

Early Childhood Education and Development in Nepal: Status, Trends and Challenges

Dhurba Kumar Shrestha
Assistant lecturer
dhrubajalpa@gmail.com

Abstract

Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) is considered as foundations of modern education system in Nepal. It's the preparedness of children for school in terms of their physical growth, mental capacities, and social adjustment. Over the last two decades, some notable achievements have been achieved beside low investment by the government in ECED sectors in Nepal. The average ECED gross enrollment rate has reached at 89.62 per cent and achieved attractive progress in gender (0.92) parity in ECED. However, community based ECEDs in geographically remote area are running without basic requirements. An execution of Local Government Operation Act-2017 (LGRG) and School Education Sector Plan (2022-32) contributing to strengthen the ECED in Nepal. Inadequate investment, insufficient ECEDs, absence of skilled and permanent ECED facilitator, dissimilarities between ECEDs, lack of friendlier infrastructure, complexities to implement bilingual curriculum, inaccessible and unaffordable education system, existence of dual education system, and structural discriminations are still observed as unsolved issues. This paper tries to review the status, trends and challenges associated to Early Childhood Education Development in Nepal.

Key Words: Early Childhood Education and Development, Dual Education System, Financial inadequacy, Physical inappropriateness.

Introduction

The educational history of Nepal begun only after the political change in 1950. Right after the downfall of the Rana regime, every citizen received educational opportunities in the country. During the past seventy-three years, the educational system is rapidly expanded in order to meet the needs of all levels of children. The Education Commissions were formed in 1954 for the first time. The government of Nepal has taken significant steps for establishing public schools throughout the country. Primary education (Grade 1-3) has been freed since 1975 and from 1981; the free education system was upgraded up to Grade 5 upon the Education Act 1971 (Pradhan, 2018). Similarly, in 1992, the government of Nepal made further decision to provide free education up to Grade 10 and the Parliament of Nepal enacted Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act in 2018 to implement Articles 31 of the constitution (Jha, 2019). Although, parents still have to pay some charges to the school. The free education policy has yet to be covered the children from the poor and disadvantaged background in the real sense. Many of the school age children have been left behind due to their poor economic condition (Ravens, 2009). Education is a crucial sector, and the delivery of good education is still a critical issue for further discussion in the country.

In Nepal, the ECED history is about more than 73 years old. ECED providers adopted various modalities in Nepal. SetoGuraans (nd.) working with ECED states that the country

introduced Montessori, Kindergarten, and pre-school prior to implementing Early Childhood Education and Development in 1949 (Bhandari,2018). However, it took a long time to be harmonized and more formal as a major component of the education system. Records of the Ministry of Education (2013), showed ECED Gross Enrollment is 76.7% and the targets for 2015 was 99 per cent but only achieved 89.62 per cent in 2021 as mentioned by the Educational Statistics of Nepal. About 22% of children were not covered by formal education program by the end of 2015. Nepal's Fifteenth Plan (2019-2024) defined one-year of ECED for each child of four years as a requirement.

ECED is mainly defined as a preparation of a child for formal schooling. ECED is a preparedness of children for school in terms of their physical growth, mental capacities, and social adjustment (Shrestha, 2002, p.5). For a decade, the numbers of ECED centers have been tremendously increasing throughout the country. The Flash I Report (2011-2012), states 33,404 ECED (Pre-primary Schools) and 28,773 (86.1%) ECED are running as community based ECEDs and community schools based throughout the country. Most recently, over 37,700 community-run, privately-run, traditional, or religious pre-primary and ECED classes/centers holding over 1 million children across the country (SESP, 2022, p.30).

Particularly, two kinds of ECED education are existed in Nepal. The institutional Pre-Primary Classes (private) are concentrated mostly in valley and community based (public) ECEDs schools are dominant in Mountain, Hill, and Terai region. It is estimated that around 8000 private ECEDs have been running in the urban and semi-urban areas in Nepal. Additionally, a policy review by Tribhuvan University mentions 1079 ECED centers that are run under the umbrella of NGOs and INGOs (Ravens, 2009, p.12). Many studies reveal that the effects of ECED program have been greater importance for poor and disadvantaged children than for economically well-off population in the country.

Linguistic diversity not only plays a key role to unite the nation but also plays a crucial role for achieving quality education for children from multi-cultural and multi-lingual background. Mother-tongue-based multilingual education has significant benefits for effective learning without hesitation (Kadel, 2015). Being a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country in Nepal, the people have been speaking different language for hundreds of years. Many of the educational programs have failed because of communication problems and difficulties in learnings. There is a pressing demand from the various indigenous and ethnic communities all over the world to educate them in their mother tongues. Nepal officially took an initiation for promoting bilingual education since the execution of the revised Educational Act-2007(Tamang, 2002, p.18). However, there are many administrative and technical difficulties to implement multi-lingual curriculum effectively even it has a higher demand. The Early Childhood Education and Development in Nepal has been channelized as an institutional framework. However, there are many drawbacks to implement and ensure effective educational strategies and policies for the poor and disadvantaged people.

ECEDs in Nepal and its' Relevancies

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, child rights issue has received as constitutional recognition. The Constitution of Nepal (1990) and The Child Rights and Welfare Act, (2008/1991) have made clear provision to ensure the Rights of the Children. The concept of Early Childhood Education was introduced in Nepal early 1950s. However, it was not given the priority from the state to disseminate its concepts throughout the country. Upreti (2013) states the government of Nepal has designed a broader program named Basic Primary Education

Project (BPEP) II (1999-2002) with the goal of ensuring the flourishing of the inherent potentialities of the children through ECED program. The state has recognized ECED as instrumental means for social, emotional, intellectual, and physical improvement of the children. Now, the issue of ECED has been formally institutionalized as an important entity. The School Sector Reform Project (SSRP) (2009, p.6), mentioned Nepal's ECED goal and objective as, "*To foster children's all-round development, laying a firm foundation for basic education*" The objective is "*To expand access to quality ECED services for children of four years of age to prepare them for basic education*".

Every child has a right to survive, grow and develop their inborn potentialities and Early Childhood Education is a foundation for education undertaking. Shrestha (2009, p.48) indicates that the first 5 years of age for a child are a crucial time. Parents and the government are responsible to providing necessary support to children for the all-round development. Shrestha further states a child required independent learning through motivation, trial and error and problem-solving opportunities. The participation in social activities and opportunities to interact with neighbors contributes to being socialized outside of the family members. That helps for the children to express their feeling and balance their emotions.

In many of the developing countries, ECED contributes to increasing enrollment, improving school achievement, reducing drop-out, and enhancing the higher level of social and emotional functioning. The World Bank (2011) states "*A vast body of research has demonstrated that Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs provide both immediate and long-term benefits for children, families, and communities.*" The research proved that ECED is more sensitive for shaping the perceptions and thoughts of a child. There is the high importance of nurturing the child and developing a connection with social development. Healthy child development is the foundation for community and economic development because healthy and competent children grow up to fulfill their potential and contribute to society in a multitude of ways (Oberklaid, et al. 2012, p.127).

Strategies and Institutional Policy Directions

The government of Nepal started to work intensively in ECED sector only after late of the 1990s. The state has ensured community engagement as a component in developing a strategy of early childhood development (ECD) since the Seventh Five Year Plan (1987-1992). According to UNESCO (2006) the Ninth Five Year Plan "*aims to make early childhood centers different from the primary school and make them community-based centers for the overall development of a child within a playful and enjoyable environment*". The ECD section was formed in 1999 under the Ministry of Education and Sports to manage the ECD development in Nepal. The Department of Education/ECD Section consists of an Under Secretary and two section officers (Upreti, 2013). To carry forward ECD education in Nepal, the government of Nepal has established National Early Childhood Development Council in 2005. The coordinating role has been given to the Ministry of Education to harmonize and manage the ECED activities. District Child Development Board (DCDB) is the first district level ECD coordination body of the government. The board is formed through-out 75 districts according to the ECD strategy 2004. The DCDB coordinates with stakeholders in the districts to form and regulate the ECDs. An execution of the Local Self-governance Act (LSGA) of 1999 has granted the full of authority to Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Municipalities to establish, operate, and manage pre-primary schools/centers (including mother-tongue) with their own resources (LSGA, 1999, p.10). The government's role for decentralizing the power to local bodies created great impacts in flourishing ECDs throughout the country.

The government of Nepal has included the overall basic education policies and priorities through Education for All Plan of Action 2001-2015. The government of Nepal set a target to educating 13,000 children through ECED during the tenth Five Year Plan (2003-2007). The ongoing Fifteenth Five-Year Plan (2019-2024, p.251) also has given strategic priority to develop early childhood development and education program and increase access to ECED as an integral part of school education partnering between the three levels of government. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has been implementing School Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2022-2032 with identified key activities that ensure access to participation, equality and inclusion, and enhance educational quality and relevance from early childhood development centers to secondary level. ECED programs associated to SESP “targeted for physical, social, emotional, cognitive development and school readiness of 4-year-old children” to make them ready for entering grade one.

The strategic intervention of SESP is focused on undertaking systematic mapping, rationalization and setting up new ECED centers by developing need-based models (SESP, 2022, p-31). Also, paid attention to ensure ECED enrollment by setting up enabling standards of ECED services, fulfilling nutrition and health-related needs of ECED children, updating ECED curriculum, developing resources in mother tongues/or local languages, and enabling learning. In many of the ECED centers, the facilitators have been using mother tongue during the facilitation which is not only defensible way of saving cost but also enabling effectiveness of learning.

ECED and its' Working Approaches

Mapping-based redistribution and establishments of ECED centers, establishment of safe and disability-friendly infrastructures, arrangement of nutritional meals, periodic health check ups, vaccination, growth monitoring, and enhance the quality of facilitators and review their remunerations are some of the key activities of SESP.

To achieve the ECD educational goal, the government of Nepal has been working with intensive strategies that revised in several times. The government's ECD education-based strategies were categorized into four core sections- integrative, community-based, low-cost program, and parental educational approach (EFA_NPA, 2003). Strategically, the government intention reflects continually reaching out to the poor, deprived, and disadvantaged communities in the rural areas. The integrative approach has planned to enhance the effectiveness, sustainability, and visible change in the community based ECEDs. Many of the community based ECEDs in the rural areas have been struggling with financial inadequacy and physical inappropriateness. They do not have well enough classrooms, provision of tiffin/lunch, and toilets as well as drinking water facilities in the ECED centers. The government has gradually implemented an integrated ECED approach to harmonize ECEDs running at different models in the country. Even though, many of the publicly owned community based ECED centers are running without the basic requirements. The children are irregular at school during the rainy and windy season due to insecure physical infrastructure. ECED/ pre-schools are likely to be distinct from home atmosphere which makes them happy to be there but many of them do not have safe drinking water facilities and safe toilets. Infrastructures that have been constructed are not matched with the minimum standard of infrastructure (i.e. class size 25 children = 62.5 square meters) implemented by the Ministry of Education (Ravens, 2009).

Since 2004, the government of Nepal has adopted the community-based approach to expanding ECDs, their effective implementation and sustainability. The state started to hand-over public schools to the respective community. It is also a good example of delegating authority to the local bodies to comply with the spirit of LSGA 1999. More recently, the local government has the full authority to establish, operate and monitor ECDs by preparing its' own Education Act (LGOC, 2017). Sharing of authority at local level opened the opportunity to coordinate with International/National Governmental Organization, and other community-based organization as required. Consequently, various I/NGOs have done a wonderful job to enhance the quality of ECED education. The government's community-based strategy is most effective to mobilize the local community for INGOs. But very few numbers of ECEDs have been received support from national and international NGOs and many of ECEDs are left out. There is no doubt that the targeted intervention and facilities provided by such organization are great. Though, it contributes to creating inequality in the society. The issue of sustainability is also questionable after the end of project term.

Since few decades, the government's investment in the education sector is significantly low in Nepal. Low economic growth caused by several political unrests, covid-19, and corruptions; the government failed to allocate adequate budget in the education sector. The government has highly depended on foreign aid. In 2010, 69 percent of the educational budget was allocated by the government and the remaining 31 percent was financed by foreign aid (Thapa, 2013). The average *"cost per student in public school is about NPR 4,675"* is significantly low (ibid). Ministry of Finance (2023) allocated NPR 70.05 billion in education that shares nearly 3.91 percent of the total budget. SSRP (2009-2015) shows the ECED budget allocation for Fiscal Year 2016/17 was respectively 2.5 percent of the GNP and 3.9 per cent of the GDP. But the allocated budget for Fiscal Year 2017/18 and 2019/20 seemed in decreasing trend. 2.03 and 1.67 percent were allocated by and similar projection for 2015/16. World Bank, & UNICEF (2020)

The investment in early childhood is *"highly cost-effective means of strengthening society as a whole"* however, the educational situation of the country is literally constant. Consequently, appropriate, and child-friendly learning materials such as toys, books, writing materials and posters are lacking too often in many of the ECED centers (Parmling et al. 2012; Ravens, 2009). The low economic status of the parents does not permit them to contribute for physical facilities even though the centers are financially weak. It does affect the child's learning process and their attraction to school. To address such insufficiencies, the government of Nepal promotes low-cost ECED program through encouraging locally available educational materials. The ECED facilitators have played a great role to manage the ECED even in the poor economic condition. It also contributes to preserving and reflecting the traditional ways of life and sensitizing children about local language, culture, and tradition.

The family is the first school of a child. They learn many things from the family before joining at school. The effectiveness of ECED education depends on the parent's role. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (2014), about 34 percent of people five + years and older are illiterate in the country. About 22 percent of children yet to be enrolled into ECED and many of parents did not send their children at school. The parents are less aware of the importance and methods of learning in the ECED. The government of Nepal has been implementing a strategy

to collaborate with non-government and social institutions to implement parental-based education through Basic Parental Education-BPE master plan. The goals of BPE Master Plan is to create awareness among parents towards the need for providing facilities to help children develop their innate capacities before entering primary schools (EFA_NPA, 2003, p.27). Thus, the parent requires knowledge to provide frequent nurturing and responsive atmosphere to their children. Oberklaid et al (2012, p.128) highlighted a child's brain development depends on environmental inputs at times-"*sensitive periods*" of development.

The capabilities of ECED personnel are the most important components to achieve the measurable progress. This is not only limited to ECED facilitators but also related to local bodies, parents, and community people. As full authority to operate and monitor ECEDs is provided to local bodies, the skills need to be increased of the ECED professionals. The ECED facilitators have been working as a part-time worker (3 to 5 hours/day) however, gets very low level (NRs 10,000/month) of allowances that lead to high rate of turnover and welcoming incompetent human resource. Many of the ECED facilitators have not taken any kind of training due to their frequent turnover. The low disbursement from the government, ECED facilitators are not motivated, and the government could not materialize their strengths. Few local governments start giving additional incentives to ECED facilitators from their internal sources which is appreciable. According to the Education Regulation 2002, it likely to be "*at least two helpers*" for each of the ECED center, however, many of the government supported ECEDs are run by a single facilitator. For the better effectiveness of ECED education, one facilitator is not good enough to take care of more than 20 children alone.

Accessibility and Affordability Issues

Besides the huge expansion of the ECED centers throughout the country, the accessibility of rural as well as disadvantaged groups of people is still problematic. The ECED enrollment rate in the geographically remote areas indicates the inaccessibility of services. According to the Flash report (2011) the Hill region shows lowest enrollment rate (66.5%) compared to Mountain (67.7%) and Terai (72.3%) eco-belts. Considering this fact, SSRP (2009-2015) envisioned a policy direction in the targeted location of disadvantaged people and provided special priority to ensure their access to ECED program. Thus, SESP (2022-32) highlighted the key activity as "redistribute and establish ECED centers based on mapping" whenever and wherever is required. No authentic evidence is available about the availability and accessibility of ECED services in the poverty pockets and remote areas but the "mapping strategies" envisioned by SESP highlighted somehow similar realities. Children represented from (0.6 per cent) disability under the age of 3 years could and from geographically remote observed unable to go to ECED centers often. Due to long walking distance, risky foot trail, social discrimination, and lack of tiffin/lunch children have been demotivated to go to school (Devkota&Bagale, 2015). Parents from agricultural background do not have time to drop and pick up their children from/or to school. Many of the older children from the illiterate and poor family are usually taking care of their younger brother and sister instead of attending school.

Beside public ECEDs, more than four thousand private schools in Nepal have been running the Pre-primary nursery, Kindergarten, and Montessori (in latest terminology) classes. Most of them are urban centered and these are unaffordable for economically poor people. Institutional schools have good infrastructures, equipment, laboratories, dedicated teachers, and

sound management system because of being more business oriented rather than targeting services to poor people. Thapa (2013) argues, "*Many of the private sector run EDC focused for well-off families who are willing and able to pay a higher fee for their children*". The private schools have been providing ECED education responding the demands of economically strong parents. They have their own curriculum instead of the national core curriculum of the government. Upreti (2013) critically argues the "*Montessori Pre-schools*" are not following the techniques of Montessori system but are only using the name for school business. The role of the state to regulate private schools seems very poor. Ravens (2009) argue in favor of "*enhancing the government control over private ECD.*" A huge gap has been created in the country between rich and poor people in the name of education. Many of the pre-primary public schools in the rural areas are in the process of the merger from the government due to the lower number of students. Ultimately, it will create additional problems in future for the people from rural and poor economic quantile. It will also obstruct achieving the school enrollment and reducing country's dropout targets.

Shortcomings and Challenges

There are many challenges that have happening during the implementation of ECED intervention in Nepal. Economic inequality has been affecting to school enrollment of nearly 19 per cent disadvantaged and ethnic minorities (SESP, 2022). The government of Nepal made an announcement for providing free education but has not been achieved in real sense. Nominal investments by government in ECEDs, parents from geographically remote areas have to contribute in-kind and cash to make school building, managing playground, arranging water supply and teaching materials. That leads ultra poor parentsto stop sending their children to ECED classes. Consequently, near about 80 per cent out of school children are belonging to the poor and geographically backward families, who are unable to provide any kinds of support to the school.

The discrimination in terms of gender, age, locality, caste, and ethnicity are still in existence in the rural part of Nepal. The government has been issued as caste discrimination and untouchability is punishable. Though, there are remains of socio-cultural and religious influences in the backward society that does not allow implementing the policy at local level. Dalit students are forced by so-called higher caste students to sit in the back rows into the classrooms (Adhikari&Robertson, 2015, Bhandari, 2018).). Dalit parents could not expose such issues of discrimination due to their dependent relationship since long-time with so-called higher caste and class people. Such discrimination is discouraging to the so-called lower caste and ethnic minority children to be presented regularly into the classroom.

The government's legal and administrative procedure related to education are observed as very lengthy and complicated. Still, community people could not easily get the permission to operate new ECED centers promptly from respective line agencies. Tedious procedures need to be fulfilled by the community and takes more than six months to get the job is done. Consequently, community people did not want to dare to start the process due to their high transactional cost in the sense of money and time. The authorities shared to local bodies or governments contributing to reduce transactional cost and administrative tediousness. But education sector is highly politicized in the country, the people must have a political connection to get infrastructural support, teacher appointment/placement, and administrative support to the

public school. The different interest and political ideology lead to polarizing the society into different segments that will affect Nepal's ability to achieve the set of EDEC and other educational goals.

Implications for the Future

The several challenges are prominent in ECD sector in Nepal. It is necessary to consider major priorities by the government within Nepal's ECED policy and strategies.

Ending Dual Education System for Building a Trust: The citizen's trust of the ECED has been declining more rapidly. The teachers who have been working in the public schools are sending their children into private ECED/pre-primary schools. It indicates that the teachers themselves are not convinced about their own professional skills that contributes to flourishing the private ECEDs and educational intuitions (Joshi, 2019). Thus, the notable demarcation has been created between rich and poor people by adopting "dual education system" in Nepal.

Adequate Financing in ECED: By looking at the last five fiscal year budget allocation for the ECED, it seems completely inadequate, and the budget never been crossed four per cent in each year. The budget must be increased if we look of high-quality ECED to ultra-poor and disadvantaged children yields a high rate of return and the higher the investment leads to the higher the possibility to reduce the socioeconomic gap in society.

Reducing Gaps in Achieving Accessible and Affordable: Bhandari (2018) states the accessibility of ECED centers is still a problem in most rural areas; there are not easily accessible ECED centers. Children cannot walk more than half hour walking distance alone. Rural parents do not have that kind of awareness level and time to take care of their children every-day due to their difficult livelihood (Groot, 2007). The author further argues privately owned kindergartens in urban areas are beyond the expectations for the parents from the low economic backgrounds because of its high fee structure.

Arrangements of Skilled and Permanent Facilitators: ECED facilitators have been working as part-time worker and getting nominal allowances which is not enough to retain skilled human resources. Remunerations do not only contribute to retain a trained ECED facilitator as an individual but also enhance the educational quality through motivating them and the existing remunerations inappropriate to fulfil their basic needs. An idea of encouragement of practitioners graduated from universities by hiring them as ECED facilitator can play a crucial role.

Harmonization of ECEDs: There is a vast difference between government funded, bilateral/INGO, and privately funded ECED centers. It has contributed to creating economic and regional disparities. A state can't be a witness in widening a gap between rural vs urban and poor vs rich and everybody expects a parental role for harmonizing ECEDs. There is the vast difference between public and private ECEDs as well as ECEDs running in rural and urban setting.

Nutritious Tiffin/lunch at School: Many of children are irregular and dropping out from the ECED centers due to unavailability of tiffin/lunch. Serious concerns are raised about the nutritious and healthy tiffin/lunch at schools. Children from poor economic background are not used to manage tiffin/lunch for their kids.

Social Discrimination: Discrimination is still in existence in most of the rural areas in Nepal. Children from Dalit, Madheshi, and Minorities encountered discrimination in several times from their cohorts in the classrooms that contributes to increase dropped out rates. Dalit parents could not expose such issues of discrimination due to their traditional “patron-client relationship” since long-time with so-called higher caste and class people.

Friendlier Infrastructure: The most ECED centers in rural areas are running without considering the issue of children with disabilities. Classrooms, toilets, trails, playgrounds, water taps etc. are not friendlier for children with disabilities.

Bilingual Curriculum: An execution of bilingual language in the classroom plays a crucial role for better learning to children who prefers in speaking their mother tongue language. There are no significant policies for implementing multiple language system in one ECED room. Local government has the authority for designing and implementing bilingual curriculum but that has not been formed in a concrete shaped yet.

Conclusion

ECED is a preparedness of children for school in terms of their physical growth, mental capacities, and social adjustment. Every child has a right to survive, grow and develop their inborn potentialities and Early Childhood Education and Development is a foundation for education undertaking. Over the last two decades, some notable achievements have been achieved in the ECED sectors in Nepal. Beside low investment of the government in ECED, total 37,700 community based and school based ECED/pre-primary classes are running throughout the country whereas 466,187 children are enrolled in ECED (SESP, 2022). The average ECED gross enrollment rate reached at 89.62 percent and achieved attractive progress in gender (0.92) parity in ECED. However, community based ECEDs in geographically remote area are running without basic requirements. The ECED facilitators have not been receiving justifiable wages even they spent optimum time specifically three to five hours/day in the classroom that led to high rate of turnover. The ongoing SESP identified key activities that ensure access to participation, equality, and inclusion, and enhance educational quality and relevance by applying strategic intervention as undertaking systematic mapping, rationalization and setting up new ECED centers by developing need-based models (SESP, 2022).

References

- Adhikari, J., & Robertson, T. (2015). *An evaluation of the Nepal education project, 2010 to 2015*.
- Bhandari, R. (2018). Early childhood education and development in Nepal: Access, quality and professionalism. *Prima Educatione*, 1, 129.
- Central Bureau of Statistics. (2012). *Statistical pocketbook, (2014)*. Kathmandu: National Planning Commission Secretariat. Retrieved from <http://cbs.gov.np/publications>
- Department of Education. (2011). *Flash I report 2068 (2011-12)*. Sanothimi: Kathmandu. Government of Nepal.
- Department of Education. (2013). *Flash I report 2070 (2013-14)*. Sanothimi: Kathmandu. Government of Nepal.
- Government of Nepal, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *Achieving literacy for all: NEF-MIS report 2014*. Sanothimi, Kathmandu.

- Government of Nepal. (1999). *Local self-governance act*. Ministry of law and justice. Kathmandu. Nepal
- Jacinta, R. M., & Rotich, K. S. (2015). Impact of early childhood education on pupils' learning in primary schools in Kenya. *Global Journal of Educational Studies*, 1(1), 52-61.
- Jha, J. (2019, November 25). Free education by law. myRepublica. <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/free-education-by-law/>
- Kadel, P. (2015). Reviewing multilingual education in Nepal. *Multilingual and development*, 189-204.
- Ministry of Education of Sports, Nepal National Commission for UNESCO. (2003). *Education for all Nepal national plan of action (2001-2015)*. Kathmandu. <http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/ext/epic.nsf/ImportDocs/EAC9BAF8241F8AC08525732200709EE7?opendocument&query=NP>
- Ministry of Education. (2009). *School sector reform plan (2009-2015)*. Government of Nepal. Kathmandu.
- Ministry of Finance. (2013). *Policies and programs of the government of Nepal for fiscal year 2070-71 (2013-14)*. Kathmandu: Government of Nepal.
- National Planning Commission. (2003). *Tenth five-year plan (2003-2007)*. Kathmandu. Government of Nepal. <http://cbs.gov.np/publications>
- National Planning Commission. (2012). *Thirteen interim plans (2012-16)*. Kathmandu. Government of Nepal. <http://cbs.gov.np/publications>
- National Planning Commission. (2020). *Fifteenth five-year plan (2019-24)*. Kathmandu. Government of Nepal. <https://www.npc.gov.np/images/category>
- Oberklaid, F., Soldfeld, S., & Moore, T. (2012). Early childhood development and school readiness. In A. Kalil, R. Kaskins, & J. Chesters (Eds.), *Investing in Children* (pp. 127-143). Brookings Institution Press.
- Ravens, J. (2009). *Early childhood development in Nepal: Expansion, inclusion, quality: A study to support the further development of Nepal's national policy for early childhood*. globalchilddevelopment.org/.../NEPAL%20UNICEF%20ECD%20FINA
- Shrestha, K., Eastman, W., & Hayden, J. (2009). Early childhood development: what is it? What are the recent trends and what are the challenges confronting its development in Nepal? In K. Shrestha, E. Wayne (Eds), *Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID)* Tribhuvan University (pp.1-8).
- Tamang, S. (2002). Education in mother tongue in Nepal. In K. Shrestha, E. Wayne (Eds), *Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID)* Tribhuvan University (pp.17-32).
- Thapa, A. (2013). Does private school competition improve public school performance? The case of Nepal. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 33(4), 358-366.
- UNESCO (2006). Nepal: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programs. *International Bureau of Education*. Geneva, Switzerland. unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001472/147200e.pdf
- Upreti, N. (2013). National plan and policies for early childhood education and care in Nepal.
- World Bank, & UNICEF. (2020). Costing Study on Early Childhood Education and Development in Nepal: A Case for Investment in ECED.