grade 8 examination. The government, reaching beyond the school sector, implements Adult Non-formal School Program to educate adults (especially women) who were dropped out their education for various reasons. This fast-track scheme awards certificates to the participants equivalent to formal school grades.

4.5 SSRP and Quality Education Indicators

The SSRP ascertains two main scopes regarding quality in education: (a) quality improvement, and (b) quality assurance or control, both of which require setting national standards and measures. Moreover, the accumulated sets of standards provide an operational definition of quality, which has not been adopted until now. However, the meaning of quality education can be derived from various policies, plan and program documents. For instance, the National Curriculum Framework states the vision of school education as 'to prepare citizens dedicated to promote and protect democracy and human rights as well as capable to withstand the personal, social and national challenges of the twenty first century'.

4.6 Teachers' Professional Development and Management

Each education plan, including BPEP, SESP, EFAP and SSRP along with Teacher Education Project (TEP) focused on training, continuous student assessment and capacity development of teachers and head teachers with a view to using methods and techniques for the learner-centered approach and enhanced teaching learning in each school.

4.7 Curriculum and Relevant Skills

A National Curriculum Framework for School Education has been prepared and adopted with the aim of achieving quality comprehensive school education, completing universal basic education, enabling the children to live a meaningful life in the modern changing world with required literacy, numeracy and life skills. The curriculum has tried to address the national as well as local needs, literacy and numeracy components.

4.8 Key Legal Provision

a. The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007): The constitution had explicitly stated the right to basic education in mother tongue, free education up to secondary level for

every citizen and right to remain safe and free from all forms of violence and exploitation for every child. Furthermore, the State has the responsibility of providing special facilities for ensuring a 'well-ascertained future', especially for girls and children who are disadvantaged (Dalits, disadvantaged Janajatis, poor children, children in remote/rural areas, orphans, children whose parents are in jail, children with all sorts of disabilities, children affected from HIV and AIDS, conflict victims, internally displaced children, street children, etc.)

b. The Education Act: The 5th Amendment of the Education Act in its preamble reiterates that, 'it is expedient to promote quality education through improvements in the management of existing and future schools all over Nepal in order to prepare human resource for national development and to maintain good conduct, decency and morality of the people in general in consonance with multi-party democratic system'. Furthermore, the 6th amendment of the Education Act provisions roles and responsibilities of different personnel and organizations such as Director General (DG) of the Department of Education (DOE) and District Education Office (DEO) with regard to assurance of quality in education. The 7th Amendment of Education Act thereafter, and the Education Regulations in 2002 introduced major changes in the composition, formation, roles and responsibilities of the School Management Committee (SMC). Again, in supporting the program, the government promulgated the Education Act 8th Amendment in 2004, which provided teacher management authority to the SMCs, along with the power to hire and fire teachers and to take responsibility to build their career. School Grant Operation Guidelines (2004) further supported the SMCs in mobilizing funds to schools.

c. The Constitution of Nepal (2015): Article 31 has provisions regarding right to education: (1) Every citizen shall have the right to access to basic education. (2) Every citizen shall have the right to compulsory and free basic education, and free education up to the secondary level. (3) The physically impaired and citizens who are financially poor shall have the right to free higher education as provided for in law. (4) The visually impaired person shall have the right to free education with the medium of Braille script. (5) Every Nepali community living in Nepal shall have the right to acquire education in its mother tongue up to the secondary level, and the right to open and run schools and educational institutions as provided for by law.

Similarly, Article 39 has provisions regarding right of children: (1) Each child shall have the right to his/her identity with the family name, and birth registration. (2) Every child shall have the right to education, health care nurturing, appropriate upbringing, sports, recreation and overall personality development from family and the State. (3) Every child shall have the right to formative child development, and child participation. (4) No child shall be employed in factories, mines, or in any other hazardous works. (5) No child shall be subjected to child marriage, illegal trafficking, kidnapping, or being held hostage. (6)

No child shall be subjected to recruitment or any kind of use in the army, police or armed groups, neglected, or used immorally, or abused physically, mentally, or sexually, or exploited through any other means, in the name of religious or cultural practices. (7) No child shall be subjected to physical, mental, or any other forms of torture at home, at school, or in any other places or situations. (8) Every child shall have the right to child friendly justice. (9) Children who are helpless, orphaned, physically impaired, victims of conflict and vulnerable, shall have the right to special protection and facilities from the State. (10) Any act contrary to Clause (4), (5), (6) and (7) shall be punishable by law, and children who have suffered from such an act shall have the right to be compensated by the perpetrator as provided for in law.

5. MEASURING LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS

The average primary level learning achievement score tested in 2001 was about 40 percent. The target for 2015 is 80 percent. However, a very extensive National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA) was conducted in 2011 at grade 8 in Nepali, Mathematics and Social Science and achievement score is 48.6%, 42.8% and 49.3% respectively. Similarly, in 2012 at grade 5, the achievement score is 59.9%, 53.6% and 53.9% in Nepali, Mathematics and English and that of grade 3 is 64.4% and 59.5% in Nepali and Mathematics respectively. There were high variations in learning achievement by the school type and geographical location as well. While the average score of the highest performing school was over 90 percent, the average score of the lowest performing school was below 15 percent. The institutional (private) schools scored better than that of community schools. The boys were ahead of girls in all eco-zones (Mountains, Hills and Terai) with a few exceptions.

At the regional level, both girls and boys from the eastern development region obtained the lowest average scores with 38.0 percent and 38.1 percent respectively; and the highest by girls and boys from the central development region with 47.6 percent and 47.8 percent respectively. Students from the valley surpassed students from other parts of the country. Major differences that NASA found between the eastern region and the rest were: teachers were less supervised, less supported technically, older and had difficulty in understanding the curricular goals and implementing the curriculum. Teachers and head teachers identified students' behaviour as a contributing factor for lower/higher achievement. However, the low STR (38:1) at lower secondary level in the eastern region gave enough room for improving their teaching and engaging students in learning.

NEPAL'S ACHIEVEMENTS 2015

EFA Goals		Achievements			
		Indicators	**2000**	**2015**	**Target for 2015**
Goal 1 -Early childhood care and education	Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children	GER, Primary	13%	77.7%	80%
Goal 2-Universal Primary education	Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, the disabled, and children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, and dalits have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality	NER, Primary	80.4%	96.2%	100%
Goal 3 –Youth and adult skills	Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs	Youth Literacy Rate (15-24 years)	70%	84.8%	95%
Goal 4 – Adult literacy	Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults	Adult Literacy (15+) GPI,(Adult Literacy)	48% 0.6	71.7% 0.68	75% 1.0
Goal 5- Gender equality	Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality	GPI, Primary GER GPI, Lower Secondary GER GPI, Secondary GER	0.86 o.83 0.80	1.09 1.09 1	1.0 1.0 1.0
Goal 6- Quality of education	Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills	Survival Rate up to Grade 5 Pupil Teacher Ratio	63 37	86.8 2.5	90 30

*Data as of 2011;Data as of 2003
source EFA NPA 2001-2015; School Level Educational Statistics of Consolidated Report 2009; Population Monograph of Nepal

The table indicates that Nepal has made considerable achievements in each goal in 15 years. For example, in Goal 1, Early childhood care and education, which had an aim of expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, Nepal's achievement in the year 2000 was 13 percent whereas in 2014/15, it maintained 77.7 percent, close to the target of 80 percent. Similarly, in Goal 2, Universal primary education, having an aim to ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls and disabled, and children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, and Dalits have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality, that was achieved by 80.4 percent in the year 2000 and with a very slow pace 96.2 percent achieved by 2015, against the target of 100 percent. The Goal 3, Youth and adult skills, with an aim to ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs, there was 70 percent achievement in the year 2000 and that moved to 84.8 percent in 2015 against the target of 95 percent.

The EFA Goal 4 on Adult literacy with an aim to achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults, the achievement in the year 2000 was 48 percent, which rose to 71.7 percent in the year 2015, very close to the target of 75 percent achievement. Similarly, Goal 5, Gender equality, aiming at eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality, with the indicators GPI, Primary GER, achieved 0.86 percent in the year 2000 which rose to 1.09 percent exceeding the target of 1.0 percent in the year 2015; with the indicator of GPI, Lower Secondary GER, achieved 0.83 percent in the year 2000 which rose to 1.09 percent exceeding the target of 1.0 percent in the year 2015. Similarly, with the indicators GPI, Secondary GER, achieved 0.80 percent in the year 2000, which rose to 1.0 percent meeting the target of 1.0 percent in the year 2015. The Goal 6, comprising Quality of education, aiming at improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills, with the indicators survival rate up to grade 5 was achieved by 63 percent in the year 2000, which rose to 86.8 percent against the target of 90 percent and with the indicator pupil teacher ratio was achieved by 37 percent in the year 2000, and 25 percent in the year 2015 against the target of 30 percent.

6. EMERGING CHALLENGES AND GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

6.1 Universal Primary/Basic Education

Despite the government's initiatives to expand the access by providing schools in easy walking distance, free school education, free textbooks, scholarships for girls and disadvantaged children, and midday meal for the children in poor rural districts, a large number of school-aged children remain out of school. The major proportion of the children belonging to disadvantaged and deprived groups/communities are girls and children with disabilities, and the children in extreme poverty constitute the major proportion of the excluded groups, who need serious attention.

6.2 Appropriate Learning and Life Skill Education

The NLSS-III (CBS, 2011) survey revealed that out of 23.9 million population aged 5 years and above 16.1 million (67.4 percent) have obtained some kind of education, but the remaining 7.8 million (32.6 percent) have not got any kind of educational provisions. Besides, a significant number of children who once enrolled in a school, dropped out without completing primary education cycle, and hence remained without basic literacy. Concerted efforts with proactive roles of both formal and non-formal education is crucial to address the challenge of addressing the issue.

6.3 Ensuring Literacy for All

The Global Monitoring Report 2013/14 (UNESCO, 2013) indicated 57 percent adult literacy in Nepal, with 71 percent males and 47 percent females as literate. The report projected the adult literacy rate to reach 66 percent (79 percent males and 53 percent females) in 2015. This means, nearly 7.5 million people would still be illiterate (women 70 percent) in 2015. An estimated 1 million children, including children not in school as well as children who enrol, but drop out without completing basic education add up to illiteracy figure every year. This situation poses an enormous challenge towards attaining universal literacy. The disparities in literacy remain very high between males and females, urban and rural, consumption quintiles, castes and ethnicity, eco-and-development regions, age groups, etc. Nonetheless, the Nepal Living Standards Survey III, 2010/11 reported literacy rates at 85.8% in the age group 10-14 years, with 87.3% for males and 84.3% for females, thus narrowing down gender gaps to 3 percentage points, with gender parity at 0.97. For the first time, the status of literacy has improved to this level, showing the effects of formal and non-formal education on children, adolescents, youths

and adults. This warrants serious attention to consolidate this gain
while still accelerating the progress with targeted interventions towards disadvantaged and
marginalized population groups

6.4 Addressing Social Equality and Gender Parity

Although gender parity in school enrolment in both primary and secondary levels has
increased to almost 0.99, the issue of gender equality in education, especially regarding
internal efficiency and learning achievement is a huge challenge. Succeeding EFA Global
Monitoring Reports from 2002 to 2013 have consistently pointed out the critical situation of
many countries, including Nepal for fulfilling the 2015 targets of gender and social equality.
There is a serious need for review of policies, programs and their implementation practices
in order to address this issue. It is also important to note that big gender gaps exist in adult
literacy and in other important areas such as vocational and technical education and
employment, especially relating to equitable numbers of female teachers as well as teachers
from disadvantaged castes and ethnic groups.

6.5 Improving Quality of Education

Ensuring quality of school education as well as NFE provision has been the most crucial
challenge towards achieving the EFA goals in Nepal. The prevalence of poor quality resulting
in grade repetition, school drop-out, longer time to complete primary and secondary cycles of
education have been the most crucial challenges in achieving the EFA goals as well as quality
of education. Besides, the production of school graduates with poor learning achievement and
without proper skills and knowledge is an enormous challenge.

The government has adopted a number of quality provisions, including appropriate teacher-
student ratio, class size and space per child. However, most of the schools and NFE provisions
are still far from the set norms. (DOE, ASIP, 2012). Qualified and dedicated teachers are crucial
for enhancement of quality. However, due to current political circumstances, political parties

and associated unions/organizations exert undue influence on teacher recruitments as well as management, creating barriers for accountability, performance based teachers' management and professional development.

Considering the achievements in education, particularly EFA, it is necessary for the government to come up with the priorities beyond 2015, leading to SSDP. Much of learning at the school level has become an accumulation of information rather than providing skills for critical thinking and problem solving. The ECD has been deviated from cognitive development to learning the content. The Ministry of Education has to focus more on out of school population, equity, and inclusion, multiple sets of materials beyond the textbooks with the reformed teaching/learning and assessment. Digitization and ICT application have become prominent parts in education for employability and life skills.

7. CONSULTATION PROCESS

The civil society stakeholders, the Ministry of Education, the UN agencies, i.e. UNESCO and UNICEF were consulted on different occasions. In order to shape the findings of the experience and knowledge of these stakeholders, a one day workshop was hosted on 21 September, 2015 in which representatives from Ministry of Education, Department of Education, university professors and researchers, members of parliament from different political parties, representatives of the NGOs and INGOs actively participated in the workshops. First, the NCE representative presented a brief scenario and objectives of the workshop followed by presentations from the UNESCO representative to familiarize the context, role of education for sustainable development, global perspective in EFA and achievements made by Nepal so far. Then the panelist presented on equity, inclusion, quality and lifelong learning, followed by the floor discussions and question-answer. The consultations also took the reference of Muscat Agreement 2014 and the Incheon Declaration, Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.

8. DISCUSSION OUTCOMES

The experts presented their views on four elements as a backbone of education for sustainable development. These ideas were supplemented by the floor discussions.

8.1. Equity

As one of the main outcomes of Incheon Declaration is "Gender equality in achieving the right to education for all" (Para 8), that aims to support gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning commitments, and to mainstream gender issues in teacher training and curricula;

and eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence in schools. The workshop focused on the factors, including the socioeconomic status, that have a scope to affect the performance and learning outcomes of the students. Some examples were drawn that the learning outcomes of the Dalit children and the girls are found quite low, whereas the Madhesi children have shown extremely low performance. The performance of the girls up to grade 3 was found very good, but same students' performance in grade 5 is quite low. Besides, many children, particularly the girls and the children from the disadvantaged communities face bullying in the schools, including the teacher's unfair treatment, and annoyance. Moreover, there is a lack of distributive justice, which needs to be provided with equal opportunity irrespective of basic services/materials to support students' interest.

The incentives provided by the government to motivate the school children are seized by the parents for forcing their children to attend the school, so that this provision is not adequately functional. Therefore, the incentive should have a direct connection to the students, comprising certain conditions. Examples were drawn from Brazil that of conditional employment to the parents, or making teachers responsible or mobilizing the university students to encourage the parents and children to enrol at the school from the diverse communities, or providing support to the family in an integrated way, i.e. education, health.

There are social, cultural, economic and geographical challenges that can be addressed through the local remedy. However, in the government's planning for sustainable development goals, teachers do not have the opportunity for participation. In the new constitution of Nepal, the education and health issues fall under the jurisdiction of the local government. Therefore, it is important to act locally.

- Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sushan Acharya

Access: Although significant progress has been observed in school education from an equity perspective with considerable increase in the access, the progress is not evenly distributed across the nation. Moreover, the data related to the access are controversial because there are variations between the data generated by the Ministry of Education and by Central Bureau of Statistics. This questions the authenticity of the data. It is likely that the MOE data is based on the day a child is enrolled at the school. Once the child is enrolled, s/ he is counted as a student even with his/her regular absenteeism. Therefore, there is a valid ground to question the MOE information, particularly from the lens of gender, caste, disability and topography. It is not that all districts,

locations or social groups share the same proportion of their school-going children. It means, the number of school-going children varies from one district to the another district/location.

Achievement: There are also variations in terms of the students' achievements. According to the NASA report, the disparity between boys and girls and across the caste is not remarkable in grade 3 and 5. However, the Janajati, Dalit and Madhesi students performed lower than that of their Brahmin and Kshtriya counterparts. For example, in grade 5 Mathematics, the Dalit students from Mid-Western tarai, hills, and Far Western tarai performed low. Similarly, no definite pattern was observed in the achievement of students from different language groups. For example, in grade 3, the Magar students performed very high in Nepali language assessment in the community schools. Likewise, in the grade 8 assessment, the students from non-Nepali home language background outperformed others, including those with Nepali home language.

Some studies have revealed that from a gender perspective, there is a trend of gradually decreasing the girls' performance in the higher grades. The NASA report suggested that the comparison between grade 3 and grade 5 achievements do not indicate any difference between the boys and the girls in Math in grade 3, but there were significant differences in their performances in grade 5.

In terms of location, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Parsa are the highest performing districts regarding the grade 3 and 5 students, in Mathematics, Nepali and English - Kathmandu being at the top and Lalitpur at the fourth tier. Whereas, the three districts, Jumla, Rolpa and Bardiya are at the bottom in terms of achievements.

One definite pattern that NASA reported based on grade 3 and 5 assessments is that very low socioeconomic status positively correlated with significantly lower learning achievement. The above scenarios indicate that there are significant diversities in school education. It also clearly revealed that it is hard to identify definite patterns in terms of access or performance. In this context, it is important to consult the teachers and the local level stakeholders and use their expertise. However, MOE mostly hires foreign consultants to work in areas of equity, inclusion and gender, which will not produce effective outcomes.

Then what next?: Area specific intervention is necessary in the kind of our settlement and diversity. The blanket approach in terms of caste, ethnicity and gender cannot be effective because the Dalits in the southern belt are performing lower than that of the Dalits in the other parts. Similarly, the girls in Kathmandu valley are performing far better than the performance of the girls in other locations. Therefore, area specific strategic intervention is appropriate, which will be convenient as the new constitution has made the local government responsible for the school education.

We provide incentive. It appears that the incentive is for the parents to send their children to the school. If so, why not to directly support the parents? However, such support should be conditional. Even the developed counties have not been able to afford unconditional grants. Nepal definitely cannot. There is a division among the donors, whether to provide conditional or unconditional grants. Therefore, the government of Nepal, particularly MOE has to put its feet firm on the ground and decide doable and good programs for Nepal rather than accepting the donor driven grants.

There are different models of working for equity:

- Bolsa Familia of Brazil, which gives cash to preferably the female head of the household, is considered a highly successful program. This conditional program has been replicated in other countries.
- Giving work to parents, e.g. China and Japan. In both countries, incentives are tied to conditions such as school attendance.
- Giving responsibility to schools to ensure equity through social mobilization, e.g. South Korea and India.
- Mobilizing the university students with minimum incentives to live and work with and for disadvantaged ethnic groups, e.g. India. Nepal's NDS program is also a good example, though it did not survive.
- Taking a family as a unit and providing an integrated package of incentive, e.g. Canada and the USA.

The local system needs to take the primary responsibility, but the central level should ensure that the local or provincial government establishes an equitable quality education system. Both levels need to provide an equal field to play according to the essence of the distributive justice.

If we agree that equity is a culturally, socially and economically intertwined local issue, then the remedy should be sought at the local level. Therefore, MOE, instead of hiring the expatriate experts to design or advise on inclusive education, gender equality and equity in education should hire the experts from Nepal, because an outsider would not understand the local complexities, subtleties blended with the local culture, social set up and economy that shape inclusion and equity related phenomena.

8.2. Quality

As far as the quality is concerned, it's important to mention the main outcomes of the Incheon Declaration as follows:

"Commit to quality education and to improving learning outcomes" (Para 9)
- Strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and mechanisms to measure progress.
- Ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.
- Foster creativity and knowledge, and ensures the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills.
- Develop the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED).
- Support the implementation of the Global Action Program on ESD launched at the UNESCO World Conference on ESD in Aichi-Nagoya in 2014.

The Incheon Declaration expresses its commitment to quality education and to improving learning outcomes, which requires strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and mechanisms to measure progress. The Declaration, therefore, ensures that the teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed spectrums, in order to foster creativity and knowledge and ensure the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem-solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills.

The consultation workshop revealed a challenge to redefine the 'quality of education'. One of the definitions is excellence (international recognition), expectation (market) and ability (individual skills). Investment in education takes place in priority. Some people invest in quality, some in input or process or output. Input focuses on the quality of the teachers, materials and the environment. The teacher is the most important entity. The process focus is chiefly relevant to the teachers, students, community and the parents where students' active engagement is crucial to get correct knowledge and skills.

In this model, investment is focused on teachers for continuous coaching and learning (self-paced learning). The schools adopt new knowledge and recognize it. Teachers are expected to be well acquainted with the technology. The community involvement and partnership are crucial for quality education. The output focus is based on the indicators to check students' achievement in different levels, and index that considers achievement results in figures.

In Nepal, layers of the officers are assigned to ensure the quality of education, which is not effective in practice. Quality comes only when the teachers are trusted, and their capacity strengthened through their involvement in policy and planning. The participants expressed their anxiety to learn a big shift of the students from the public schools to the private schools. The government wanted to see a significant shift in quality by empowering the teachers through the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) training but it couldn't make a visible difference. Therefore, it is important not only to clarify the input, process and the product, but also to ensure the accountability of the head teachers and adequate representation of the teachers, students and the school management committees.

Prof. Dr. Bidya Nath Koirala

QUALITY EDUCATION: HOW TO ACHIEVE IT?

Quality education: as it is defined

The term quality education has been defined in many ways (e.g. UNESCO, 2005; UNICEF, 2000). It has been country specific, project specific, and author specific. But these definitions converge in three parameters viz., global excellence from meritocracy point of view; employability and/or entrepreneurship skills from market and/or expectation point of view; and all-round development of the learner from his/her innate capacity point of view.

The first definition implies that the quality learners must be capable for global competition no matter in which country s/he studied. The requirement of TOEFL, GRE and other standardized tests for the university entrance is an example of it. The second definition focuses on the relevancy of education for the world of work. This also expects in students the life skills, soft skills, hard skills, job harvesting skills, including that of entrepreneurship skills. The third definition aims to unveil the learner's curricular and the non-curricular potentialities that s/he possesses.

Quality strategies: the framework under system approach

The literatures available on quality education strategies can be grouped into the system approach called input, process, and product. The strategy advanced by Education International in which Nepali teachers' Unions now Confederation are the members can be grouped under input. According to Education International, quality education demands three things (a) quality teacher (b) quality materials and (c) quality environment. By quality teachers, EI advocates for recruitment and professionalization of the already recruited teachers through training, exposures, and self-learning. By quality materials, it talks about quality supply from the education administration. By quality environment, EI looks for negotiated environment at school so that the teachers can perform their assigned task without any threat.

Under the process level, quality education strategies (Ethiopian Team, 2005) looks for (a) engaged students, sharing culture among them, connection of the learning with their prior knowledge, skills and attitude, and expansion of the knowledge as well as the skills that the students already possess, (b) coached and/or self-learning teachers (c) involved and inclusive parents, and (d) adaptive as well as recognized schools.

Under the product level, quality education strategies (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) searches for indicators and index. Quality indicators express quality of the learners through his/her knowledge, skill, and attitude. Indexes, on the other hand, describe quality in learners' achieved score.

Vocationalization: what and how

The four skills that we talk these days are life skill, soft skill, hard skill, and job harvesting skill to make education relevant. In order to prepare students in these skills, three ways

can be done (a) change the teaching technique. For this, teachers can use project work, student research, and joint research (b) provide short term training in collaboration with the private organization (c) organize experience sharing and/or vision sharing sessions each week with the students. Local entrepreneurs, experts, and visionary people can be invited for such discussion sessions. The reason is that we spent only 3% of the education budget to vocational education, and we are not in a position to exceed this amount. Culturally Dalits and Janajati have all the four previously mentioned skills. However, they are not regarded as experts because they are looked down from the stereotypical castism perspectives. It is where I proposed the thee ways to make education what people on the ground expect as janabadi Shiksha, janamukhi Shiksha, samajbadi Shiksha, vyabaharik Shiksha, vaijyanik Shiksha, etc.

8.3. Inclusion

As one of the main outcomes of Incheon Declaration is "Inclusion and equity in and through education" (Para 7), that aims to address all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes, basically considering inclusion and equity in and through education as a cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and to commit to make the necessary changes in education policies and focusing on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities.

The equity, quality, inclusion and lifelong learning are inextricably linked to each other in education. Quality is not simply an excellence, but also a satisfaction and equity are the foundation of inclusion. Therefore, lifelong learning is the product of quality and inclusion. Inclusion aims to include everybody for his or her empowerment. Inclusion has two levels - structural inclusion that targets the groups with provisions and functional inclusion that translates the provisions into actions. Though full inclusion is a challenge, structural opening in a system should create a condition for meaningful participation, in another word voiced participation, resulting in empowerment. One of the most crucial elements of inclusion is emancipation that is freedom from all types of the social, cultural, educational and economic evils.

Inclusion needs to move from charity based to rights based approach. We have some structural inclusion, but the functional inclusion is largely missing. For instance, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities came in 2006 that was adopted by Nepal in 2009. However, it only provided the elements of structural inclusion not being able to address the needs of the differently able people. Though the constitution of Nepal has structural provisions for inclusion, the beneficiary groups are not able to enjoy these provisions, which mean the functional inclusion is not taking place.

The conclusion was drawn to declare all the schools in Nepal as inclusive schools, guaranteeing the necessary infrastructures accordingly. The time has come to move from structural to functional inclusion to change the attitude of the key stakeholders arousing the feeling of inclusive teacher, inclusive parent, inclusive school management committee and inclusive student.

Prof. Dr. Basu Dev Kafle

INCLUSION IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Inclusion, as a vision and strategy, means to include the people from all quarters of life for empowerment. Inclusion does not come automatically, but it moves through the myriad of active presence as a part of structural inclusion. It embraces active participation (voiced participation, enablement for empowerment (functional inclusion), emancipation that is freedom for all the socioeconomic cultural events, which can be called full inclusion. Inclusion can also be said as subtotal of equity, quality, and lifelong learning, followed by the principles of full participation, human dignity, acceptance and respect for diversity.

Inclusion is a strategy to penetrate through the process of social integration, but it is not a welfare provision embedded in charity and wishes. It is neither a regular education to categorize people, and students placing them

in a regular setting without the needed support services, nor it a right based approach denied to many but privileged to selected few.

What is done in the name of inclusion?
The federal democratic republic constitution (Sept 20, 2015) of Nepal has ensured participation of PDNAs in different levels of the State - first time right based approach to the education and other service of PND.

Part of the inclusion in education has embraced teacher training, child friendly school, non-violence teaching, gender responsive teaching, inclusive school teaching, resource class based delivery (instruction), Special Education Training (42 days), one-year B.Ed-SNE program and M.Ed. in SNE program. Similarly, little adjustment has been made in the curriculum and the textbooks. However, no adjustment except the added writing hours has been made an examination.

Representation in SMC/management is few and almost rare. Inclusion is about a change, reorientation of the education system to respond to individual needs; this is well said but little practiced. Provisions are also made for providing ID cards, scholarship, and tuition fees. However, very few people are engaged in teaching (about 250), small-scale business.

Recommendations:
Considering the status of inclusion in education in Nepal, following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Ensure that all schools are inclusive and the quality is the concomitant of inclusion.
- Attitudinal change: The structural change does not matter most (facilities, structural but functional change). Acceptance and respect for diversity (difference) may have been caused by difficulty, disadvantage or disability.
- Integrate support services for not specializing them through institutionalized approaches.
- Trained teacher service.
- Keep the system well informed that all can learn with the provision of stimulating learning environment.

- Ensure effective implementation of the existing laws, acts, rules and regulations and adopt the paradigm shift strategy like that of the new constitution from charity to rights, and acceptance of diversity as a rule, not as an option and choice.
- Adopt community based services and approaches.
- Consider inclusive democracy, inclusive economy, inclusive employment and functional implementation UNCRPD 2006 Nepal 2009.
- Ensure acceptance of diversity as a rule, not as an option and choice.

8.4. Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is a broad generic term that is understood as a learning journey of "learning to be". It is interchangeably used as other closely related concepts of lifelong, permanent, recurrent, continuing, or adult education and learning organizations. For some, it includes learning from childhood and early schooling, while others treat it in terms of the adult learning process continues to progress in learning and acquiring recognized qualification utilizing open education scheme. In sum, lifelong learning is a structure to important process designed to provide any citizen with a constantly updated personal and professional development. It is a tool which enables people to face change, to adapt to the requirements of the labour market, to take responsibility for his or her own life, to attain personal fulfillment and to assume the responsiveness for an active citizen. The Incheon Declaration has drawn a provision of "Quality lifelong learning opportunities for all" (Para 10), which has the following provisions:

- Includes equitable and increased access to quality technical and vocational education and training and higher education and research.
- Provision of flexible learning pathways acquired through non-formal and informal education is important.
- Strengthening science, technology and innovation, especially ICTs must be harnessed to strengthen education systems.

Lifelong learning has very little space in the policy documents of the Government of Nepal. One of the reasons may be a lack of a clear concept of lifelong learning. The instruments are yet to be developed to track the survival ratio of the students at the school. However, according to the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2015), Nepal considers lifelong learning as a means of (a) literacy development, (b) self-sufficiency, (c) social wellbeing and income generation.

Moreover, from the Nepalese perspective, following are the basic elements of the lifelong learning:
a) Literacy as a foundation of lifelong learning,
b) A belief in the idea of lifetime human potential and the possibility of its realization,
c) Efforts to facilitate achievement of the skills, knowledge, and aptitudes necessary for a successful life,
d) Recognition that learning takes place in many modes and places, including formal educational institutions and non-formal/informal experiences such as employment, civic participation, open and distance education informal self-initiated activity, and
e) The need to provide integrated support systems adapted to individual differences that encourage and facilitate individuals to achieve competence and self-direction.

Lifelong learning is a need-based learning from the Early-Childhood Development (ECD) to the adults, a kind of pathway – changing modes of learning, including the ICT as a key tool. The alternative modes will require investment. Lifelong learning is contextual that helps to achieve the needs. Internationally, knowledge economy is given due consideration that requires the citizens to keep maintaining competence.

There is an ongoing debate of literacy. Literacy is a continuum that takes place in various levels. For instance, being able to write the name, achieving skills equivalent to grade 3, grade 5 and equivalent to basic education are the literacy levels. Therefore, it is necessary to move from one level of literacy to another level so that learning gets a continuum. Lifelong learning provides the impetus to social well-being and helps cope with the economic needs. The paradigm of needs is dynamic – subject to change.

Learning may take place elsewhere in any mode by using any means. However, we have no means to measure such a learning and determine its equivalence. There is a need to increase investment in non-formal education. Blended, learning can be the most useful in which there is a need to integrate formal, informal and non-formal learning. Emphasis should be given to develop a one structure of learning that contributes to personal attributes, active citizenship and employability.

Prof. Dr. Tanka Nath Sharma

LIFELONG LEARNING UTILIZING OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION TO ENSURE EDUCATION FOR ALL

Introduction

In a country like Nepal, where the majority of youths and adults are not adequately literate, there is a need for developing education and skills through various modes and pathways of learning. These pathways are formal, non-formal and informal education to provide access and opportunity to every citizen who wish to continue their education, to learn and upgrade skills and engage in continuing education and lifelong learning process (NFE, 2015). Upgrading or advancing their education through lifelong learning by utilizing open learning system has become an urgent need. This calls for a system of qualification framework, recognizing prior learning and a clear pathway for education and training. It means recognition, permeability, transfer, cross recognition, and portability of education and training qualifications, where qualifications are defined as the outcomes of learning.

Concept of Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is a broad, generic term that is difficult to define with specificity. It is understood as a learning journey of "learning to be". Its meaning overlaps or it is interchangeably used as other closely related concepts, such as lifelong, permanent, recurrent, continuing, or adult education and learning organizations. For some, it includes learning from childhood and early schooling, while others treat it in terms of the adult learning process continues to progress in learning and acquiring recognized qualification utilizing open education scheme. It has grown to a global concept, with differing manifestations that vary with national, educational, political and economic priorities, and with cultural and social value systems. In the context of Nepal, where the majority of people have no basic education, it is understood that it opens up avenues for learning for all utilizing formal, non-formal and informal modes of learning with the national provisions for assessment, certification and recognition of learning from less formal and open modes of learning (Jarvis, P. 2001; Jarvis, 2009).

Although there is no official definition of Lifelong learning in Nepal, but based on the policies and plans of the Government of Nepal, lifelong learning is learning throughout life by means of informal, non-formal and formal modes of learning. Lifelong learning is beyond educational process. It focuses on a learner's potential, demand and interest that change together with his/her needs (Acharya, 2014). Lifelong learning is relative. Developed countries are using lifelong learning in order to address the issue of "knowledge economy", economic productivity and active citizenship in line with globalization. However, developing countries such as Nepal consider lifelong learning as means of literacy development, self-sufficiency, social wellbeing and income generation (MOE, 2015). It is further understood in Nepal as a source of empowering and liberating oppressed people. Lifelong learning is embedded in the Nepalese society as an ongoing informal process of learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together (UNESCO, 1996).

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. 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. This system is to be necessitated by the new technologies of communication-information and the emergence of new topologies of learning which incorporates

the formal, informal and non-formal aspects of social, cultural and work life. Such lifelong learning system utilizing open and distance education can be operational 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 (Sharma, 2011).

Lifelong Learning and Open and Distance Education
Lifelong learning is of key importance for individuals of all ages and holds an array of benefits for them and society. It promotes their full economic and societal participation, enables them to be better informed and be active citizens, contributes to their personal well-being and fulfilment, supports their creativity and innovation, and increases their efficiency as workers or volunteers. Learning is intrinsic and we engage in learning throughout our whole lives (NFE, 2015). The scope of lifelong learning is quite broad and it covers both formal and non-formal educational settings. Lifelong learning includes learning for personal purposes such as personal fulfilment and adaptability, social purposes such as social inclusion, civic purposes such as active citizenship and employment-related purposes such as employability (Jarvis, 2009;). Open and distance education opens up flexibility, multiple options and individual learners' choices to learners. Use of ODE can make lifelong learning instrumental and accessible to all learners regardless of distance, time, and education levels.

Lifelong Learning Programs supported by ODE will create a better base for a wider cooperation and harmonization of different educational institutions, programs, constructing better and more flexible learning pathways connecting basic, higher, vocational and adult education as well as the labour market. Ideally, it will engage different stakeholders in constructive dialogue among schools, initial as well as adult vocational education and training institutions, universities, trade unions and enterprises (Torres, 2014).

Open and distance learning can resolve some of the geographical and time barriers faced by many potential learners by mobilizing information and communication technologies, including internet access and video/ telephone conferencing. Improvements in communications infrastructure increases in the capabilities of personal computers and the widespread accessibility to computers at modest hourly rates, or free of charge in the case of public libraries or in community learning centers, make it an increasingly viable mechanism for learning. Barriers to increased use of open and distance learning include the fact that, notwithstanding the positive developments recorded above, many people do not have regular access to the internet. In addition, the development costs of creating suitable open learning programs should not be underestimated. It is also important to recognize that to be fully effective, open and distance learning methods of delivery need to be supplemented by support mechanisms that allow direct teacher-learner contact.

Conclusion
It seems that open and distance education leading to lifelong learning gains an educational value. As new educational ideal is associated, at the level of practice, with policies of challenging social exclusion, we can say that lifelong learning supported by open and distance learning constitutes a radical need, the satisfaction of which presupposes new institutional frameworks. Open and distance education can address the learning needs of all learners from the basic to higher education level, it is advisable to move forward with adequate preparation both in terms of physical, material, technological and human resources and facilitate interaction of learners with learning materials and teachers at a distance.

The national qualification system is required to be in place to institutionalize lifelong learning and strengthening ODE. National Qualification Authority, the authorized national body, will be responsible for formulating national competency standards, developing assessment tools, assessing qualifications and awarding recognized certificates to those who succeed in the assessment.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

Nepal is in a position to achieve many of the EFA goals, though not fully. Achievements relating to goal 1, 2 and 5 are remarkable in terms of a number of indicators. Even the youth literacy rate of age group 15-24 years, an integral part of goal 3 and 4 has improved remarkably. There have been significant progresses in school enrolment with more girls than boys, increased female teachers, teachers' licensing completed, ECD enrolment increased, including the ECD centers, gender parity at primary level increased, EMIS has progressed significantly; regular bi-annual publications of Flash Report I, Flash Report II and Consolidated Report of School Level Educational Statistics of Nepal provide disaggregated data on agreed indicators in the EFA NPA and SSRP. Decennial censuses and periodic household surveys such as NLSS, NLFS, MICS and NDHS provide and substantiate the data on school and higher education, and on NFE and literacy, and School level education related data are placed on the DOE's Website: www.doe.gov.np.

Still the children between 5 percent and 22 percent of the poorest families, street children, children of seasonal or occasional labourers, Dalits, particularly Terai Dalits such as Musahar, Chammar, Dom, Halkhor and Dusadh. Rural mountain communities and some are still out of easy access to schools, especially lower secondary and secondary levels. In some Terai, Mid and Far Western districts, the social barriers are still impeding the girls from getting access to schooling. The quality of primary school education as well as non-formal classes remain poor, including the lack of minimum enabling conditions in terms of infrastructure, learning environment, and teaching learning practices. Moreover, the studies indicate that the approach, methods, techniques and skills provided to teachers in their training are in most of the cases not materialized into the classrooms for the benefit of the learners, resulting in poor learning achievement of children.

With regard to achieving the goals of the national EFA program, two issues have been recognized: – 1) lack of effective provisions for out-of-school and dropout children, and 2) lack of systemic linkages between formal and non-formal education. These issues still need serious consideration as a significant number of school age children are not enrolled in school. Further, school sector still faces big differences between NER and GER, indicating that a large section of children is enrolled late. Besides, an overwhelming number of children drop out of the school system without completing even the primary education cycle (DOE, Flash Report 1, 2012/13). Moreover, the EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2013), reveals that over 7.5 million adults (15 years and above), with 70 percent females would still be illiterate in Nepal in 2015. The provisions of NFE with regard to adult literacy, female literacy, post literacy and income generation activities all combined cover about 250,000 adults a year (NFEC, 2012/13). The total coverage by CTEVT and affiliated institutions at TSLC level (secondary level) and diploma level (higher secondary level) combined is about 11,000. This indicates the total coverage remains too far from the needs and demands.

Therefore, the focus should be about the transformation of schools as a part of the system of society that cares individual child so that no child is left behind unattended:
- Focus on universal participation and completion: Now that 95 percent of school age children are enrolled in school at primary level, special strategy associated with robust and computerized EMIS at the school level should be developed to track and support the disadvantaged children to bring in school and complete primary education with an acceptable level of learning. Such strategy should be an integral part of the overall strategy of free and compulsory school education.

- Focus on Learning and Teachers: Attention needs to be paid towards effective

learning activities for the many diverse backgrounds of learners. While development plan for the Education 2030, 'learning outcomes' should be the most focused area. The provisions of highly qualified and trained teachers are vital to ensure quality education and learning for all, especially the disadvantaged. This would require reasonable salaries and career paths for teachers at all levels, including for non-formal education and literacy, ECD and pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education.

- Focus on Flexibilities: Only formal education cannot address the educational needs of learners with various backgrounds. For this education should be provided using multiple methods, including flexibility in time, varieties in modes of learning opportunity, relevance- and needs-based curriculum, etc. It has been realized in many countries, including Nepal that the conventional school system alone cannot meet the learning needs of all learners. It is essential to recognize that traditional ways of organizing education need to be reinforced by innovative methods. The interest of both educators and learners in the use of internet and multimedia technologies is crucial for learners in line with the fundamental rights of all people to learn.

10. THEMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to shaping education 2030 in Nepal, the education 2030 agenda might be framed by:
- A comprehensive, overarching goal based upon key principles of access, equity, inclusion and quality on the perspective of lifelong learning,
- Translated into a range of global objectives, global targets and related indicators,
- Specific target setting and indicator development at national level.

To conclude, it is worth considering the Incheon Declaration, with a view to reshaping the vision for free and compulsory education with human rights perspectives to "Ensure the provision of 12 years of publicly-funded, equitable quality primary and secondary education, of which at least nine years are free and compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes".

10.1. Equity
- Create the school atmosphere to ensure fair and equal treatment to all students, guaranteeing their safety, security and provisions for quality learning outcomes, within the parameter of distributive justice.
- Provide incentives to the parents and students separately so that the incentives become meaningful to ensure that both fulfil their responsibilities to achieve the goals of quality education.
- Ensure safe and gender-friendly school infrastructure, gender-sensitive curricula, learning materials and teacher training to address gender equality.

10.2. Quality
- Provide comprehensible and contextual definition of quality education so that the relevant stakeholders act to achieve quality learning outcomes.
- Provide at least one year of compulsory pre-primary education as a part of an extended basic education cycle.
- Specify the focus of financing in education, whether it is for teachers, materials and environment or on the process or the output.
- Draw a policy with clear roles and responsibilities to ensure quality of education and provision of effective mechanisms for the on-going teacher professional development with the assurance of its reflection into the learning outcomes.

10.3. Inclusion
- Draw up clear guidelines providing simple definitions of inclusion and ensure both structural and functional inclusion are in place to benefit the target groups.
- Develop a policy to declare all schools in Nepal as inclusive schools and ensure its effective enforcement.

10.4. Lifelong Learning
- Provide clear policies and concept of lifelong learning.
- Develop necessary infrastructure and provide opportunities for youth and adults to develop life skills and other learning outcomes to be attained.
- Develop a mechanism and necessary instruments to measure the competence and skills of the citizens developed by informal and non-formal means and provide accreditation of such learning.