

Teacher Education in Nepal and Denmark: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This article investigated the teacher education policies, practices, and their influence on teaching-learning activities in Nepal and Denmark. The study presents a comparison of the teacher education system and practices between Nepal and Denmark. The study is based on the literature reviewed in the case of Denmark whereas in the case of Nepal, it is based on the data obtained from the various stakeholders. The study adopts an interpretive approach under qualitative research design which includes in-depth interviews with university teachers, Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) executive and focus group discussions with school teachers. Findings indicate that teacher education in Nepal started far later than in Denmark and shares some similarities with distinct differences in policy stability. Enrollment in teacher education courses is decreasing due to unemployment issues which may affect the quality of education in future. Furthermore, the results indicate that new demand-based approaches to teacher education, capacity enhancement of training centers, effective monitoring mechanisms, qualified teacher educators, and efficient ICT integration are the major aspects of needed improvements.

Keywords: Demand-based approach, ICT integration, interpretive approach, teacher education.

Introduction

Teaching is one of the major components of the education system. There are multiple forms of teaching in the world including school education, college, or university graduation. Besides, formal education based on structure and curriculum, teaching of religious and spiritual books among the different religious communities is a major variety of teaching. The transfer of knowledge and skills from elders to the kids in the family can also be regarded as teaching. Teachers are the key persons who are involved in the teaching-learning process. The primary purpose of teaching is to make the students understand what their teacher wants to tell them. For this to happen teacher should contain a large set of knowledge, contents on the subject matter as well as the techniques and skills of communication so that the learners grab in the way the teacher wants to deliver. Teacher education aids a lot in attaining this objective and prepares teachers to cope with the changing pedagogical paradigms, technological development, and emerging challenges in teaching. Bartels (2005) insisted that teachers' knowledge in practice is more complicated than just knowing

or using facts and the general concept of language learning. It explores the various research methodologies that can be used to investigate questions about language teachers' acquisition and use of Knowledge about Language (KAL), as a prospective model for further research. Biesta (2015) has suggested that the "difference between a competent and a good teacher lies in the ability to bring judgment to the task of teaching". Rust (2019) develops new approaches to teacher education based on inquiry among teacher educators who emphasize partnering between universities and schools aiming at the preparation and support of teachers and schools.

Poor classroom teaching has been regarded as one of the major causes of less efficient basic education in Nepal. The claim has been supported by the facts of very low academic achievement, high drop-out, and class repetition rates. Asian Development Bank (ADB) (2011) identified "lack of emphasis on teacher training, an unsuitable teacher training curriculum and teaching methods, and weak management capacity" (p. 1) as the reasons for poor teaching. ADB (2011) stated that at the request of the Government of Nepal, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided technical assistance under their loan to assist the government in preparing a project for training primary school teachers in Nepal. ADB assessed the project as efficient and claimed that its contributions were fully integrated with the school sector reform program. Pradhan (2011) performed a descriptive study about teacher education in Nepal. The study concluded that there should be a balance between content and pedagogy for the new perspectives of teacher education to be adopted in the teacher's profession.

Neupane and Joshi (2022) recommend increasing investment in teacher education so that teachers will be motivated which leads to contributing to the overall transformation of the education sector in South Asia. Rasmussen and Bayer (2014) present the results of a comparative study of selected teacher education programs for primary and lower secondary teachers in Canada, Denmark, Finland, and Singapore and The study did not find any clear difference between the teacher education programs in Denmark and other top-performing countries. Dignath et al. (2022) conducted a quantitative study on the factors that affect the development of pre-service teachers' diverse beliefs and findings suggest that participants having prior knowledge were less likely to be persuaded by the text. The findings of the research by Main and Slater (2022) suggest that existing online learning platforms can be used to provide focused instructional coaching for instructors. Schroeder and Curcio (2022) concluded that teacher education programs must acknowledge that social networks are an integral part of life, these days and must focus on pre-service teachers' engagement with social networks.

Teachers' interests and knowledge are keys to driving their professional learning Hallman (2022) stated that teacher education in the pandemic era must value the professional judgment of teachers.

According to Craig et al. (2022), ideas on teacher education must be open for further debate, discussion, inspection, and reconsideration which will lead to further clarification and dimension to the language. Bista (2011) recommends advanced program packages with student-centered teaching methods, materials, training, and structural design to improve the existing trend of teaching and learning English in Nepal. Gautam (2006) reviews the impact of teacher training in Nepal identified the major issues and suggested ways to improve them. Teacher Service Commission regulation 2057 provisioned that those with a certificate, bachelor's or master's degree in education faculty would be considered to have training of ten months which is mandatory for those with degrees in other faculties. Baral (2014) states that considering training and qualification both to the product of education faculty might lead to compromise in quality and difficulty in the fulfillment of skilled teachers. According to NCED (2014), TPD consists of a cycle of workshops, project work, and counseling. TPD training has developed a culture of learning and sharing in the schools. Teachers discuss their ideas with fellow teachers, share problems, and at times do some collaborative projects as a part of their TPD training. It identifies strengthening the capacity of the training center, developing an in-built mechanism of monitoring and follow-up programs, and selecting of qualified roster as the main aspects of the needed improvement in TPD.

Ferguson (1985) describes the historical development of teacher education in Japan. He analyzes similarities and differences between Japanese and American teacher preparation practices. He concludes by describing the efforts that the Japanese had made to use and modify Western pedagogical concepts. Kumar and Wiseman (2021) analyze five major national education documents of India and critically question the human capital theory of Indian education policy. It offers evidence-based policy recommendations to improve teacher quality in India. Conklin (2015) provides a conceptual framework to guide the design of coursework to prepare teacher educators. The author provides examples “from a course on pedagogy of teacher education oriented towards critical, social justice-oriented pedagogies that the author created and taught to a group of doctoral students who were learning to become teacher educators” (p. 317). Menon et al. (2014) share the emergent ideas about the role of languages in teacher education in multilingual contexts in India. It concludes that teacher education programs could prepare future teachers to look critically at the multiple languages used in schools to value their students’ emergent capabilities with languages.

The article by Srinivasan (2016) states the four problems of the pedagogy of teacher education. They are curriculum, relation, professional knowledge, and learning problem. He highlights the challenges faced by teacher educators, including the need for teacher educators to scrutinize their practices. It considers “what should teacher educators know and do in the context of India” (Srinivasan, 2016, p. 197)

to guide teacher educator preparation and their continuous development. Rajput and Walia (2001) state that the focus of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners was on the development of professional competencies and effective ways of achieving higher levels of commitment and motivation to teachers. It states that new developments in information and communication technologies would lead to a major transformation in India.

While there is extensive research in the realm of teacher education, there remains a notable gap in comparative studies between the teacher education systems of Nepal and European countries. This article explores the existing teacher education system in Nepal and Denmark and presents suggestive feedback for its enhancement. This study aims at finding answers to the following research questions.

What are the existing teacher education practices in Nepal and Denmark?

How has teaching and learning been affected by teacher education in both countries?

In what ways do the existing teacher education policies contribute to bringing significant changes in their teacher education program?

Method

The research adopts an interpretive research paradigm within qualitative research approach. I took seven teachers and one of the executives from CEHRD as the research participants for the primary source of data. Among seven teachers, four of them were involved in secondary-level English teaching and three of them were in bachelor-level English teaching. Research participants were purposively selected based on their education level, leadership, and experience in teaching and they were approached at their convenient time and place through direct contact and via the zoom platform. Both focus group discussion (FGD) and in-depth interviews were employed as the data collection tools. I created good rapport with the research participants. Regarding Denmark, I had gone through the various literature including articles, books, and reports.

English teachers from one of the public schools of Kathmandu Valley were involved in FGD. Utmost care was done while selecting them so that it included teachers from all levels who had received different sorts of teacher training. Two of them were from the secondary level, one from the lower secondary, and one from the primary level. Permission from school management was obtained and the participants were requested for their voluntary involvement. Although they were teaching at different levels, it was assured that they all had obtained pre-service and in-service teacher training. FGD was carried out at their school hall after regular school hours it took almost one and a half hour to end the discussion. The researcher stated the

purpose of the discussion and conducted a brief introductory session at the beginning. Participants shared their opinion and experiences on the various aspects of teacher training. The audio recordings were taken and then transcribed later.

In-depth interviews were carried out with the teachers teaching in both public schools and undergraduate level. Interviews with two teachers were carried out physically while one of them was carried out via the online platform zoom. An in-depth interview was also performed with one of the executives of CEHRD. Each interview lasted for about forty-five minutes and follow-up interviews were also done to reach the saturation of the data. All the participants in FGD and interviews were pre-informed and given their pseudonyms to preserve their confidentiality. Interviews were recorded in audio as well as video form, later transcribed, and organized thematically into different themes and sub-themes.

Findings

Historical Perspectives of Teacher Education

The history of common schools in Denmark began in 1818 during a national bankruptcy. According to Foldberg (1985), the King of Denmark issued the Common School Edict, ensuring all children received schooling. Education reforms occurred in 1894, 1930, 1954, and 1966. Institutions providing teacher education included nursery school training colleges, social pedagogy colleges, education colleges, vocational training colleges, universities, and The Royal Danish School of Educational Studies. Foldberg (1985) concentrated on 29 colleges of education in Denmark, including state and private institutions, one in Faroe Islands, and one in Greenland. These institutions trained teachers for primary and lower secondary schools with entrance requirements similar to universities.

Foldberg (1985) further highlighted that Danish colleges offer concurrent education, integrating subject matter and practical and theoretical preparation. Teachers aged 16-19 are typically educated in two subjects and must add a semester of professional training. Denmark has a unique position in Europe due to its teacher education system, which remained under the control of colleges of education. Despite reduced numbers due to unemployment, teacher education institutions in Denmark were subordinate to university studies in liberal arts, law, theology, or medicine. Over thirty institutions serve the entire Danish public school system, with twenty teachers' colleges maintaining a dominant role in teacher education. As specified in Ohles (1957), Danish teachers' colleges were small, and enrolled less than 300 future teachers, with over half being private institutions. Admission required applicants to be at least seventeen years old and master subjects. The four-year course included general education and professional concentration, with compulsory subjects like Danish, religion, and foreign languages. State examinations were conducted after

the second and fourth years, with religious instruction prominent. Most colleges maintained their practice schools or used nearby municipal schools. According to Ohles (1957), half of Denmark's colleges had dormitory facilities with clubs and student councils, fostering a passionate college spirit. A national council of Teacher's College Pupils influenced college instructors. Post-World War II, Denmark faced teacher shortages, leading to emergency measures like shortened courses and evening colleges offering five-year courses. Third-year students were placed in regular classrooms for two months, ensuring equal training rates.

As stated in Pradhan (2011), training for secondary teachers was initiated in Nepal in 1957. For training purposes, the government established the College of Education with the functional and technical assistance of the government of the USA. The college offered a two-year I. ED program and a one-year B.Ed course for 10-year high school graduates and for those who hold Bachelor's degrees in subjects other than education to produce trained lower secondary and secondary teachers. In 1973, the College of Education was converted into the Institute of Education as one of the institutes of Tribhuvan University. According to Shrestha (2008), the concept of teacher development was started in 1971 when the government provisioned the policy that all teachers must receive 10 months of training and provided an additional allowance for the trained teachers. Government policy being inconsistent could not provide the training facilities to train all the untrained teachers. Afterward, when the government started its institutions to provide in-service training to teachers, the universities started losing the government support to improve their professional programs. As a result, the pre-service training programs gradually converted into academic and less professional programs. Denmark's teacher education system has evolved over the years, with the colleges of education providing training for primary and lower secondary schools. Since they offer concurrent education, integrating subject matter and practical and theoretical preparation, the teacher education system in Denmark can be regarded as a well-developed system to address the issues of teacher education. The Danish teacher education system can be viewed as a dynamic and evolving landscape, with opportunities for ongoing research and improvement to better meet the needs of students, teachers, and society. However, policies although adopted to employ better teacher education programs could not be sustained due to policy instability. As a result, teacher training programs gradually converted into academic and less professional programs.

Both Nepal and Denmark have distinct historical perspectives on teacher education due to their unique socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts. Over time teacher education became an integral part of Nepal's higher education. Despite some progress, there are some challenges prevalent in teacher education including inadequate infrastructure, rural disparities, and the need for continuous professional development of teachers. Whereas Denmark has a high value on education and

invests significantly in teacher training and professional development. Although teacher education history in Nepal is far behind that of Denmark, it encompasses a number of remarkable milestones and is gradually in the process of enriching itself.

Existing Teacher Education Practices

Laursen (2015) stated that the training of teachers in Denmark took place at seven universities. Universities had several different campuses. The four-year programs were of a concurrent type. Student teachers interchangeably work with theory and practical classes. Six months of teaching practice at schools decided by each college was required last year. The general outlines of the program were regulated by legislation: the duration, subjects, rules regarding the institutions and their management, etc. The theoretical part of the program includes pedagogical subjects and school subjects.

The admission requirement for the teacher-training program was an examination at upper secondary level. The concurrent model in Danish professional education is based on the assumption that students will experience a close connection between theory and practice.

With respect to the case of Nepal, participants of the study highlighted that to pursue their pre service teacher education course they did not attend any entrance examinations. Rather they got direct admission to the colleges. Later, they had to pass the teacher license exam as well as competitive teacher selection exam conducted by teacher service commission. The administrative difficulties of applying for those examinations, corresponding interviews were the matter of concern in the FGD. S₂ expressed that syllabus of teacher selection competitive exam must align with the undergraduate pre service teacher education course offered by the universities. He opines:

Our B.Ed. and M.Ed. degrees are just for qualifying. We have to compulsory join the preparation classes by paying huge sum of money to appear in the TSC examination. We have to pay twice for the same purpose.

The participants T₁, T₂, T₃ were the M.Ed graduates from Tribhuvan University, Nepal. They all were familiar about institutions providing the pre-service teacher education in Nepal and demanded for the timely update in such courses. T₁ puts his thought that:

Our B.Ed and M.Ed courses are as old as TU and as inefficient as TU. The courses must incorporate saleable, innovative and practical contents to make it alive.

They knew about the in-service training conducted by Education Training Centers for the permanent public-school teachers. T₁ and T₃ received their second

phases of TPD training while T₁ had completed all phases of secondary level TPD training in English. Both T₁, T₂ were very excited about how they shared their experiences during the training. T₂ states:

It was much interesting to share teaching experiences among colleague teachers. I applied some of the experiences from the training later in teaching which yielded positive results.

All of them expressed that there is declination in the interest of new students towards teacher education. T₃ expressed her discouragement:

In Nepal, teachers get paid less than other professions. It would be profitable to work abroad or start own grocery than to be a teacher. Also, the syllabi and course contents of teacher education programs conducted by Tribhuvan University and other universities in Nepal are conventional. They do not focus on producing competent manpower as per market demand.

L₁ and P₁ teachers of lower secondary and primary level who participated in FGD had completed their one-year B.Ed. after passing B.A degree. They found the one-year B.Ed. program of different universities purposeful and worthy. All the participants agreed on P₁'s thought that:

Classroom practices without considering the psychological aspects of students will be meaningless. B.Ed. the program helped me with teaching methodologies and pedagogies besides the course contents which I had mastery over.

S₁ and S₂ on the other hand emphasized the 'teaching practice', a compulsory part of the B.Ed. course. They insisted that the beauty of teaching practice lies in its sincere adoption and monitoring. S₂ states:

It was a memorable day when I used to prepare lesson plans, visit the class on time, answer the queries of the students, and await their feedback at the end. Those students still remember me and send greetings via messenger.

In contrast to Nepal, Denmark has the provision of an entrance test to qualify for admission to the teacher education courses. This signifies their focus on such courses. However, it is lacking in the case of Nepal. Also, the number of aspirants in such courses is decreasing each year. Nepal and Denmark share teaching practice as the mandatory requirement for their teacher education programs. Participants found it purposeful as well. Professional training programs such as TPD were the major attraction to the participants where they got opportunities to share their experiences with their colleagues. All the participants of FGD had an idea about TPD as in-service teacher education. They were well known about the three phases of training for primary, lower secondary, and secondary levels. They also stated about the

specific training on ICT and refresher training conducted by Education Training Centers throughout the country. But they raised their voice on the insufficiency of specific and refresher training for the teachers. In my opinion, existing practices on teacher education in Nepal is not demand based and needs revision such that number of aspirants get increased as well as their job opportunities are also assured after completing their courses.

ICT in Teacher Education

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has revolutionized the present-day world. Due to the increasing use of computer programs, web applications, mobile applications, and the internet, people are simplifying their complex tasks. ICT tools and teaching-learning platforms are being extensively used these days. All the participants of this study who were interviewed or involved in group discussions put their positive remarks on the use of ICT in teacher education. N₁, an executive from CEHRD opined:

Teachers are attracted to online TPD training these days. After the Covid-19 pandemic, we started conducting online training. This saved the time and money of the teachers on reaching training centers and residing nearby throughout training sessions.

Another participant L₁, a lower secondary teacher who attended online TPD training, however, expressed his dissatisfaction with the internet service provided by the ISPs and the non-reliable power supply of NEA. He expresses:

If the training center was accessible to me, I would prefer physical training because power failure and low connectivity issues killed my 50% training time during TPD.

The participants demanded the proper use of ICT tools and the consistent availability of the needed resources including the high bandwidth Internet. This sounds logical since without the high-speed Internet and appropriate resources, teacher education courses and sessions could not be well delivered and managed.

Teacher education in Denmark took place in special teacher education colleges, not in universities. According to Hjarnaa and Bollerslev (1995), before 1992, teacher education was very centralized with detailed regulations set down by the Ministry of Education. The curriculum of each subject was the same for each college. After the new act came into force in 1991, teacher education in Denmark changed setting out some common aims. The act stated only the aims associated with the different subjects and left the colleges themselves to decide on the subject-specific contents. It caused differences between the colleges offering teacher education courses. The training was for four years and compulsory subjects for

teacher education students were the psychological and pedagogical subjects, Danish, mathematics, religion, and some practical and creative subjects. Each student engaged in more extensive studies of two specialist subjects.

There was no provision about IT in the previous act of 1966. An adjustment to the act introduced a compulsory course of 42 lessons in IT into teacher education in 1985. Students acquired practical knowledge about IT and learned the pedagogical problems connected with the development of IT. However, it was insufficient to provide the teachers with the necessary qualifications to stay updated with the developments of IT in schools. Based on the report by the ministerial commission, in 1990 only one mandatory course in informatics was abolished and the social and cultural issues connected with IT were treated in the individual subject. Based on the revised policy, most of the colleges started integrating IT in individual subjects but in a few only. Later, as the significance of IT increased for teaching learning, adoption and IT integration to the various subjects increased in Denmark.

The integration of ICT in teacher education has been a significant focus throughout the globe including in Nepal and Denmark. Both countries focus on innovative pedagogies, collaborative learning communities, and research. Denmark has advanced infrastructures and pedagogical approaches. As per the European Union (2020), all level schools in Denmark were well equipped with sufficient ICT devices and reliable broadband Internet. A strategic approach had been developed and followed to set up digital infrastructure and skills of students and teachers. Teachers feel confident using ICT in class without any formal training. However, Nepal is making efforts and gradually stepping ahead despite various challenges.

Teaching Lab in Teacher Education

Laursen (2015) highlighted that a teaching lab involves a group of student teachers cooperating with a teacher in school to try out an idea for teaching or to conduct a small piece of practical research in school. Observations of the Teaching Lab developed by a Danish university college demonstrated that the student teachers tried out well-established ideas on teaching in school. They analyzed, discussed, and learned from their experiences involved in reflective dialogues and shared practical experiences with both supervisors and lecturers. The Teaching Lab seemed to bridge the gap between theory and practice, primarily because it made it possible to try out ideas and gain experience on how ideas work in practice, in the Danish context.

In the case of Nepal, most of the participants from FGD and in-depth interviews did not hear the term teaching lab. Instead, they misunderstood it with the English learning lab for students. One of them, T₂ understood the terms and said that he knew it via research articles when he was doing his master's thesis. He shares:

Mandatory arrangements of playing the role of the teacher in the teacher

education class such as B.Ed. and M.Ed. for the future teacher students will help to improve practical knowledge and assist in tackling the real-time difficulties in the classroom setup.

Teaching labs in teacher education mean dedicated spaces where aspiring teachers can practice and embed their skills under the guidance of expert educationalists. The provision of a teaching lab provides a real-world setting for aspiring teachers. Both countries recognize teaching labs as an important aspect although they are still emerging in Nepal whereas they are already well established and integrated into teacher education practices in Denmark. Engaging in practical sessions with sufficient tools and devices in the laboratory results significant progress in the abilities of aspiring teachers rather than having lectures for hours. Therefore, each teacher education curriculum shall be restructured so that the mandatory lab sessions become the part of evaluation itself. Although it seems a bit difficult for institutions to manage all the necessary resources in the beginning, it would yield significant transformation on the future teachers they produce.

Teacher Education Libraries

Before 1980, teacher education in Denmark was almost based on the interaction between teacher educators as subject specialists, their book collections, and the students. On December 22, 1980 Ministry of Education directed that each teacher training institution form a library committee on which the newly appointed librarian, the rector, and representatives of the teacher educators and the teacher trainees could confer on library policy as stated in Morrill, 1986. The policy resulted in the establishment of teacher education libraries and later evolved in the form of online computer-based libraries.

In the case of Nepal, all the participants had common beliefs on the significance of teacher education libraries. Teachers L₁ and P₁ had bitter experiences with such libraries during their pre-service education. Their colleges did not have well-managed libraries and sufficient reference books, journals, thesis collections, etc. They used to request friends from other colleges if they required added learning materials than those provided by their lecturers. P₁ says:

Those were the days when I used to visit the libraries of other colleges, request the librarian, and borrow necessary books in the name of my friend studying there. It was a really difficult time for us. Now time has changed. The Internet brought many resources onto our palm. But still Internet cannot quench the thirst for physically visiting libraries, reading new stuff, and joining new friends.

The library is the most important collaborative space where most aspiring teachers spend their time and enhance their horizons of knowledge. In the case

of Denmark, teacher education libraries are well-equipped with comprehensive resources and digital infrastructures. Teacher education libraries in Nepal face challenges such as inadequate funding and limited print resources. However, both countries recognize the importance of teacher education libraries. Well facilitated libraries play the pivotal role in the field of teacher education. Managing e- library with high band with internet facilities and sufficient number of resource materials is still the task to accomplish in case of Nepal.

Challenges of Teacher Education

Denmark's teacher education had the same difficulties as many other nations: It was not well-regarded, and it was challenging to obtain the necessary number of applicants, particularly from students who had excelled in upper secondary education programs. Lauresen (2015, p.35) highlighted that the universities did not get much research funding, but society still expects newly educated teachers to be familiar with new knowledge of what works in teaching". There is still a room for inclusive education practices. Strengthening the connection between educational research and teaching practice is also one of the challenges these days.

Staugaard and Rasmussen (2010) identify setting the basis for the final choice of study between teacher education and profession-oriented studies, enhancing the higher quality of teacher education, increasing aspirant enrollments in teacher education and promoting project work, and linking theory with practice as the key challenges to teacher education in Denmark.

OECD (2020) states making teachers better understand the meaning of being an excellent teacher, further, developing the capacity of schools and municipalities to make use of available data, and strengthening monitoring indicators for measuring system performance as the key challenges.

In the case of Nepal, as all the study participants were in-service teachers, they preferred to discuss much on in-service training. They identified several challenges to in-service teacher education in Nepal. Discussion and interview also yielded recommendations from the participants. T₁ questions the capacity of the training centers:

I attended the second phase of my TPD training in one of the public school's narrow classrooms. The desk benches were covered with dirt and the multimedia projector could not display all the contents. One of the sessions was like punishing us rather than training.

Other major challenges identified by the focus group discussion and agreed upon by N₁, NCED executive were a selection of the qualified teacher educator's roster, effective monitoring and appraisal mechanism, lack of follow-up and refresher

sessions, and the time and venue for the training.

During FGD the issue regarding the role of teacher education in teaching-learning process was raised. Two of the teachers, one secondary level and another lower secondary level emphasized that students' academic performances are affected by the quality of teacher education. Interestingly, when the researcher asked if there was any evidence of an improvement in students' results when taught by trained teachers than that of untrained teachers of private schools, they looked at each other and became puzzled. Furthermore, the quality of teacher training programs, integration of technology in teacher education, support for needy and marginalized ones, and decreasing interest of aspiring teachers towards teacher education courses are some of the challenges in Nepal.

Need Improvement

OECD (2020) recommended developing a national teacher profile, vision, or standards of practice to improve formal appraisal and informal feedback. OECD suggested developing more strategic training at different career stages, including collaboration, coaching, and mentoring opportunities to cope with the challenges of teacher education in Denmark. In the case of Nepal, one of teachers, T₃ suggested conducting TPD training during the vacation or during the examination time. S₁ and S₂ focused on the intensive ICT training for the roster trainers. S₁ further emphasizes:

Adequate instruction materials should be managed in ETCs. Existing facilities and resources should be upgraded with sufficient hardware, software, and reliable Internet connection.

All the participants agreed on the fact that skills learned during TPD training were not transformed to the classes properly and they have to act seriously upon translating acquired knowledge from training centers to the English classrooms. Participants insisted on selecting the roster trainers based on merit, research publication, academic qualification, and competency in using ICT tools and platforms. T₁ questions:

How can a trainer who is unable to connect the multimedia conduct the training to the teachers?

To enhance the betterment of teacher education, both countries require collaboration between policymakers, educational institutions, teachers, researchers, and other stakeholders. Nepal can benefit from the best practices of Denmark. However, both countries should employ the mechanisms so that the number of quality aspirants in teacher education programs increases.

Discussion

Based on findings it is observed that the policies on the teacher education system in Denmark are consistent and stable compared to that of Nepal. Although both countries have their uniqueness in historical development, socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts, the significance of well-established and organized teacher education programs is pronounced in both countries. The Danish government invested a huge sum in reforming primary and secondary schools, the majority of which was supposed to be invested in strengthening competencies among teachers and pedagogical staff in schools. The government gradually integrated ICT into teacher education courses and programs as well. The provision of well-facilitated and equipped teaching labs for teacher education, and teacher education libraries with a huge set of teaching-learning materials help to strengthen the teacher education system in Denmark. Lack of sufficient funding and a decreasing trend in the number of aspiring teachers are among the common challenges faced by both countries. Besides investing, if the monitoring and assessing mechanism of teacher education and professional development training are devised and adopted with the active participation of school principals and administrators, the objectives of teacher education programs will be attained. The selection of trainers should be based on knowledge and expertise. The feedback mechanism also needs to be employed. Both theory and practical sessions should be designed by incorporating more project work that links theory into practice.

Several reformative steps have been adopted in teacher education in Nepal, both in pre-service and in-service education. Major ones include the compulsory teaching practice assessed by the internal supervisor of the college and the external examiner from the university. Prospective teachers must conduct English classes for grades nine and ten for two months. It helps them to develop teaching competencies in the real classroom setup and become familiar with the various dimensions of conducting classes and facing teaching English difficulties. B.Ed. program is extended to 4 years program including the latest relevant contents in ELT with the updated curriculum. However, there are still grounds for modification and betterment. In-service training for the teachers at public schools is also added with new strategies and methodologies. Teachers who are unable to attend physical training can attend online TPD training, refresher training, and other subject-specific training such as ICT training. However, the aspect of selecting competent teacher educators and trainers is a matter of concern. Restructuring the training centers with adequate instructional and learning resources, necessary ICT tools, platforms, and reliable internet are the prerequisites for efficient training. Developing and implementing the feedback mechanism along with the regular monitoring of teacher education programs and the high motivation in teachers will only lead to the transformation of the acquired skills

and knowledge from training centers to the classrooms.

All stakeholders in teaching English i. e. teachers, teacher educators, trainers, students, school management committees, and local, provincial, and central government must act collectively to reform the public education system in Nepal. Gautam (2016) states that there was no positive correlation between the trained teachers in school and students' success rate in public schools in Nepal. The relevance of teacher education will only be proved when the academic results of students in English taught by trained public teachers outperform that of the students in private schools taught by the fresh university or college graduates.

Conclusion

Denmark has a stable legislative system and policies for teacher education, while Nepal has less stability in training providers. Although teacher education in Nepal began much later than in Denmark, there are some similarities as well as a clear divergence in the stability of policy. Additionally, the results show that the main areas in need of improvement are demand-based methods for teacher education, training center capacity enhancement, efficient ICT integration, skilled teacher educators, and effective monitoring mechanisms. Students in Denmark choose between professional education universities and teacher education colleges, while Nepal allows teaching licenses for aspiring teachers in their respective subjects, and they need not to be graduated from an education background. Denmark uses a strategic approach to develop digital resources, while Nepal lacks sufficient resources. Adopting new Danish teacher education approaches could attract more quality students and improve teaching quality, enhancing overall school performance. Continuous supervision of the teacher professional education and training will further encourage teachers towards their goals. Despite their significant contribution, the existing teacher education policies in both countries must be updated to incorporate the changing aspirations of both the prospective teachers as well as the students.

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