Practices of Inclusive Education in Nepal

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Abstract

Inclusive education is an approach, process, perspective and universal principle of mainstreaming the people to address the diverse needs and interests of students through a responsive, respectful and supportive learning environment. Students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and with different learning abilities can learn together by participating in their educational settings. This study aims to identify the indicators of inclusive education that can be helpful for teachers to make their teaching effective. After being familiar with the national and international practices of inclusive education, teachers can broaden their knowledge and will incorporate inclusive attitudes into their content delivery practices. Despite the high public interest in technical and vocational education (TVE), few of them have access and the opportunity to enroll in the TVE stream. Considering this problem, this study was conducted in a natural setting through field visits, interviews with parents, students, SMC chairpersons and political leaders in the sampled district. The study found the various gaps in inclusive practices such as promoting diversity, social justice, cooperative learning and collaboration in general and TVE schools in Nepal. Using Herzberg motivational-Hygiene theory as a theoretical lens to investigate the practice of inclusiveness in TVE schools, I found some demotivating factors such as fragile TVE policy and job insecurity of teachers to demotivate teachers and students toward technical and vocational educations in western Nepal.

Keywords: inclusion, access, supportive teaching, alternative teaching, parallel teaching, visionary leadership.

Introduction

This study analyses the practices of technical and vocational education (TVE) from the stakeholders' perspectives including subject teachers, SMC members, and students in Nepal. Although the thirteenth national periodic plan (2013–2016) provided programmes and activities for developing and strengthening the TVE stream at the secondary level offering choices to the students for vocational preparation (NPC, 2013), the crossroad conversation and my observation as a teacher educator informed about the practice of TVE as per its objectives. Similarly, offering TVE in school as a separate stream is not only the answer to promoting employment, engaging youths in productive work and reducing poverty (Grollmann & Rauner, 2007). However, SDP (2016-2022) has given top priority to the effective implementation of such programmes (Karki, 2012). To enhance the quality and relevance, relevant curricula, preparation of teachers, provisions for infrastructure and equipment, adequate provisions for institutional learning blended with work-based learning, involvement of the employers in course design, training delivery and assessment and provision for career guidance, coordination of institutional training and work-based learning including transitional services and post-training supports are some of the essential prerequisites for successful implementation of the streaming scheme in secondary schools (DOE, 2017). But there are only a few inclusive practices have occurred in Nepal. Documental practices have been more but the real practice reflected that 92.59% of students do not have textbooks, 44.44% mismanaged the school, 29.23% of schools have only reference books and 70.37% of textbooks are insufficient in the school (DOE, 2017).

International Practices of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a right, efficacy, pragmatic and political perspective (Dyson, 1994). It is conceptualized from a development perspective as it has a different meaning in developed and developing countries. According to Sharma (2015), in the perspective of developing countries education is widely inclusive in ladies, marginalized and disadvantaged, and in ethnic group children with physical exceptions and learning problems. Inclusive education can be interpreted from a critical perspective as it may cultivate learners' minds with pedagogy and transform society through education. The critical perspective assumes that inclusive education provides an appropriate learning classroom environment for all participants (Brelach & Chamber, 2011). Defined through a humanistic lens, Cologen (2013) states that getting inclusive education is a human right to enhance social relations and conditions. In the narrow meaning, it is an integrated form of learners and oppressed children groups (Slee, 2011). The wider perspective definitions are more focused on diversity and inclusion of all children in learning according to their needs and psychology (Armstrong, et al. 2011). But in recent date, inclusion in education is not an intellectual idea; it is a real experience (Bruns, 2009). It is a way of looking at the world society that enacts the fundamental meaning of education for all children, complete participation, complete membership, complete and valid citizens. To sum up, inclusive education is an ideology to address the people positively with the diversity like Nepal with difference and differences as stated by Derrida. That requires full participation in group learning with special methods and techniques. There are some methods and approaches like the social minima approach, political

inclusion approach, partial inclusion approach, and regular inclusion approach. Regarding the approaches to inclusive education. Heiman (2004) suggested four approaches: in and out approach, two teacher approach, full inclusion approach, and rejection of inclusion.

As the beginning of international practice, the UN declaration of human rights on 10, December 1948 brought international attention to the practice of inclusive education globally (UNESCO, 2005). Inclusive education policy Ghana (1992), Dubai inclusive education policy framework (2017), the world education forum Dakar conference (200), and Salamanca conference (1994) in Spain have coined the term inclusive education. Salamanca's statement and framework of action on special needs education (1994) are still considered the key international document on the principles and practices of inclusive education. Salamanca stated that schools should be incorporated global behavior in all children according to their physical, mental, social, emotional linguistics and other conditions (UNESCO, 1994). The Child Rights UN convention (1989) ensured the right for all children to education without discrimination in any field and made the provision free and compulsory primary education (Peters, 2004). UN millennium development goal (2000) has already achieved its goal. Now Incheon conference has raised education as SDG 4, to 2015 to 2030 as global prosperous and prosperity of the global citizen. These all have the international practices for enhancing inclusive education for global peace and humanity.

Salamanca Conference (1994) outlined the rights of all children to have access to education in the regular school environment (Ainscow, 2005). It means an inclusive educational environment should be provided to all children to ensure their access to the general curriculum. In an inclusive setting, educational programs are adjusted as per the needs and abilities of children rather than expecting them to fit into the system. Inclusive education is essentially a social justice in education. It seeks fair, equitable, and egalitarian education for all students (Ainscow et al, 2006). It seeks to break down any type of discrimination or prejudice based on specific differences or minority status. Inclusive education, therefore, aims to improve educational quality by accommodating the general curriculum as per the personal needs and abilities of the children (Ainscow, 2005). Students may experience exclusion in their classrooms without proper access to the curriculum. Adaptation, therefore, has been reported as a key practice to ensure access to curriculum and instruction in the general classroom. An individualized Educational Plan is a most essential tool to ensure access for all children to the general curriculum and instruction (Ainscow, 2019). School professionals need to work together to conform the curriculum no longer a barrier to inclusionary practices. For this purpose, they can differentiate the general education curriculum as per the individual needs of learners studying in a particular class.

Practices of Inclusive Education in Nepal

The government of Nepal has committed to and signed various international conferences and conventions. The documents such as Salamanca of Spain (1994) and The Constitution of Nepal (2015), have provisioned inclusive education in article 31, in part 3, and stated every citizen shall have the right to access free and compulsory basic education to each people up to

secondary level. For inclusive practice, the latest constitution of Nepal has ensured education rights up to the secondary level for the physically impaired and economically marginalised (GON, 2015). Similarly, the child act (1992) has a positive practice by establishing child welfare committees and orphanages (UNICEF, 2003).

In Nepal, some positive efforts have been practiced regarding inclusive practice in school education. The education act (1971), national policy and plan of action on disability (2006), special education policy (1996), equity strategy (2014), inclusive education on development plan: 9th plan (1997-2002), international commitment on MDGs (2016-2030), Incheon conference in Spain (2015), 10th plan (2002-2007), 11th 3-year interim plan (2007-2010), 12th plan (2010-2013), respectively 14th to recent 15th plans and inclusive education policy (2017) which created both the disability right and inclusive education policy. These all have addressed the inclusive education in Nepalese practices.

Similarly, the Ministry of Education have developed the SSRP and reformed SSDP (2016-2022), has made special provision for the remote Karnali province students from Dalit communities students and disadvantaged, differentiated, and excluded have provided free alternative education to promote access and participation to promote equity and social inclusion in education (MoE, 2009).

NNEPC (1956) was one of the first and most important of all other commissions and it stated about universal and free primary education. Similarly, ARNEC (1966) has established a social education center in each developmental region it has provisioned training and certification for disabled children (Kafle, 20020). NESP (1971-76) has established a uniform national education system, and NEC (1992) has addressed linguistic and cultural diversity and suggested mother tongue education. Likewise, HLNEC (1998) has recommended gender and caste-based discrimination as well as promoting language, ethnicity, and cultural diversity of the country (Kafle, 2002). All of the aforementioned practices have supported to enhance the inclusive education in Nepal from the past to the present date but the achievement is not still satisfactory in the case of the general stream of school education to vocational education in Nepal.

Education For All - EFA (2000) assessment country report of Nepal committed itself to meet the educational needs of Children with Disabilities through Inclusive Education. The report mentioned that universalization of primary education cannot be achieved unless children with disabilities are provided with schooling opportunities. BPEP II seeks to promote inclusive education of primary school children with non-severe (mild to moderate) disabilities (Jung & Shiwakoti, 2017). To achieve this aim, the program will support primary schools in identifying and assessing such children, train special education teachers and provide appropriate teaching-learning materials designed to ensure effective mainstreaming of these children in primary school (EFA, 2000) assessment country report of Nepal Resource classes will be established to prepare children with schools. Each resource class will have 10 students with the same type of disability. Each class will be provided with one trained teacher (in the respective area of disability) and adequate teaching-learning materials. Multiple ways of involving communities in providing

financial support and temporary residential care at resource classes for children with moderate disabilities have been proposed. Specialized NGOs will be supported in providing education to children with disabilities who cannot attend inclusive classes. (EFA, 2000) assessment country report of Nepal), Tenth Five-year Plan Vision of the tenth five-year plan for inclusive education (2059-2064) highlights inclusive education as the strategy for the EFA program.

Statement of the Problem

There are various problems occurred in the technical and vocational education stream. 12.6 percent of basic education age level children are still out of school (DOE, 2017a) and due to the inadequate budgeting allocated by the state in school education has created problems in access, quality, equality, and equal opportunity in school education. The budget is rounding from 13.91 percent to -17.1 percent (National Campaign of Education, 2015). 83% of basic level children are enrolled in community schools but the other 17% of children are still out of school (DOE, 2017a). Approximately, 17% of children are in private schools. The richest 20% of the population sends their children to private school. Vocational education is more useful for children but the enrollment rate and its access is only 1.5% in higher education but in general education, it seems 15% enrollment ratio (CDC, 2015).

The data shows that 17% of children are out of school and how can the slogan of inclusive education be successful? Despite their interest and attraction towards technical and vocational education, there is a low practice of inclusive education in TVE schools in Nepal. So this study aims to investigate the practices of inclusive education in TVE schools. The study will be helpful to incorporate inclusive practices in the classroom teaching for the teachers and other concerned people. The study has the following objectives:

i. to introduce the indicators of inclusive education for teachers facilitations;
ii. to explore the national and international practices of inclusive education.

Methodology

To examine how inclusive education has been practiced in Nepali schools, I employed a qualitative research design. Six schools from the mid-west and far west of Nepal were selected following purposive and convenience sampling procedures. The participants were teachers, students, and SMC members from the selected TVE schools. I used observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions to collect information along with self-study and narrative inquiry. The study was conducted under the National Curriculum and Education Development Center (NCED) Sanothimi Bhaktapur through Santona Collage New Baneshwor, Kathmandu. As an expert judgment, I used FGD guidelines for SMC members, interview schedules for subject teachers, and in-depth interviews with SMC chairpersons and with the district education officer.

The survey was conducted based on physical facilities, financial condition, academic facilities and the opportunities for learning of the students were explored in depth. The computer science and plant science teacher and students were sampled for an in-depth interview.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Before conducting this research, I set a conceptual framework in my mind based on the equity theory of Stacey Adams (1965). Adam (1956) states that equality and inequality are searched based on input and output. Input refers to the inside reference such as school efforts by subject teachers, school head teachers, SMC chairs and members, political leaders and social contributors, pedagogical skills, teachers' training, creativity, and institutional loyalty, etc. And within the output factors, I linked pay of teachers, bonus, job security, status, career opportunity, self-working environment and highly challenging in their teaching professions. These were all concerned with teachers' professional development. In this regard, I have compared equality and inequality in general stream students and technical and vocational schools students. I used Herzberg motivational-Hygiene theory (1966) as a theoretical lens to investigate the practice of inclusiveness in TVE schools.

Dissatisfaction and de-motivation factor	⇒	Not dissatisfied but not motivated factors	⇒	Positive satisfaction and motivative factors

Hygiene Factors	Motivational Factors
Educational Policies and provisions	Need-based education
Quality of education and TQM	Job opportunity after certificate
Rate of pay to teachers	Linking with family professions & support
Job security of teachers	Self -employment, self- motivated
Working conditions	Support from indigenous knowledge

Findings and Discussion

Although the government documents showed that various inclusive education practices were implemented in Nepali schools, this study found that the framed policies and practices were not practiced in a real situation. For example, a teacher participant from Dang said,

A large number of students do not have textbooks and many schools have inadequate learning resources according to the need of the students. Since there are limited teacher quotas, a shortage of competent teachers and a lack of pedagogical training for teachers to implement inclusive education in practice.

Teacher's response came against the government documents' claim about the practice of inclusive education in Nepali schools. My observation reflects that there was a gap between the real practice and document reports. I observed that majority of students did not have textbooks whereas a large number of them mismanaged the school. Similarly, a high number of students had insufficient textbooks in schools those who received the textbooks received them late. Although teachers' professional development can play a significant role in the effective practice of incisive education, teachers' involved in the interviews reported that professional development activities for the teacher were ignored. It shows that the lack of pedagogical training for teachers and professional security prevented them to practice inclusive education in a real sense.

Similarly, it was found that most of the opportunities for TVE and the entire education system were captured by the 20% elite group and those who could exercise political power. Since TVE school education is for the students who are from the low socioeconomic background and those who have no access to CTEVT expensive education. However, the participants involved in the study reported that the allocated quotas for public schools were inadequate to meet the increasing demand of the students and CTEVT private institutions were interfering with the department of education for their business. The political power and education business have interrupted the inclusive practice of TVE to the target groups in Nepal.

I found that students of TVE schools were in confusion about their future job security. Because the government has not provided easy access to the students to equivalent their certificates. So OJT activities were not properly managed. The lack of proficient teachers, shortage of academic facilities and supportive learning environment, and the blur career roadmap after they graduated from TVE schools influenced the quality education as well as enough practice to provide inclusive education.

The collected data informed that the concept and practices of inclusive education in the different classrooms were found unclear. It means that the teachers and students had no clarity on the meaning and purpose of inclusive classroom settings in practice. In the observed technical and vocational subject classrooms such as plant science and computer science, students argued that the general stream-related students were not getting this opportunity for vocational subjects. The allocated seats, i.e., 48 number were insufficient for the vocational subject. The interaction with teachers and SMC members reflected that despite the high demand for TVE, the allocated quotas could not contribute to the practice of inclusive education. It shows the lack of inclusiveness in actual practice in vocational subjects in Nepali schools. These data are sufficient to claim that the national and international policies of inclusive education have not been implemented properly because the documentation was far different from the real practice.

Access to TVE Schools

I found that the access to TVE for the students from rural and urban poor backgrounds was far due to their financial crisis. The FGD with the school management committee reflected that 80 percent of members and chairpersons argued that the poor, disadvantaged and deprived students had no access to technical and vocational subjects provided by the Nepal government. So inclusive education practices have not been a success from past to the present date but dozens of policies have been made in the context of school education in Nepal.

Students' Satisfaction and Motivation toward TVE Schools

From a motivational lens, most of the teachers in TVE schools were found demotivated due to their job insecurity although they were paid more than the teachers from the general stream. For example,

> I passed M.Sc. from Tribhuvan University. There are other teachers in the general stream with similar qualifications. I am paid more than those from the general stream. However,

I am not satisfied with my job. The major demotivating factor is job insecurity which the teachers from the general stream do not have. (A teacher from TVE School in Darchula)

The above response indicated that teachers were not motivated to prolong their job in TVE schools due to their job insecurity. Similarly, one SMC chair from Darchula said, "Our students are in confusion whether they will apply for a job and higher education after completing grade 12 or not. The policy of technical and vocational education is not clear." It indicated that the fragile TVE policy of the government was responsible to demotivate and de-empower the students from TVE schools.

I observed the students' interaction from the lens of positive satisfaction and motivating factors as stated by Frederic Herzberg. I found that most of the students were satisfied with the knowledge of technical and vocational education but they were dissatisfied with their textbooks, curriculum and scholarship, expensive fees to pay and inappropriate library and laboratory. For example,

Everybody talked about the scope of technical and vocational education in Nepal. But we have experienced the bitter reality due to the government's policy. After completing grade 12 with good marks, I tried to compete in the public commission of Nepal (Lok Sewa Aayog), but our certificates of JTA were not accepted. This not only demotivated us but also discourage us from this type of education. (Two participant students from Darchula)

The above remarks showed students' level of motivation because of the government policy on technical and vocation education. Such policy can discourage students to enroll in TVE schools.

Indicators of Inclusive Classroom

Inclusive education means wider access to education for those who have been traditionally excluded due to discriminatory societal practices, cultures, or ways of doing that ultimately result in inequality. It encourages collaboration in which all members of the educational team work together and share knowledge while striving toward a common goal. Principles of social justice, acceptance, and promoting diversity are fully valued. The major indicators of inclusive education for my study were fixed co-teaching, natural proportion, co-planning, grouping is heterogeneous, engaging instruction, and differentiation.

I observed that these indicators were not found properly implemented in the sampled schools. The students' participation was found heterogeneous in the gender perspective but they were from a similar socioeconomic backgrounds. It was also found that the student's participation was more inclusive but the teachers' behaviour in classrooms was not inclusive. In the case of student enrollment in the vocational stream, there was no inclusive practice. Because the quota system of the technical and vocational schools created the demarcation between the students and their parents. All this information through my observation reflect that there is little practice of inclusive education in a technical and vocational stream in Nepali schools.

Conclusion

The community school mechanism for inclusive education is essential to enhance the quality of education and equitable access and prejudice reduction training for teachers. The education-related programmes such as SSRP and SSDP emphasized the effective practice of inclusive education in educational institutions. However, the smart policies are not in real practice. The poor school management system, lack of pedagogical training for teachers and special training for SMC members and more injustice in admission requirements are major hindrances to its effective practice and implementation. Skill-based curriculum reform and easy access to reference books and textbooks are the emerging problems in the school. OJT problems, equal opportunity, effective policy implementation, public awareness, quality education, and low participation of the girl's students than male students in technical and vocational education stream were found as remedial measures in this study. Professional insecurity is another serious problem found by the subject teacher. Dilapidated furniture, old books, copy-paste curriculum of I. Sc., and science curriculum are some emerging exclusive practices of TVE of a school in Nepal.

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