School Level Teacher Management System in Nepal: Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract

This paper highlights teacher management in terms of prospects and challenges in the Nepalese school system. The paper argues that the existing teacher management model adopted by the government is both an administrative model and a grassroots model. The paper aims to explore the existing teacher management system of the government and its prospects and challenges from the quality perspective. To achieve a critical reflection on the teacher management system, the paper utilizes qualitative content analysis as a method of generating empirical evidence. The Teacher Service Commission (TSC) functions as a centralized agency for selecting and recommending teachers for permanent appointment, and the SMC at the local level is working with a grassroots model of teacher management as a decentralized agency. As a result, the quality of school education is deteriorating because of this contradictory policy provision for teacher management. The devolution of power to the local level to hire teachers with different names opened a gate for under-qualified and less competent teachers to enter school education through an indirect path. The paper explores that the contradictory policy provision, unclear roles, and responsibilities between local and centers, extreme politicization, teachers' hierarchies, and categories all are the challenges for and problems with teacher management in school.

Keywords: ad-hoc teacher, decentralization, grassroots model, power-devolution, professionalism

Introduction

Teacher management at the school level in Nepal is confronted with formidable problems. This has implications for quality improvement in education. The internal efficiency of any institution is said to be determined by the extent of quality of education and teacher management has a greater say in it. Teacher management at the school level, especially the teachers at community schools, has not gone without problems. Deployment and redeployment of teachers as per the need of the school on one hand and their rightful selection preceding the deployment on the other has ever been a major concern of both the government and the stakeholders. The availability of a capable teaching force and retaining them is yet another concern that must be addressed well to ensure the delivery of quality education. It is often said that no education system of any country is any better than its teachers. Moreover, a qualified teaching force capable of discharging its roles and responsibilities up to the desired level is expected to contribute directly to accomplishing the goal of providing quality education for all.

From the first amendment to Teacher Service Commission Rules-2002, the government of Nepal has made teaching license mandatory for aspiring candidates to enter the teaching

profession with the defined minimum level of qualification. The Teacher Service Commission (TSC) serves this purpose by administering the examinations regularly with the expectation that better candidates are selected, placed, and promoted. Teacher selection and teaching license, despite their rigor, has not gone without problems too (MoE, 2002).

Management of teachers to ensure the satisfactory delivery of education is fraught with problems that need to be diagnosed well and addressed for making quality education possible. Issues related to recruitment to the retirement of teachers, rightful placement, professional development, retention, and the capability of the service providers (teacher training/teacher education institutions) are there that demand immediate attention from the government.

Teacher Management Context: A Brief Overview

Teacher management is perceived to be a challenging endeavor since it has a direct connection to the students' achievement and could distort and imbalance the total education system. Globally, the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers remain challenging with particular reference to Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America. (Jonyo & Jonyo, 2017). Similarly, Mpolosa and Ndauhutse (2008) stated that weak management, poor decision-making process, tight fiscal management policy, and insufficient management of workforce skills are equally responsible for poor teacher management. Quoting the World Bank's report, Jonyo and Jonyo (2017) highlight those qualified teachers in both the developed and developing world are becoming the hardest segment of the teaching profession to attract and retain and are the most expensive to educate.

In the global scenario, the current trend at the micro level, as Cheng (2009, p.70) argues, education is "reestablishing a new national vision and educational aims restructuring education system at different levels and privatizing and diversifying a market-driven approach to education. At the meso level, a salient trend is increasing parental and community involvement in education and management". Teacher management always requires a kind of synergy that plays a crucial role in bringing a shift in traditional teaching-learning styles and boosting up the teacher's enthusiasm to look for a new dimension of teaching-learning practices. If teacher management becomes static and remains chaotic in attracting competent and qualified teachers, the education system gets imbalanced and lost its fascination in public. For instance, in Kenya, weaknesses in human resource planning affected the training and deployment of teachers and thus distorted their distribution and utilization (Jonyo & Jonyo, 2017).

UNESCO (2000) highlighted that in South Asian countries revealed that there are variations in salaries increment, employment of local teachers, provision of special allowance for teachers working in remote areas, and the need for teacher transfer, etc. Similarly, the practices related to information systems for teacher management indicate that the information system at the intermediate and local level is adequate and well-functioning, but the information mechanism is found still to be weak. Devolution of responsibilities to the local level is positive but over politicization in teacher management has been a hindrance to the implementation of the policy.

Nepal is also not adequately practicing good teacher management, since several studies and policies have emphasized teacher management and recommended to the government for

improving the status (see, NEP, 2019; AIRT, 2017; SSDP, 2016). A study conducted by CERID (2006) revealed that there was a mismatch between the schools and teachers and the teachers were less prepared to perform their expected roles to the satisfaction of the stakeholders. The problem of deployment and redeployment of teachers was also pointed out by related reports and documents including a study done by NCED (2004) on teacher effectiveness. A case study done by ADB (2002) shows that lack of trained teachers, lack of opportunities for professional development, and lack of classroom instructional practices along with overdue curriculum revision process have marked the teacher management system. Focusing on teacher management, the AIRT (2017, p. xiii) states:

> One main front of effecting change is by changing the practices of teacher management and capacity development. From a management perspective, teacher management and capacity development is undertaken by multiple actors, but the extent to which all the actors are accountable to a single entity is unclear. This makes the task of enforcing common standards for effective instruction and effective teacher training at the basic and secondary levels very challenging.

This reveals that our current education system is practicing arbitrariness in teacher management. This being the case, School Sector Development Program (2016- 23) has already realized to systematize it. It states," the Teacher Service Commission at the federal level will continue to accredit and certify teachers as well as monitor the criteria for the recruitment, appointment, and promotion of teachers at the provincial level. To ensure ownership, local bodies will participate in the recruitment and appointment of teachers" (ibid, p. 49). To attract highly qualified and competent individuals to the teaching profession, special provision is managed. For this, the National Curriculum Framework prioritizes the teacher licensing system is further improved and consolidated (MoEST, 2019a). For teacher management in school, National Education Policy (MoEST, 2019) emphasizes ensuring the subject teacher together with teacher preparation, attainment, and development. For these to happen, it pays attention to the improvement of teacher development and utilizing systems for the enhancement of education quality.

This article therefore an attempt to investigate this situation of teacher management, particularly at the school level, and to come up with a strategic outlook to address the problems related to teacher management in Nepal.

Models of Teacher Management: A Theoretical Review

Teacher management has certain models that refer to the way how teachers are managed. In this regard, Gaynor (1998) presented three different models of teacher management: the administrative model, grassroots model, and alternative model as discussed succinctly.

Teacher management is decentralized to a lower level of government and to the education system itself is concerned with the administrative model. In this model, legal accountability for education goes to the Ministry of Education, and certain roles of teacher management are delegated to the other levels of education. The central level controls and makes decisions about teacher preparation, establishes staffing levels, manages teacher salaries, sets

standards for teacher qualification and school education. Shifting the locus of control from central ministries to districts or even to schools can increase the participation of principals or teachers in decision-making without increasing the participation of citizens (UNESCO, 2000). The central department is responsible for evaluating, monitoring, and supervising the educational programs, and controls the quality of school education by providing pedagogical support to the teachers. According to ADB (2002, p. 32), the administrative dimension is desirable because it leads to greater responsiveness to local conditions and preferences, thus leading to more effective education.

The grassroots model transfers the responsibility of the management to community representatives so that they become more devoted to the development of schools. This model aims at making local communities responsible for the overall management of school development. Schools and communities are considered solely responsible for controlling, monitoring, and supervising school activities. Gaynor (1998) asserts, "When the emphasis is on the partnership, parents, teachers, and community leaders are more equal in terms of power and responsibility" (p.7). The model perceives the partnership activity and strategy as democratic and participatory which is very likely to diminish the role of locally elected educational authorities. This model, thus, attempts to give school constituents--administrators, teachers, parents, and other community members--more control over what happens in schools (Wohlestetter & Mohrman, 1993).

Finally, the alternative model focuses on innovative and non-mainstream programs. It is applicable in case of a shortage of qualified teachers or a lack of resources. This model is also regarded as a "temporary arrangement by any institution or non-government organization, religious institution or community" (Khanal, 2012, p. 774). According to Gaynor (1998), this model mobilizes support from communities, and support directly provided by I/NGOs or through local education authorities. The hiring and firing of the teachers and salary, promotion, discipline, appraisal, student-teacher ratio, supervision, and monitoring of the teaching standard all are directly controlled by the institution or I/NGOs which establishes or support the schools (Gaynor, 1998; Khanal, 2012).

Methods and Materials

This is a qualitative analysis involves a critical review of some education policy and program documents. The review of selected education policy and program documents provides empirical evidence to develop this paper. Therefore, the paper utilizes a qualitative content analysis (Flick, 2012) of the prescribed documents as empirical evidence to shed light on the issues underlined. Choosing a content analysis method in analyzing any policy and program documents is one of the adequate options as there are not found any methods effective to analyze them (ibid). The main selected policy documents and education programs are given in the following table No. 1.

Table 1

Selected Policy Documents

S.N	Name		Publishers
1	National education policy	2019	MoEST
2	National curriculum framework	2019	MoEST
3	School sector development plan	2016-23	MoE
4	ICT Master plan, Nepal, 2013–2017	2013-16	MoE
5	Teacher service commission rules (All amendments)	2002	MoE
6	National education Act (All amendments)	1971	MoE

The selection criteria of policy and program documents were based on the ongoing programs of the government. Equally, the documents and programs that much concerned the teacher management programs were chosen. A qualitative content analysis framework was developed to write down the notes concerning the focus of the policy and program documents on the teacher management.

The empirical evidence drawn from the review is intersected by the theoretical review of the texts on teacher management recently published at the national and international levels by renowned scholars. For the data analysis and interpretation, I followed a sequential step - identify the key concept, create a codebook, gather data, evaluate data to fit within the initial code frame, record the frequency, and write the narrative (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Through rigorous analysis, certain models of teacher management were explored and discussed in connection with our current teacher management system.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the major findings of the study are presented at first and then the discussion and reflection are carried out. Besides, based on the results and discussion, the problems and challenges of teacher management have been explored.

Presentation of Findings

Policy review: Legal documents and related programs

To recruit the teachers at the school level, a commission – Teacher Service Commission (TSC) – has been formed which recommends teachers to Education Development and Coordination Unit (EDCU) for the appointment. The TSC has come into existence following the sixth amendment to the Education Act (1999, p. 19) to fulfill the approved vacant posts of teachers in community schools. In this regard, the seventh amendment to Education Act (2002, p. 26) has confirmed:

> *Nobody is eligible for joining the teaching profession unless they receive a teaching license. The responsibility for managing licenses for school teachers has also been fulfilled by TSC since its conception.*

To be a professional teacher, the TSC has mandatorily established a teacher license as the most eligible criteria, if anyone is willing to enter the teaching profession (ibid). The TSC further commits that TSC is always far away and isolated from any kind of temptation, political intervention, and influence while fulfilling the responsibility and duty in selecting and recommending teachers for the appointment. The first amendment to Teacher Service Commission Rules (2002) states that -----

Although TSC has committed and promised to select and recommend the teachers without any interference and influence, several challenges for teacher selection and recommendation have been faced. The challenges, for example, delay in result publication raises the question mark to the fair and unprejudiced activities of the TSC, tend to reduce the confidentiality and privacy of the TSC in public (TSC annual report, 2011). This reflects some extent to which teacher selection and recommendation activities are still not fully independent despite its commitment and assurance.

Talking about teacher management, several policies and programs have focused on the provisions for improving teacher recruitment and improvement from equity and gender perspectives. The EFA National Review Report carried out by MOE/UNESCO (2015, p. 40) reemphasizes already committed policy by the government:

> *Increasing female teachers is the stated policy of the government. At least one female teacher quota per school, preferably more than one female teacher has been a clear policy of the government. Similarly, the policy emphasizes teacher recruitment from Dalits and Janajatis for ensuring inclusion in teacher management.*

These indicate that there is no satisfactory result about the recruitment of teachers adequately from equality and equity perspectives, even it has been committed. It may therefore further require a strong commitment from the part of the government. The progress in teacher management is seemingly challenging (NIRT & AIR, 2017, p. 15) reflects dissatisfaction. It states:

> *From a management perspective, teacher management and capacity development are undertaken by multiple actors, but the extent to which all the actors are accountable to a single entity is unclear. This makes the task of enforcing common standards for effective instruction and effective teacher training at the basic and secondary levels very challenging.*

The current School sector development plan (SSDP, 2016-23, p.55) is focusing teacher management, it discusses:

> *Teacher management is one of the main elements in its theory of change. It has clearly stated that it will review and strengthen eligibility criteria for teacher licensing and participation of teachers in the teacher service examinations.*

The concern is that if a person fulfills the basic criteria and takes part in a one-year preliminary course will be eligible to sit for the teaching licensing examination. The SSDP has mentioned its strategies for improving teacher management. The SSDP (ibid, 55) makes a strategy that emphasizes:

To strengthen the TSC to conduct licensing and to select candidates for school teacher positions. The TSC will recommend selected candidates as school teachers with local governments appointing and deploying teachers to the appropriate schools. It regularizes the intake of new teachers through the TSC to address issues related to the deployment of temporary teachers. It enforces teacher recruitment and performance assessment based depending upon the developed competency framework.

Equally, National Curriculum Framework-NCF (MoEST, 2019, p.38) has talked about the teacher management system and stressed that the teacher management system will be made qualitative by formulating these policies. *Teaching will be developed as a*

Pursuing the national curriculum framework, teacher selection, and management will be carried out. For this, an improvement in school education and the competency development of teachers will be prioritized. The teacher license system will be further improved and consolidated, together with reviewing the current qualification of teachers teaching at different levels. Equally, to attract qualified and competent teachers to school education will be prioritized with a special program.

Professional teacher training will be standardized, systematic, and demand-based, if not practical. The school-based teacher support program will be implemented through an action-oriented program. Teacher education will be restructured enabling teachers to handle multiple subjects. The quality of the teacher licensing system will be enhanced and made mandatory. And, finally, a provision will be developed to deploy headteachers capable to undertake better educational leadership at all levels.

Again, the SSDP (2016-2023, p. 88) focuses on managing teachers in the subjects which lack qualified teachers, and it vows to offer subjects for the prospective teachers to be recruited. It highlights:

Many efforts and scholarships will be made to increase teacher production in science, mathematics, and other subjects where there is a shortage of teachers. The lack of teachers in subjects like science and mathematics will be attracted to the teaching program by providing those subjects. In the curriculum of the Teacher Preparation Program, teachers will be provided with incentives including scholarships to increase the productivity of the teachers in the school.

Based on recommendations and experiences gained from previous policies and education programs, the National Education Policy 2076 (MoEST, 2019) has proposed provisions to uplift teacher management in schools. It makes a provision:

To enhance the quality of school education by ensuring subject teachers in the schools and improving the system of preparation, acquisition, development, and utilization of teachers. Arrangements will be made to supply the required teachers for the Early Childhood Development Class, and Child Development Center based on the number of students. Legal arrangements will be made to facilitate the teachers in the elementary childhood development class so that the minimum qualification is secondary education examination (class ten) or similar (pp. 10-14).

The review of the policy-related documents and programs reveals teacher management is a cross-cutting issue that implies the quality of school education. With priority, every document speaks of and focuses on the teacher management system involving the policy commitment to accelerate the teacher management system in schools. Nonetheless, the questions about the chaos in practice are unanswered. A huge gap between what is committed by policies and what is in practice further deteriorates the quality of public education and lose public confidence in public education. The practice reflects the inequality and inequity in the management of teachers despite the policy endorsement.

Discussion and Reflection on the Policy

Teacher management practice in schools

The above-presented policy reviews on teacher management reflect that mostly the major policy documents and related programs have shown their uniformity and cohesion concerning the teacher management system in schools. However, the translation of these policy guidelines and program directions into practice shows a huge discrepancy and contradiction in teacher management.

The policy documents and related programs have markedly discussed the role of the TSC at the center level to recommend the teacher for appointments to those who take part in the teacher examination run by the service commission. But, in practice, it is seen that the category of teacher ranging from permanent teacher to ad-hoc teacher stated in the following table, except for the permanent teacher, gets recruited and appointed by School Management Committee (SMC) at the local level. The recruitment of teachers at the local level by the SMC is claimed to be less free of bias and prejudice since the implicit involvement of political parties pressures the school body to recruit the teachers, who favor their parties.

Teacher Category	Characteristics
Permanent teacher	The permanent teachers are those who are appointed by TSC to the government teaching position. In general, the government creates teaching positions and fills them with the candidates who get through the TSC selection test. These teachers enjoy full government salaries, annual increments, provident funds, and pensions. They get regular promotions following the recommendation of the TSC. They enjoy various kinds of leave, including paid study leave and unpaid leave up to five years. More than 40% of the country's state school teachers fall into this category.
Temporary teacher	These teachers are appointed by School Management Committee (SMC), yet to sit or get through the TSC selection test. If the TSC is unable to make a regular advertisement, teachers are appointed locally to government positions. In practice, the TSC advertisement is infrequent. Currently, more than 30,000 teachers belong to this category. Teachers in this category enjoy a full government salary but do not receive annual increments, provident funds, and pensions. They are not entitled to promotions and study or unpaid leave. The

	SMC is responsible for the selection of temporary teachers and the district education offices are responsible for the appointment and transfer of teachers.
Rahat teacher	Teachers are hired by the SMC to fixed-term government positions. For more than 10 years, the government has not created new teaching positions in state schools. Instead, as part of the funding of the ongoing projects such as the Education for All and School Sector Reform Program (SSRP), it has created temporary positions, commonly known as Rahat Darbandi (relief quota). Teachers in this category are appointed by the SMC. They get a fixed salary, normally less than the pay scale enjoyed by the permanent and temporary teachers.
PCF teacher	Teachers who are appointed on the Per Child Funding (PCF) budget scheme. As a recent approach to demand-side financing, the government has introduced the PCF scheme. Under this scheme, for every new child enrolled, the school receives a fixed sum of money. On this basis, the SMC hires teachers on a contractual basis. The PCF teaching positions remain as long as the school retains the number of students required for the PCF budget contributions.
Local teacher	Teachers appointed by the SMC on local budgets. Despite the supply of teachers by the government, state schools in Nepal normally have a shortage of teachers in proportion to their number of students. In such circumstances, the SMC recruits teachers on local budgets mostly generated through voluntary donations and fund-raising. The SMC has overall responsibility for setting policy on hiring, firing, appraisal, and promotion of local teachers. Teachers in this category are commonly low-paid, and their turnover is very high.

Policies have clearly stated that the TSC will be improved for selecting teachers and recommending them for appointment in terms of competency, meritocracy, and performance by avoiding all kinds of interference and influence. Yet, in practice, contradictorily, the role and the responsibility of the TSC is seemingly shifted into the role and responsibility of the SMC in recruiting different kinds of teachers. A covert bias and favoritism in selecting and appointing teachers in school are therefore crossing the boundary of limitation. It is because the TSC only selects the permanent teachers to be fulfilled in the prescribed vacant quota; except this, the SMC is being made a sole responsible agent for the enrollment of teachers in schools at the local level.

Despite the policy commitments, the practice shows anarchy in teacher management in schools as discussed by Khanal (2012, p. 775). Besides the teacher category discussed in the matrix, there are still two categories of teachers in community school practice in recent days. They are ECD teachers and Ad hoc teachers.

ECD teacher: ECD teachers are appointed by the SMC in school to support the ECD center where children of age 3-5 will be benefited. The local government has inspired to establish ECD in schools and communities (MoLD, 1999) by assuming financial management to the ECD teacher. However, in recent years, the central government has tried to address the ECD teacher's salary a little bit in its budget. Equally, the teachers are not trained at the ECD

center, and the ECD centers are also poorly resourced and enriched. These teachers are less paid and could be easily hired and fired; their turnover is very high.

Ad-hoc teacher: A newly recruited teacher is an ad-hoc teacher whose assignment is to teach ICT in the classroom for an immediate purpose. It is seen that an ad-hoc teacher is one who is also recruited by the SMC if one is not from the regular teacher. So, an ad-hoc teacher may be a regular teacher or anyone who is appointed out of school family. The regular teacher then teaches ICT along with his/her regular class load. This teaching task to the regular teacher is assigned depending upon the basic knowledge and skills on ICTs he/she possesses. However, the ad-hoc regular teachers may not be trained on ICTs and their use. These teachers are in existence since the government has implemented the ICT Master Plan (2013-17). As stated, the government policy has committed to providing a quota for a trained ICT teacher, but in practice, there is not any ICT teacher teaching at schools. Rather, the school is hiring a teacher who has little knowledge of ICTs or a regular teacher who is familiar with the use of ICTs.

Thus, the relationship between the policy and practice of the teacher management in school indicates that there is a contradiction between policies and practices. Theoretically, the administrative model is working with selecting and recommending the teacher through TSC at the central level, and the grassroots model is functioning to enroll and appoint teachers through SMC at the local level.

Teacher Management: Problems and Issues

Division and hierarchy

In community schools, teachers are divided into different names, categories, and statuses, and an artificial hierarchy is created to distance one group of teachers from another. As mentioned by Khanal (2012), teachers are divided into permanent, temporary, Rahat, PCF, local teacher, ECD teacher, and Ad-hoc teacher. These teachers have their circles, priorities, and status in schools, and have a particular worldview on salary, job, security, professional facilities, and motivations because of division and hierarchy. Teachers, therefore, experience very different situations depending upon the condition of appointment and status in the schools. This division and hierarchy, on the other hand, has weakened the teachers' motivation level that compromises the quality of their activity has a quality implication in schools.

Equity issues

In terms of teachers' remuneration, service, security, and other professional benefits, there are several equity issues in a public school in Nepal. It reveals that many teachers, with low salaries, little job security, and loss of motivation, are working in tough conditions. Within the same post and responsibility, variation among the teachers in terms of salary, job security, opportunity, facilities, and workload are seen. The poorer the remuneration, service, security, and other professional benefits they get, the greater the responsibility and duty they have to perform. On the contrary, the higher the remuneration, job security, and the professional benefit they get, the lower the responsibility and duty they have to perform.

The range of remuneration is vivid; it applies to the teacher of the same level differently. For example, the remuneration to a Rahat teacher at the primary level differs from the

remuneration a temporary or permanent teacher achieves. Accordingly, the job security and other professional benefits highly differ at the same level, or the same post the teacher is working in. In similar ways, the other professional criteria are applied quite vividly and irrationally.

Local vs. central tension

This tension is related to the teacher service commission vs. the decentralization of rights to the local level. There is an ambiguity and a contradiction in terms of roles and responsibilities to be carried out by central and local education bodies. There is a teacher service commission (TSC) to select and recommend permanent teachers for school level centrally (AIRT, 2017). The ninth amendment to Teacher Service Commission Rule 2071 (MoE, 2015) clearly stated this provision that it would recommend the temporary teachers who fell in the alternative list of teacher service commission's examination corresponding a merit priority. Despite this policy, a huge backdoor entry to school at the local level in the pretension of responding to an immediate need is seemingly very common. The policy has not endorsed a strong emphasis on the local level to recruit the teachers only as per the recommendation of the TSC.

Owing to the lack of recruiting teachers through one door system, severe politicization at the local level provided fertile land for joining the school as a teacher compromising the approved eligible quality. Therefore, if the TSC is the sole agency for selecting and recruiting the teachers for school education, the backdoor entry to join school education as a teacher should be ended; if the right of hiring and firing the school teachers at the local level is delegated, the rationale of the TSC existence is a big question.

Professional development

The professional development of school teachers is less effective to address the needs and expectations of all teachers irrespective of their status and hierarchies in schools. Although institutionally the government has been providing training to teachers under several training programs, these plans and programs have not well covered all teachers irrespective of their status and hierarchy. Besides, the government is less active to run seminars, workshops, and refreshment programs focusing on the professional needs and expectations of teachers.

The government has mandatorily introduced a teacher license as an eligibility criterion for joining the teaching profession to be a school teacher (MoE, 2002). Contradictorily, without training or educational background in some subjects – English, math, account, engineering, science, computer science, law, etc. teachers can participate in the temporary license examination undermines the value of teaching license though these teachers should take the permanent license within five years from the entry date of joining teaching professional MoE, 2002; 2015). Equally, there is not any teacher training provision for teachers teaching at private schools from the part of the government. Nor are private schools recruiting teachers from any educational background employing any fixed criteria as set by the educational Act and Ordinal. This explicitly exhibits the ineffectiveness of the teaching license for the recruitment of teachers in private schools. This also disobeys the commitments of the NCF (MoEST, 2019a), which specifically focuses on the area of teacher management to be carried out.

A teacher is not only teaching, but also learning partly depends on the teacher's self-learning, and partly depends on the concept that the teacher is a continuous learner. The government-run training and refreshment programs have just only focused on teaching the subject of teachers at the school level. Teacher professional development cannot be limited to only teaching, more than it, such as teacher as a reflective practitioner, a researcher, a curriculum planner, developer, and implementer. The present teacher training programs and packages could not promote these qualities of professional development.

Extreme politicization

The political favoring of teachers, the division of local community in various political parties, and teacher professional organizations all influence teacher management at the local level is a crucial issue. A severe political lobby takes place when school plans to recruit teachers for the fulfillment of school vacant for the teachers. Schools are entitled to the right to recruit teachers at the local level and get the recruitment process approved by the district education office. While recruiting teachers for the vacant, all teachers, headteachers, community leaders, and political parties in the school play their roles in line with their affiliated political background. They pressurize the teacher selection body to recruit candidates from their politically affiliated backgrounds. As a result, not only a fair selection of teachers is influenced, but also qualified and talented candidates are excluded from the system. The politics in the selection of teachers at the local level therefore always raises the question of the quality of education.

Upskilling teachers in ICT

The government implemented the ICT Master Plan (2013-2017) to integrate ICT in education. There were many things (infrastructure, connectivity, human resources, capacity building) to be considered while implementing and integrating ICT in schools through promoting teachers' competencies and skills on ICTs. The SSDP, also vows to embrace major activities of the ICT master plan (MoE 2013) focusing on the timeline for assimilating ICT into school education systematically. Aiming to implement the programs phase-wise by introducing interactive classes, online modules, and digital teaching-learning materials, such as digital libraries and videos for English, science, and math for basic level (2016-23). This emphasis requires a felt need to upgrade the existing teachers' ICTs competency, knowledge, and skills in a way that they could adopt any ICTs devices for effective teaching and learning.

Dual role of the headteacher

The Headteacher is the sole person with the responsibility to run the school academically and administratively at the local level. The headteacher has several roles that range from liaison officer, functions to connect the school with the community, to the classroom teacher. The dual role, academic and administrative roles, of the headteacher has caused to run the school effectively is a noticeable issue. When the headteacher performs academic roles, such as taking classes, performing as a teacher trainer, it retards the administrative activities of schools and vice versa.

Addressing the Problems

This is now clear that teacher management in a decentralized education system is challenging, if not problematic. To mitigate the problems and challenges, the specific focus is essential to take an action for equitable teacher management at the local level.

Consolidating professionalism: One of the ways is to focus on teacher professional development requires consolidation of professionalism. Providing the same platform to all teachers to get equal opportunities for professionalism is a current need. The category and hierarchy of teachers is the problem with consolidating and making teachers engage in professional activities. The interpersonal relationship among teachers, and their sharing culture on the professional issue, pedagogy, and school practices could consolidate their professionalism. Therefore, there is a felt need to address these issues by the government logically in an equal and justifiable measure.

The right man in the right place: Qualified, competent, and industrious teachers are always devoted to teaching professions; they love, appreciate, engaged in the profession as if he/ she is born for teachers, not made by force. The teaching profession is to make a socially prestigious, respective, and attractive one, and, a talented, competent, and interested individual could join the profession. For this to happen, teacher selection and recommendation should get out of bias, favoritism, and discrimination. It could not be a profession to join only when an individual does not get a job in another field.

Motivation and incentives: Motivation and incentives are the backbones of making the teaching profession prestigious and effective. A need for equitable practices could be promoted through motivation and incentives that affect the teachers' performance and activities in schools and could be impressive and imitative for others. But a more meticulous and justifiable practice is essential to promote teacher motivation and encouragement; the practice should not be punitive for the teacher who is likely to deserve such rewards.

Central financing with local management: The overall responsibility to promote teacher management is to emphasize the center to invest and finance to the local management of teachers. All the financial responsibility and burden of teacher management should fully be taken by the central and all other responsibilities for teacher management in schools should be the responsibility of the local community. So, it could avoid various categories, names, and hierarchies of teachers in terms of salary, security, facilities, and another kind of bias and discrimination.

Depoliticization in education: The most perceived problem with teacher management at the local is severe political interference in the selection and recommendation of teachers. Certain measures need to be sought for reducing politics in managing teachers at the local level. A transparent mechanism of stakeholders to ensure that candidate is competent and qualified to deserve the post is essential to be developed.

Conclusion

Teacher management in Nepal is intersected by several problems and issues, and that cannot be resolved by an absolute effort. The problem with teacher management is with

existing rules and regulations that are ambiguous and contradictory. The policy has emphasized the role of the TSC in the selection and recommendation of school teachers based on the criteria of competency and qualification. Contradictorily, the government has handed over the responsibility of hiring teachers to the SMC, which contradicts the policy and provision of the TSC for the selection and recommendation of teachers. Theoretically, the administrative model of teacher management at the center level and the grassroots model at the local level are working for the selection and appointment of the teacher. Because of policy contradictions in selecting and recommending the school teachers, various categories of teachers are in existence in schools. The TSC is working with an administrative model of teacher management at the central level to select and recommend the teacher as permanent, where other various teachers like a temporary teacher, PCF teacher, Rahat teacher, etc. are being selected by the SMC for the appointment. Thus, contradictorily, the SMC is producing teachers, in the form of the grassroots model, and the TSC is advertising vacancies to legitimate those locally recruited teachers as a name of internal competition.

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