

Problems and Prospects of Quality Education in Nepal

Krishna Raj Acharya*

Education is the mirror of a society and the rate of economic development depends on status and quality of education. Education is an important source of increase in productivity in human resources, definitely increase in national output. The quality of education in Nepal is poor due to absence of practical education, lack of expert manpower, poverty, geographical setting, gender bias, lack of appropriate infrastructure, illiteracy of parents and lack of appropriate government policy. In this paper attempt had diverted to explore the relationship between quality education (dependent variable) and investment in education, economic growth, teacher student ratio and qualification of teachers were taken as independent variables. The investment in education is approximately 12 percent of total budget so that the quality of education cannot be materialized according to the wish of policy makers. When there was an interview with 25 planner and 35 implementation agents regarding to the quality of education, there is the significance difference between these agents on the basis of their opinions. In their responses, it was found that they are confident in the context of contents and it is not practically used. People are not attracted in education because the job market is not sure so that they try to go abroad to earn money in early age. People are not interested because it is beyond the access of low- middle

* Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur (Nepal) and currently teaching in Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus as well as has a responsibility of Head of Department of Economics E-mail: <krishna@ratnarajyalaxmicampus.edu.np>

and low income people. There was positive relationship between investment in education and economic growth in Nepal.

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1. Introduction

Education is widely recognized as one of the fundamental factors contributing to the process of development. No country can achieve sustainable development without sustainable investment in human capital. It raises the people's productivity & creativity and promotes entrepreneurship & technological advances. Further, it plays a crucial role in securing economic and social progress and improving income distribution. An effective and innovative education system opens enormous opportunities for individuals, whereas weak educational system can result in declining standards of living, social exclusion and unemployment. Hence, there is a strong need to strive for excellence and quality. The 11th Plan recognized that higher growth rates would require a large expansion in both "quantity and quality" of formal education and skill formation. The Right to Education (RTE) will ensure the needed quantitative expansion to bring all the eligible school going age population into formal education stream at the elementary level. But evidences show that the key problems at the school level education are high drop-out and low retention rates. It's not just years of education that matters, the issue of quality at school level is equally important (Jain, 2014).

To reap the benefits of education to the extent possible, the policy makers need to address the dual challenge of increasing the quantity of education, while assuring the high level of quality of education. To achieve high standards of quality, nation requires both establishing quality assurance system and patterns of evaluation as well as promoting a quality culture within institutions or schools. It is generally seen in developing nations that education competes for scarce public resource with other urgent needs such as healthcare or infrastructure. Getting sufficient public resource is a major challenge across all the nations. In India, a large part of the resources for education come from the state governments which places a pressure on their finances. This calls for a relook at the financing of education. At the same time, it is argued that successful learning outcomes to a significant extent depends on enabling environments at schools, at

home, at work etc. Cognitive skills may be developed in formal schooling, but they may also come from the family, the peers, the culture, and so forth (Ibid).

Education is an important instrument in shaping, sharpening and directing an individual, the society and the nation towards achieving the high, broad based and sustainable economic development. It is also regarded as the indicator to the future. A good and practical education gives cognitive tools to students to solve real-life problems due to practical knowledge. It is a key driver of economic prosperity and social mobility. Management of quality and practical education must be kept in highest priority of the long run development of a nation.

Economic Progress is uneven between and within regions and countries in the world. The major challenges are unmet commitments, inadequate resources, lack of focus and accountability, insufficient dedication to suitable development, financial global crisis. In addition, there are 39 million girls fail to attend primary schools (Biamba, 2013). In the context of Nepal, it states that education is a key factor for reducing poverty and maintaining sustainable development (ADB, 2010). However, achieving the equitable access to quality education to all the people is not an easy task. We efforts to reduce poverty fail, then quality of education agenda of Nepal cannot convert into reality. High economic growth with equal distribution of increased output may ensure higher level of primary school enrollment and move in the way of quality education in Nepal.

Poverty, ignorance, unemployment, less used syllabus and defective government policy is the main problem in the way of quality education in Nepal. Lack of practical education may be the best cause of low educational achievement in Nepal. After the restoration of democracy in Nepal, there was the flow of wind of liberalization. Thereafter, education sector also open for investment to the private sector according to the model of Public Private Partnership (PPP) model of development. Gradually, education moves in the hands of private sector and they have syndicate in this welfare sector. Education became expensive and move far way from access of poor, suppressed and remote lived people. Rich people have access on better and job oriented education so that the gap between rich and poor is widening in the context of Nepal.

Curricula, text books and resources may play the greater role to maintain the quality education at schools. These educational materials may address the aspirations of people in the society. Such materials may upmost the human ability, social harmony and social values of the local communities and encouragements of ethnic minorities for the quality education (Lapka, 2017). Conference paper of UNESCO opines that there would have been minimization of discrimination including caste, clan, sex, religion and races in practice and it has been closely related to backward population (UNESCO, 2003). Ministry of Education asserts that government has brought plans for the access of education to students in community schools. It is assumed that access is the first element absence of which quality may not be expected and without access, quality education may not be imagined because quality is found from the competition of all not from fewer population (MoE, 2010).

If there is quality education, then marginal productivity of labor can increased. It is an indicator of higher output of a nation. Increased in output has twin consequences; in the one hand it increased export and on the other it substitute import. Earning of foreign currencies is possible and outflow of domestic currency can be controlled. Quality education is useful to mobilize local resources so that there are additional employment opportunities. There is chance of technological advancement and innovation due to quality education in a country. It is ultimately useful to move a country in the mainstream of development.

2. Objectives of the Study

Education is an important instrument of development. Better, applied and vocational education is useful to increase output. This paper is concerned with the problem and prospects of quality education in Nepal. The specific objectives of this paper are :

1. Problems of quality education in Nepal
2. Possibilities and prospects of quality education in Nepal

3. Methodology of preparation of this Paper

A questionnaire with 11 items was constructed after a study of the literature on the basis of objectives and mailed to 60 members of a target population to planners and implementers of quality education in Nepal. Out of them 25 were planner and 35 were implementation

agents. The 'planners' comprised of the members of the designer of curriculum, Ministry of Education personnel involved with quality education, vocational experts of the Curriculum was done on the basis of quota sampling with convenience m Development Center, members of the National Planning Commission and related personnel, and popular educators. Those designated 'implementers' were the administrative and supervisory personnel of the Kathmandu. During 2019, over a one-month period and with one follow-up procedure, 60 (100%) of the target group returned filled questionnaires. The questionnaire required the subjects to respond to the 11 items using a five-point Likert scale, from 'one' indicating strong agreement to 'five' indicating strong disagreement. The responses of respondents were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted using the simple mean value calculation in this study to explore the perception of planners and implementers of quality education in Nepal.

4. Data, Discussion, Analysis and Interpretation

Nepal is least developed country and try to graduates in the list of developing nations by 2022 AD. In this connection, quality of education may be the best instrument. Quality education can increase productivity of labor so that higher output is possible and the products produced by those types of manpower will be with better quality. GDP gap is the basic characteristics of least developed country and can reduced with the help of better education in the sense that it is related on the basis of available resources in the nation. Quality education can change and increase knowledge, skill, attitude and behaviour of the people. Education is the best way to transform unskilled manpower to skill and productive manpower.

In spite of quality debate in education coming from long time, there is still no universal acceptable definition and variables of quality. The concept of quality of education is multifaceted and is articulated differently by different scholars in the world based on their empirical evidences and situation of locality. There are two aspects of quality in education : Quality of the system as a whole and Quality of what the system offers to the students/learners. The terms like efficiency, effectiveness, equity and quality have often been used in Malcolm Baldrige Quality components; it consists of : a Leader setting values, systems and level of accountability; a System that consist of four building blocks of education and business management processes, human resource development, strategic

planning and information and analysis; Measurement of progress which uses quantitative indicators of performance; and the Goal which is student's focus. Baldrige holds the view of accelerating improvement efforts by serving as a framework to align institutional activities for achieving ever improving outcomes (Adams, 1993).

It is therefore not easy to define quality in the context of education. According to Hoy (2000), quality in education is an evaluation of the process of educating which enhances the need to achieve and develop the talents of the customers of the process and at the same time meets accountability standards set by the clients who pay for the process or outputs from the process of educating. Goddard and Leask (1992) highlighted the definition of quality as simply meeting the requirements of customers. For education, they have mentioned different customers, who include parents, government, students, teachers, employers and institutions that all look for different characteristics of quality. Education being a service and not a product, its quality cannot lie exclusively in the final output. Its quality should also be manifested in delivery process. The quality of education should also take into account determinants as provision of teachers, building, curriculum, equipments, textbooks and teaching processes are the main components of quality education (Grisay & Mahlck, 1991). They opt for three dimensional composition of quality of education comprising the quality of human and material resources available for teaching (inputs), the quality of teaching practices (process) and quality of results (outcomes). They further add that here are some indicators which are frequently by planners are approximate means of measuring quality are repetition, dropouts, promotion and transition rates. In 1990, the Jometien's World Declaration on Education for All identified quality of education in terms of assuring an increase in children's cognitive development as a prerequisite for achieving the fundamental goal of equity. UNESCO's education quality definition emphasized more on "lifelong learning" and "relevance" to be most important

Quality is not a unitary concept but involves multiple perspectives. The Communiqué of the World Conference on Higher Education 2009 states that "Quality criteria must reflect the aim of cultivating in students critical and independent thought and the capacity of learning throughout life. They should encourage innovation and diversity" (UNESCO, 2009).

In the context of Nepal, technical and non-technical are two types of education by which we can classify whether it is market oriented or not. If it is job oriented, it can be assumed that it is quality education in the sense that it is useful for their livelihood and can create job in the market. Students with non-technical education have no technical knowledge so that they should depend on the job offered by others. However, the students of technical disciplines have a capacity of job creation so that they should not depend on others.

Education if matched with the available natural resources then its quality and application will be high. Quality further depends on curriculum, instructors, pedagogy, suitable government policy, practicability and so on. In Nepalese context, our curriculum partially based on the curriculum of western countries and the situation of our country is different so that the output of education is not as expected from the side of policy makers. Again one matter should be relevant to state that the students with technical education also not interested to stay here because the income in abroad is higher when it is compared with Nepal. The condition of student enrollment in Tribhuvan University in technical and non-technical education is stated in the sense that it is one indicator to measure quality education.

Table-1 : Distribution of Students Enrolled in Several Technical and Non-Technical Disciplines in Tribhuvan University Constituent and Affiliated Colleges of Nepal

Year	Number of Students (Technical)				Total
	Engineering	Medicine	Science & Technology	Ag.	
2009	5666	2012	12779	860	21317
2010	5601	2007	12310	1181	21099
2011	5929	2084	12348	1101	21462
2012	12190	7564	14584	942	35280
2013	3002	7129	16649	1334	28114
2014	8458	3811	20266	1305	33840
2015	7444	5417	16589	-	29450
2016	7322	1582	27349	-	36253

Year	Number of Students (Non-Technical)			Total
	Education	Humanities	Management	
2009	91923	60611	75965	228499
2010	147457	68013	94189	309659
2011	151114	67129	109606	327849
2012	144914	86212	111888	343014
2013	219355	81153	167599	468107
2014	150863	54404	141840	347107
2015	122454	43100	133828	299382
2016	82805	35541	124568	242914

Source : Tribhuvan Bulletin Special, 2019 (p. 47).

The number of students in non-technical education is 86 percent which has low applicability in job market and huge numbers of people are fall in this category. Only 14 percent students are getting technical education in Nepal. There is quota in technical education and is expensive also. So that poor students with average cranial capacity are not able to learn this branch of knowledge. Only 0.8 percent students are reading agriculture since two-third of total population is engaged in agricultural activities for their livelihood. If there is balance in policy two-third students should learn agriculture in Nepal. Tribhuvan University has 82 percent of students out of total students of Nepal, even she has 11 universities.

Do we need less non-technical human resources than technical one? Do we need less number of engineers than educationists? A country cannot develop if it has more lawyers than engineers. In the last 10 years, South Korea developed very rapidly where enrollment of students in Science & Technology is more than 40 percent; about 30 percent students get enrolled in Engineering field (Aryal, 2019).

From the table-2 (next page), it is clear that there is not remarkable increase in the number of students in technical subjects. The structure of enrollment is not satisfactory and should be increased in technical component. In the time or reconstruction after devastating earthquake in Nepal (2072 Baisakh, 12), there was the scarcity of engineers in Nepal. When we can increase the number of enrollment in technical education, then national output of our country will increase. Quality in education is the basis issue in the world. It can be maintained with the help of appropriate government policy in this sector. Investment in this sector should be increased so

that better infrastructures can be created. There should be appropriate balance between inputs, process and output so that highest output can be achieved with the help of limited resources.

Table-2 : Change in students enrollment in technical and non-technical education of Nepal

Year	Total Number of Students (Technical)	% Change	Total Number of Students (Non-Technical)	% Change
2009	21317	-	75965	-
2010	21099	99.0	94189	124.0
2011	21462	101.7	109606	116.4
2012	35280	164.4	111888	102.1
2013	28114	79.7	167599	149.8
2014	33840	120.4	141840	84.6
2015	29450	87.0	133828	94.4
2016	27349	92.9	124568	93.1

Source : Based on Table-1.

Universities are taken as a mirror of a nation. Universities with better and quality education are the symbol of prosperous nation. In the context of least developed countries, they are fighting with quantitative aspect of education. Nepal is listed under the poor country so that children have no chance to go to schools and universities since they should support to their parents for their livelihood. Curriculum of Nepal definitely diverted toward agriculture and tourism because these are two potential sectors of Nepal.

Table-3 : Causes and Remedies of Quality Education in Nepal (implementers view)

Causes and Remedies of Quality Education in Nepal	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Moderate (2)	Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (0)	Mean Values
Poor Curriculum leads toward low quality graduates	5	15	10	3	2	2.51

We have no practical education	7	7	8	8	5	2.09
Low income of the parents is the cause of low quality	10	8	7	5	5	2.37
Low level of industrialization lower job market	2	12	15	4	2	2.23
Government has no manpower planning	3	20	10	1	1	2.66
Privatization in education is a threat in education	10	12	8	3	2	2.71
Investment friendly environment can improve quality	7	12	11	2	3	2.51
Provision of educational loan	6	15	10	4	1	2.66
Use of practical education	9	12	12	1	1	2.77
Co-ordination with other universities around the world	1	12	10	10	3	2.00

Source : Field Survey, 2019

In the above table, it can be realized that quality of education in the context of Nepal seems to be poor. Its poorness appeared in the form of poor curriculum, lack of practical education, low income, no manpower planning, no educational loan and lack of co-ordination with other universities in the world. Poor people are not able to support to their children because they have no additional income and their children should send to the work or to rear their juniors since higher growth of population is the feature of poor family. Federal, provinces and local authorities are silent about the quality education to their regions due to focus on political agendas rather than in development issues. Most of the teacher are unfriendly with modern technology and follow traditional mode of teaching and learning, threat to quality education in Nepal.

Regarding to planner view, it has lot of advantages when it compared with disadvantages. In Nepal, job market is clear and it is useful to increase the productivity of labor in Nepal. For poor students, Nepal has formulated and implemented various schemes to teach them freely by the state. It developed various vocational syllabus and implemented by various universities and training centers in Nepal. Curriculum is developed on the basis of

international criteria and semester system has forwarded. It is clear after a perception table :

Table-4 : Causes and Remedies of Quality Education in Nepal (Planners view)

Causes and Remedies of Quality Education in Nepal	Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Moderate (2)	Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (0)	Mean Values
Poor Curriculum leads toward low quality graduates	1	5	7	11	1	1.76
We have no practical education	0	4	8	8	5	1.44
Low income of the parents is the cause of low quality	3	8	7	5	3	2.2
Low level of industrialization lower job market	2	6	15	4	2	2.4
Government has no man-power planning	3	5	5	12	0	1.96
Privatization in education is a threat in education	5	12	3	3	2	2.6
Investment friendly environment can improve quality	2	2	11	9	1	1.8
Provision of educational loan	2	7	10	5	1	2.16
Use of practical education	3	12	8	1	1	2.6
Co-ordination with other universities around the world	1	12	5	5	3	2.2

Source : Field Survey, 2019.

In the table above, it is cleared that the mean value of most of the responses falls near of 2, indicates the indifference in the asked responses. From the answers of the questions, it is cleared that planners are not openly answer regarding to the quality of education. There is no co-ordination among students, instructors and society so that output of education is maximum. There is no harmony regarding to objective of education and the demand of society is different than curriculum designed and implemented by line agencies of education.

Several issues were identified which could have been influencing the development of vocational and quality education in Nepal, as indicated by the responses of the planners and implementors of vocational education. The planners did not believe that vocational education was only for less intelligent students, nor were they sure about vocational education being too expensive an endeavor for Nepal. However, the implementors felt more strongly than the planners that vocational choices can be made by students at the age of 14 or 15, and that vocational education was too expensive for Nepal. Except for these differences, both groups indicated general agreement with the issues as stated on the prepared questionnaire (Belbase & Jung, 2019).

Thus, for many aspects of vocational and quality education, there is general agreement among both planners and implementors about the problems and issues involved. Yet because some differences were discovered to exist, lines of communication between planners in the central offices and implementors in the field obviously need to be improved. By using feedback and taking more time to plan, a more appropriate program of vocational and quality education for Nepal should be realized (Ibid).

Salary of the instructor is an important component to assure quality of education. If they are paid high salary, they can stay longer time in the institutions. It may enhance higher quality of education. The facility to the teachers is another device to accelerate quality education. Parents awareness if increased they can send their children to school and college, increase enrollment in educational institutions. Similarly, use of modern tools in the field of teaching may enhance delivering process. Participatory approach rather than lecturer method can deliver their knowledge effectively to the target group. Sometime syllabus in local language may be the best way to achieve quality education and Nepal had applied this strategy to attain more enrollment as well as quality of education in Nepal.

There is difference in perception between policy makers and implementers in Nepal. In general, policy makers are confident regarding to the quality of education and Nepal has congenial atmosphere on the development of quality education.

5. Conclusions and Policy Recommendation in Nepal

It is obvious that the quality status of education in Nepal seems to be poor. The policy of the government and line agencies are not in

the same direction while the expectation of society is quite different. Poverty is the main cause and consequences of poor quality of education in Nepal. Our theoretical curriculum is the main cause of its poor quality of education. Only less than one percent students are learning agriculture since two third of total population rely on agriculture. Poor people are not able to send their children to school because they have no additional income and their children should send to the work or to rear their juniors since higher growth of population is the feature of poor family. Federal, provinces and local authorities are not actively participate about the quality education to their regions due to focus on political agendas rather than in development issues of our country. Most of the teacher are unfriendly with modern technology as well as not interested to use modern technologies and follow traditional mode of teaching and learning, threat to quality education in Nepal. Regarding to planner view, it has lot of positive applications when it compared with disadvantages. In Nepal, job market is small and it is useful when we can increase the productivity of labor in Nepal. For poor students, Nepal should formulate and implement various schemes to teach them freely by the state. Quality improvement of instructors should be recommended by which knowledge transfer process will be more effective. Educational loan to the student in nominal interest rate should be provided to achieve better quality of education. Education on the basis of student interest and need of the society may be the milestone in the field of quality education. These all the component is true in the context of south Asia of the world.

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