



The Status of Teacher Education and Development in Nepal

Case study 3: Sudurpaschim Province

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1. Introduction

This is one of three provincial case studies conducted as part of a study of teacher education and development in Nepal commissioned by the British Council. The case studies form annexes¹ to the main report, which provides full details of the objectives and methodology of the study. Overall, though, the goals of the research were to understand current approaches to teacher education and development in Nepal, with a focus on basic education teachers and secondary teacher of English, science and mathematics, and to make recommendations for improving the support teachers receive at both pre-service and in-service levels.

The fieldwork for this case study in Sudurpaschim was conducted by Vertex Consult in the period 6–11 November 2022. The fieldwork schedule is included in the appendix and it consisted of a series of individual and group meetings with a

range of stakeholders, including:

- university lecturers and campus chiefs
- school teachers
- head teachers
- education officials at federal, provincial, district and municipality levels.

In Sudurpaschim a total of 63 stakeholders contributed to individual and group meetings, which were conducted mostly in Nepali. The meetings took place face-to-face, except for three interviews with educational authorities, which were conducted over the phone or online. With consent, all meetings were audio recorded and lasted 30–60 minutes

The results of the qualitative work in Sudurpaschim are presented below, starting with the pre-service context. This report was drafted by Vertex Consult and finalised by Simon Borg.

2. Pre-service teacher education

The fieldwork for the pre-service teacher component of this case study was conducted at affiliated colleges of Tribhuvan University: Sudurpaschimanchal Academy/College in Dhangadhi, Kailali district, and Shree Janjyoti Multiple Campus in Bhimdatta, Kanchanpur district.

2.1 Status of teaching profession

Lecturers did not feel that teachers' status was respected, particularly in comparison to other government officials. For example, during the elections:

The temporary government staff of municipality is given the authority of Election Officer whereas highly experienced and permanent teachers of government school have to work under the temporary government staff as Assistant Election Officer. Such discriminatory treatment really hurts

dedicated teachers. Therefore, students' attraction is slowly being decreased towards the teaching profession. (Lecturer)

As further evidence that teachers received less respect, it was also mentioned that whereas there is no delay in the provision of remuneration and other benefits for civil servants, government schoolteachers do often experience delays. Lecturers also felt that:

We teachers/lecturers are the people who prepare doctors, engineers for the country but we are not given due respect by the country. So, the government should formulate policy to make the teaching profession respectable. (Lecturer)

These concerns about the status of teaching in Nepal were reflected to some extent in how attractive Education programmes at university were seen to be. Science and business

¹<https://www.britishcouncil.org.np/status-teacher-education-and-development-nepal>

programmes were very popular as they were seen to offer good employment and status prospects. But the Education stream is often the least preferred (normally the last choice) of students. Also, many of the students who joined Education programmes were working at the same time as studying, and this affects their ability to attend classes and to graduate:

The majority of our students are teachers in private schools. They do not attend College regularly. The majority of them submit assignments on time; however, they are very weak in presentation of the same assignment. (English department head)

Socially, teaching was also seen to be a more suitable choice for females rather than for males, who were expected to choose more 'difficult' subjects: 'The sons should enrol in some more difficult and technical subjects whereas daughters can go with the easier education stream' (campus chief).

2.2 Education programmes

In Sudurpaschim Province, both colleges we visited have been offering Bachelor's (four years) and Master's (two years) programmes, including several streams in the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programme, which we focus on here. However, although science and mathematics education are advertised options for prospective teachers, these streams are not currently running due to a lack of students:

Last year, only four students applied for Mathematics education but we could not admit them. As per Tribhuvan University's policy, there should be at least 10 students to run a class on a particular subject. As per our experience, there should be a minimum of 15 students in a subject to make it financially viable. Thus, we are offering Masters and

Bachelor's degree courses in English Education only along with Nepali and Health Education. (Campus chief)

The interviewees explained that Education was not perhaps as marketable as other subjects it offered:

Management and Technical Education are sellable subjects. So there is relatively more flow of students in these faculties compared to the Education stream. We have small numbers of students on the B.Ed. which further decreases on the M.Ed. Even at Bachelor level, only 50–60% students continue till the fourth year as most of them go abroad or join the police force or start working as a teacher either in a private school or in a government school. (Campus chief)

2.3 Programme design

The informants were asked about the content of the B.Ed. programme for English. The current version of the programme was updated in 2021; however, lecturers had not received any orientation to the new programme: 'The syllabus was revised last year. We expect at least a one-day workshop/seminar to make us more familiar with the changed syllabus' (English department head).

University informants were asked about the content of the B.Ed. programme for English (see Table 1). All courses are worth 100 marks and assessed theoretically (i.e. through written examinations, typically focusing on knowledge recall and often utilizing multiple-choice questions – 'Th' in the 'Assessment' column in the table). A minority of courses also involved some practical assignments ('P' in the Assessment column). Only two courses (ELT Methods and Teaching Practice) seem to focus on the development of student teachers' practical teaching competences, suggesting that these competences remain under-developed when students graduate.

Table 1: ELT courses on Tribhuvan University B.Ed.

| | Course no. | Course title | Assessment | Mark |
|------------|---------------------|--|------------|------|
| First year | Core Courses | | | |
| | Eng.Ed.411 | General English | Th | 100 |
| | Major Courses | | | |
| | Eng.Ed.416 | Foundation of Language and Linguistics | Th | 100 |

| | Course no. | Course title | Assessment | Mark |
|--------------------|----------------------------|--|------------|-------|
| | Eng.Ed.417 | Reading, Writing and Critical Thinking | Th | 100 |
| | Minor subjects | | | |
| | Eng.Ed.418 | Foundation of Lan & Ling | Th | 100 |
| Second year | Core Courses | | | |
| | Ed.421 | Educational Psychology | Th | 100 |
| | Eng.Ed.422 | Reading in English | Th/P | 80+20 |
| | Eng.Ed.423 | Expanding Horizons in English | Th | 100 |
| | Eng.Ed.424 | English For Communication | Th | 100 |
| Third year | Core Courses | | | |
| | Ed.431 | Curriculum & Evaluation | Th | 100 |
| | Major Courses | | | |
| | Eng.Ed.432 | English Language Teaching Methods | Th/P | 80+20 |
| | Eng.Ed.433 | English for Mass Communication | Th | 100 |
| | Eng.Ed.434 | Academic Writing | Th | 100 |
| Fourth year | Core Courses | | | |
| | Ed.441 | Teaching Practice | Th | 100 |
| | Ed.442 | Instruction Technology | | |
| | OR | | | |
| | ICT In Education | | | |
| | OR | | | |
| | ICT in Specialized Subject | | | |
| | Major Courses | | | |
| | Eng.Ed.445 | Translation Theory and Practice | Th/P | 80+20 |
| | Eng.Ed.446 | Literature for Language Development | Th | 100 |

It was felt that the Tribhuvan University B.Ed. curriculum was not well aligned with the realities of teaching in schools. The discussion with lecturers revealed that there is need of a common platform where schoolteachers and university lecturers can communicate with each other regarding the appropriate B.Ed. curriculum, focusing on teachers' real needs:

There is no coordination between college teachers and school teachers. There is no common platform where we can interact with each other and discuss the linkage between the B.Ed. curriculum and school teacher preparation. (Lecturer)

The lecturers interviewed also felt that the programme contained a large volume of material and that it is often difficult to find appropriate relevant resources:

The syllabus is very vast. It seems that the syllabus has been prepared by foreigners who do not understand the Nepalese context and made such a complicated syllabus. For some contents, we even do not get proper resource materials. (Lecturer)

In my opinion, the curriculum designers are guided by the ideology that the more content you put in the curriculum, the more knowledgeable the students will be. In the name of introducing new curriculum/courses, very tough courses should not be designed such that the reference material/textbook cannot be easily obtained. Furthermore, textbooks should be made ready in advance so that students do not need to suffer to get the textbooks. (Department head)

Another challenge noted by lecturers is that they have no involvement in the design of courses; these are created by a curriculum design team, then passed to the lecturers to deliver without any orientation: 'Regarding

curriculum design, we do not have any role and responsibility. We have to simply follow the curriculum designed by Tribhuvan University' (lecturers).

2.4 Teaching approach and assessment

According to the lecturers, the approach to teaching on the B.Ed. programme was largely lecture-based and teacher-centred, although this was not determined by any policy, and lecturers were free to utilise any method. Some used technology to support teaching, though resources were limited:

Some of us are using PowerPoint slides. We download some relevant videos from YouTube which are very helpful in making students understand the subject matter and creating interest in learning. (Lecturers)

The medium of instruction is generally Nepali in all B.Ed. subjects. Even in English education, the lecturers stated that the students do not understand the topics unless these are explained in the local language, though some did say they emphasise the use of English:

I firstly try to make them understand in English. But they do not understand well. They get confused and cannot tell the gist. So, I again explain the same thing in Nepali. Then the students become happy as they understand exactly what I meant to say. (Lecturer)

One lecturer felt that the low academic level of students meant that teaching had to be lecture-based:

When I was a student in Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, our lecturers used to simply give the topics and we had to search the relevant materials ourselves. But here in Sudurpaschim, students' educational background is very weak and hence, they expect everything from teachers. No doubt others methods exist in theory but in the context of Nepal, lecture method is still useful and mostly in practice as well. (Lecturer)

On the B.Ed., 40 per cent of the mark is awarded internally (attendance, course assignments and mid-term exams), while 60 per cent is allocated to the final examination. Examinations tended to be theoretical, with a focus on multiple-choice questions or short-answer questions, as these examples illustrate:

Attempt ALL the questions. Tick (✓) the best answers.

1. According to McRae (1996), the focus of using literature as resource is:
 - a. to exploit literature for language growth and development
 - b. to teach literature for aesthetic purpose (critical concepts and responses to human values)
 - c. to acknowledge literature as an object
 - d. to teach literature for the development of literary skills
2. Which of the following models doesn't come under the proposal of Carter and Long (1991) to justify the use of literature in the teaching of language?
 - a. The personal growth model
 - b. The language model
 - c. The cultural model
 - d. The background information model
3. Which of the following statements is closer to language-literature integrated approach of teaching literature?
 - a. The teaching and learning of literature for information
 - b. The literary analysis from linguistic origin and the teaching of language through literature
 - c. The teaching of literature for the development of literary skills

1. Literature has been described as a content-rich material and a model of creative language in use. Elaborate.
2. Select any lyrical elegy from your course (i.e. Literature for language Development) and critically analyze it.
3. What is the role of drama in a language classroom? Briefly describe how it can be used in a language class?

Figure 1: Literature for Language Development examination questions

2.5 Teaching practice

All B.Ed. students complete a period of teaching in school in their final year. This is how the process was described by the lecturers:

The students come up with a lesson plan in advance and present it in the classroom. Following the presentation, we provide feedback and accordingly, let the students revise the lesson plan. Before they go into schools, students have 10 classes of micro teaching at college then they are sent to school for teaching practice of 25 classes in the last year. We also observe 1–2 periods of the practice teaching, visiting the school for at least two times. We discuss with respective Head Teachers regarding the regularity of our students in teaching practice and their performance in the classroom. (Lecturers)

Dissatisfaction was expressed with the brevity of the practicum and with the fact that it only took place at the very end of the B.Ed.:

The teaching practice should be made of longer duration in at least two phases, one in the second year and another in the last year. The more teaching practice they do, they will be able to become an efficient teacher in future. (Lecturers)

2.6 Alignment with Teacher Service Commission examination

Graduates must pass the TSC examination to secure a licence to teach in public schools (Grade 1–12). However, the view among the lecturers interviewed (and also teachers we spoke to) was that there is no alignment between pre-service teacher education programmes and the requirements of the TSC. For example, the TSC is a general examination for teachers of all subjects, and its first paper consists of 100 multiple-choice questions across a range of topics such as mathematics, science, general knowledge, computer science, IQ test, constitution acts and education policies. Only candidates who pass the first paper are able to proceed to Paper 2, which has more open-ended, subjective questions. Teachers felt that Paper 1 in particular was not linked to their college studies:

For TSC examination's second paper, which is subjective, we found that most of the things we studied on the B.Ed. were helpful but to succeed in the first paper, one should prepare taking help from other reference materials. Otherwise, there is a low chance of getting through. Nowadays, we can find a lot of such guiding materials on YouTube and reference books on the market. (Teachers)

Given these gaps, it was suggested that:

To make the TSC preparation course compatible with university education, either a common foundation course (like a bridge course) should be implemented or university and TSC curriculum should be revised. (Lecturer)

2.7 Lecturer motivation

Education departments are staffed by some full-time and many part-time lecturers. One full-time lecturer was satisfied with his work apart from the lack of opportunities for professional development and discussion with colleagues:

I have recently resigned from Head Teacher position due to extreme unnecessary pressure from teachers. All teachers in my school, even the supporting staff, were affiliated to one or another political party and I could not direct them for quality education. My voice was not given due respect. But I feel good in this college as an English lecturer. I am being paid well. The only lack I feel is that there is no provision of training/workshop for professional development as in the case of school teachers. Most lecturers are part-time. There is not even time with them for discussion regarding teaching issues. (Lecturer)

Regarding the lack of professional development for lecturers, one of the campus chiefs mentioned that they were planning to organise research-related workshops to help the lecturers write articles for publication. Covid-19 had also provided opportunities for the institution to support the development of lecturers' online teaching skills:

We were threatened a lot by Covid in the beginning. We first oriented our lecturers on how to conduct Zoom classes and other online applications which might be useful to run the online classes smoothly. We are very grateful to our lecturers who are very hard working. They explored many things themselves to become well-tuned with new technology. Accordingly, we conducted online classes despite low presence of students. (Campus chief)

3. CPD

This section focuses on continuing professional development (CPD) provision for schoolteachers in Sudurpaschim Province. The insights reported here were obtained through interviews and group discussions with schoolteachers, head teachers and education authorities at the province, district and municipality levels.

3.1 The need for CPD

As explained above, the students who join Education programmes and become teachers are often those with modest levels of academic achievement. Additionally, pre-service programmes do not prepare graduates sufficiently for the realities of classroom life. CPD thus has an important role to play in allowing teachers to continue their development in-service, as one respondent explained:

B.Ed. and M.Ed. are also a kind of teachers' training for the prospective teachers. They need formal training such as TPD to make them more practical and to transfer the knowledge they gained in university to the school classroom. But only one-time training does not make a competent teacher fully. For this, the teacher himself/herself should make several attempts for continuous professional development. (Vice head teacher)

Emphasising the need for CPD, one head teacher noted:

The teacher has to work hard to become a professionally competent teacher. For this, he can take help from different materials available on online platforms. He can discuss the things with other teachers and ask assistance from the Head Teacher in case of requirement of financial aid for teaching material preparation. (Head teacher)

3.2 Teacher induction

In Sudurpaschim, the most recent teacher recruits located for this study had qualified six years previously. The majority of them had received induction to their job, though others said they had not. The authorities did in the



past provide two days of induction, where teachers were given information about their roles and responsibilities, including how they were expected to work with colleagues and the school administration. However, since the new federal policies had been enacted, induction had been lacking:

We are loaded with so many administrative works regarding teachers' remuneration and budget allocation for school building construction. We have to state with sadness that we even could not even provide job induction to the newly recruited teachers. (Education officer)

Emphasising the need of teacher induction, one of the head teachers described one challenging experience with a newly recruited teacher:

Teacher induction is very essential. Otherwise, the newly recruited teachers are totally unfamiliar with the government school environment. I had a lot of discussion with one of the newly recruited teachers due to his poor performance in the beginning days. He had already worked as a teacher in a private school for more than five years; however, he could not adapt here in the beginning due to lack of job induction. (Head teacher)

3.3 TPD training

Although the dominant view of CPD that emerged here was linked to TPD training, some respondents were aware that CPD extended

beyond formal training and included activities that teachers could do together in schools:

The activities which we can do for making ourselves skilled and competent teachers is professional development. For this, TPD training plays a significant role. However, it's only a medium. If we teachers discuss inside school regarding teaching methods, that is also a part of professional development. (Teacher)

The B.Ed. degree which we received from university and the TPD training which we receive once does not work forever. For our professional development, we have to be updated with the new teaching learning methods as per the demand of changing socio-cultural context. (Teachers)

For professional development of teachers, formal training, monitoring, counselling and motivation are required side by side. (Head teacher)

To discuss with senior and experienced teachers regarding teaching learning problems in the school is also a kind of professional development activity which we are regularly doing, though it's not formal activity. Also, we can search new materials from the internet to increase our knowledge and become skilled teacher. (Teacher)

Officially, though, the CPD provided for teachers consisted of training courses organised in central training centres which teachers travelled to (sometimes by plane). This was not seen to be efficient by one head teacher we spoke to:

There is wastage of government funds and time because of training centre based TPD training. The training centres are far from school. The teachers have to stay there in a hostel during training. If such training centres are provisioned in some more locations, it would have been easier for nearby teachers and cost effective as well. (Head teacher)

The educational authorities recognised that TPD training would not reach all teachers and suggested there were other professional development activities teachers could be doing in schools:

For overall professional development, the teachers should not only depend on TPD training and other refreshment training. The ETC has limited funding from central government for delivering training and all teachers won't get opportunity to participate in training at a time. Till one's turn comes, he/she can do many activities in the school.

Teachers can form subject committees to solve day to day teaching problems. Teachers can make educational materials and learn innovative teaching methods from YouTube videos. (Education officer)

It was also recommended that teachers needed to receive training on topics such as action research which would allow them to take responsibility for their own professional development:

The number of teachers might be very few that really work on project-based activities for professional development. There should be more provision for Action Research in the TPD training such that teachers will be self-studious. (ETC official)

3.4 Independent CPD

One of the head teachers emphasised the need for teachers to engage in CPD independently:

There are so many alternate measures by which a teacher can develop his/her skill. They can learn new teaching methods to make students interested in teaching learning activity by using materials available online. For this, the main thing is that the teachers have to be pro-active. It's not good to just keep on asking for ICT training from government. Nobody taught us how to use Facebook and Messenger but we all habitually use these applications. In the same way, why can't we search for materials on the internet? It's just matter of willpower and desire. (Head teacher)

Some teachers did give examples of what they do to support their own development:

I am associated with an online network of teacher professional development called NELTA (Nepal English Language Teachers' Association). I have very much benefitted from the online interaction with other teachers in the platform. We get easy and fast solutions to our day to day problems that we get in the course of classroom teaching. (Teacher)

I am a permanent teacher in primary level. I find sometimes difficult words while teaching English in grades IV and V. Very difficult word meanings are given. So, I have got an English to Nepali dictionary application on my cell phone. (Teacher)

We are exercising some informal measures of professional development in our school. The senior and trained teachers share their experience with new teachers. There

is provision of a classroom monitor who is responsible to maintain a diary regarding teachers' performance. Regarding any teaching learning related problems, we do discussion in general meeting; however, we do not have any subject committee. Furthermore, 14 teachers in this school were provided with laptops with a certain amount of funding from school and they were provided ICT training by computer teacher. (Teacher)

In B.Ed., we just got theoretical knowledge on action research but in TPD training, we were taught how to carry out action research practically. This has really helped us to improve the way of teaching. (Teacher)

A lack of job security, though, was noted by some teachers as a factor that discouraged them from investing in professional development:

I have been in teaching profession for 28 years and I am already fifty years old. In every new academic year, I have to suffer from a kind of mental fear that I will be continuing or not. In such cases, I cannot dedicate myself to professional development related activities rather than the ritualistic approach of teaching. I need professional security first. Professional development cannot be imagined at the cost of professional security. (Teacher)

Some respondents also felt that professional development was not currently a priority for the educational authorities. They further mentioned that there are many teachers' unions, but these also do not advocate for teachers' professional development. In this connection, one of the respondents stated:

Almost all teachers are associated with different teachers' unions. These unions focus on teachers' professional security only rather than their professional development. (Teacher)

3.5 Teacher professional support

Teacher professional support (TPS) is being promoted as part of the new federal education policy. It implies alternative approaches to CPD, including those that are school-based. In Sudurpaschim, teachers stated there was no TPS from the local education unit at all. However, some head teachers said they did try to support their teachers:

I sometimes do class observation. I found some teachers using TPD training to some extent in the classroom. I find other teachers using simply the lecture method. I discuss with teachers in general meeting regarding use of new methods of teaching to attract students in teaching learning activities. I also recommend self-reflection and self-exploration. There is provision of internet facility in the school free of cost. Those who want to can definitely make an effort for professional development by keeping updated with new things. (Head teacher)

Regarding supervision from the local education unit, one of the head teachers stated that there had not been any, though he accepted that it was also his responsibility to monitor teachers' classes and provide feedback accordingly. But he shared a bitter experience in this regard:

Of course, it's my duty and responsibility to monitor classes and provide necessary feedback being a Head Teacher. I also provide some feedback to the teachers for better performance. But what I found is that they do not internalize the suggestions and keep on teaching in the conventional approach (more lecture based teaching). To be very frank, they do not have any fear of the Head Teacher. And they know well that Head Teacher does not possess authority to take any strict action against them. (Head teacher)

It was also found that none of the schools we visited had subject committees. However, teachers said they regularly have discussions about subject-specific problems:

Generally, we keep on discussing with each other regarding any particular problem which we face in the course of delivering subject matter. But if the issue is of general kind, we put it in the general meeting where all teachers discuss and get a common solution. (Teachers)

Regarding local government supervision and TPS, one education officer explained that a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities was an obstacle:

I was a school inspector earlier. I supervised many schools and provided required support technically to the teachers. I continued this even after being Head of education unit. Once I suggested that a teacher make some changes in his teaching to make it more effective and productive. He took it negatively. The next day, I received a call from head teacher of that school asking me on which basis (clause of Education Act) I was permitted to give direction to a

teacher. Since then, I am totally disappointed and stopped visiting schools. Not only me but also my colleagues in other municipalities are suffering from similar problems. Nobody wants to take a risk (by giving direction to teachers) as there is nothing clearly defined by prevailing law. (Education officer)

He added that without having subject-specific human resources, the local education unit cannot monitor and supervise teachers and provide feedback. As a solution to this problem, he further mentioned that it would have been far better if a roster of TPD trainers could be formulated and mobilised for TPS in schools. Otherwise, the available human resources should be trained for the specified purpose. Supporting his view, another education officer said:

I cannot believe those who say there was an effective TPS in the past when there was provision of school inspectors. There is no doubt that the school inspectors used to visit schools but most of them were limited only to administrative supervision rather than providing technical support to the teachers by observing classes. This is also because of the lack of subject knowledge among the school inspectors. (Education officer)

The discussion with one of the respondents about TPS revealed that though there is a will, there is currently no way forward. In his own words:

I was a district Education Officer. I used to visit schools frequently with my staff. But now as a head of Education Development and Coordination Unit (EDCU), I do not have sufficient human resources and budget. Though, I have a strong desire for school supervision personally, I cannot do so due to lack of resources and policies. Even the meaning of EDCU is not seen fully in practice. As per the budget and provision, we are not allowed to do anything for the development of education. We are just allowed to do some coordination work. (EDCU head)

As an alternative kind of TPS, one of the head teachers mentioned:

Considering lack of resources (experts and budget), teachers from one school can be taken to a model school for class observation of respective subjects. Later on, the teachers should be made accountable for preparing a report of field visit and accordingly they should make plan for implementing the ideas in the classroom for effective teaching and learning. (Head teacher)

One of the local education unit heads felt that education has been made more administrative through federalism. He further added that, due to limited resources, they are more focused on other activities rather than school supervision and TPS. For example, preparing local-level curricula was a major task local education units were spending much time on. But they did not really know much about what was happening in classrooms:

To be very frank, we do not know what is happening inside the classroom. We do not know how much the curriculum is being delivered in the classroom. We completely depend on the information delivered by Head Teachers. (Education officer)

Regarding an alternative approach to professional development, one of the education officials recommended having model schools at appropriate locations:

For teacher professional development, I think it would be better to have 3–4 model schools in a municipality or the number can be determined as per the population of the municipality. Teachers from different schools can be taken for exposure visits in such model schools where they can observe the subject specific classes of experienced teachers, discuss with them regarding better ways of teaching and making students understand. Furthermore, if effective technical supervision is to be done by staff of education units, they should be well oriented/capacitated for the same. A staff having expertise in Mathematics cannot do meaningful supervision of English or Science class. (Education officer)

It was also noted that a sharing culture needs to exist for TPS to work effectively:

Teachers should not always depend on central level training for professional development. They can do much more from their own side for professional development. One should think what effort I did for my professional development or how much time and money I invested for my professional development. Likewise, we should develop sharing culture. A trained teacher can share what he/she learnt from the training to his/her colleagues in school. Both individuals who share and who will be benefited from the sharing should be well enthusiastic. The most sustainable approach to professional development is to ask/learn from senior teachers. Thus TPS can be best exercised by developing sharing culture. (EDCU head)



3.6 Selection of teachers for CPD

As a part of CPD, teachers are selected for TPD training that is organised by the Education Training Centre (ETC). Selection is meant to follow a formal process: according to the available quota from CEHRD, the ETC formally writes to the EDCU, which then contacts the respective municipality education units. These units inform the schools they are responsible for, and teachers are chosen by head teachers. However, teachers with personal access to educational authorities are able to bypass this process, creating a situation where the same teachers attend training repeatedly, while others are deprived of the opportunity. As one EDCU head mentioned, 'sometimes, ... the local bodies directly refer the names of teachers for training as per their personal contact'. Many teachers hold only temporary status, and they do not have the same access to CPD as permanent teachers. One such teacher expressed his views on this issue:

All kinds of teachers irrespective of category should be equally prioritized for the TPD training and other customized training. It's already been 15 years I have been teaching as a subsidy teacher in secondary level. I have taught thousands of students in this period. It's a matter of some disappointment that teachers like me never get the opportunity for training. It compels us to think that we are not working as hard as the permanent teachers or that the government does not have any accountability for our professional development. After all, we are also contributing in similar ways to permanent teachers for

the overall benefit of the school and students' learning outcomes. (Teacher)

The official position on this issue, though, was that only teachers whose continued employment was guaranteed should receive training funded by the government:

The government has to invest both funding and time to deliver training to teachers. There is no guarantee of continuity of jobs regarding the other kind of teachers. In such a situation, we cannot argue that all teachers should be provided equal opportunity. (Education officer)

Some teachers understood this position and argued that the differential treatment of teachers based on their status was demoralising. They felt the government should put in place policies which allow temporary teachers to become permanent based on their service.

3.7 Impact of federal system on CPD

The general view among the education authorities in Sudurpaschim was that the federal educational policy had had a negative impact on the provision of CPD for teachers. Almost all of the local education unit heads and EDCU heads agreed on the poor situation of teachers' formal training and teachers' professional support at present. Almost all of them were disappointed with the discontinuation of the earlier provision of CPD

by resource centres, school inspectors and resource persons. One of the education officers expressed his disappointment as follows:

Federalism aims for decentralization. But we find that there is more recentralization. In the earlier system, there was provision for district education offices with authority and responsibility. But at present, the local governments are said to be responsible only but without dissemination of authority. For example, regarding teacher training, everything (budget and quota) is decided by federal government. We are just asked to send names of teachers for training. Due to lack of clear policies and regulations, we formulate working procedure ourselves and work accordingly. But this usually creates conflict. (Education officer)

The newly formed Education Development and Co-ordination Units (EDCUs) also now had a limited direct role in teacher CPD – ‘we simply coordinate the collection of names of participating teachers from different municipalities of the district.’ In this respect, one of the education officers explained that:

the earlier district education office was really a functional platform with technical human resources along with clear responsibilities and full authority for the monitoring, feedback and support mechanism pertaining to educational issues throughout the district. As of now, they were replaced by EDCU in the districts with limited budget and limited roles mainly of coordination only. (EDCU head)

Local education unit heads also felt that education was not a priority for the local governments:

The municipality mayor or rural municipality chairperson focuses on tangible aspects of development i.e. infrastructural development such as construction of roads. Education hardly comes in the priority list despite the availability of a budget. (Education officer)

Within the new structure, while local education units felt that they could support teachers through school visits, there was a need of capacity-building among education officers for this to happen:

Despite the lack of staff, we can try out best to mobilize our staff to some extent to visit schools and provide support to teachers. But for this, first of all, they should be trained

to provide technical feedback to teachers by monitoring their classes. Otherwise, just sending them to schools for observation is meaningless. (Education officer)

Discussions with teachers highlighted one further concern regarding decentralisation:

There is a high chance of unfair local political influence if everything is handed over to the local body regarding school education. There should be checks and balance from federal government for overall development of education sector along with teachers’ professional development. (Teachers)

3.8 Role of PETC

The main responsibility for CPD now lies with the ETC, which provides two forms of training for teachers: one-month certification (divided into two blocks of 15 days each) and needs-based customised training (lasting 2–5 days) for the teachers in the province. Some additional forms of training are also provided, even though by law it is only TPD training that ETCs are required to deliver:

Last fiscal year, we trained 60 groups (1,605 individuals) on areas including TPD training. Among them, two groups were provided with Teacher of Teachers (ToT) training. 1,100 teachers were provided with TPD training. We received budget from both federal government and provincial government. From the budget of provincial government, we mainly deliver customized training, training on local curriculum development, ToT training, job induction training and Head Teachers’ training. From the budget of federal government, we mainly deliver TPD training. (ETC training chief)

The ETC was understaffed – two people against an approved quota of eight – and for this reason the planned training in the last fiscal year could not be wholly delivered, and about three crore of the budget was frozen. Lack of staff also meant that the effectiveness of the TPD training could not be monitored:

In fact, it’s a matter of sadness that there is no formal mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of TPD training. We could simply say how many teachers got the training but nobody can say what and how much change the training brought in the teaching and learning activities. (ETC official)

One aspect of the TPD training that the ETC was dissatisfied with was the way certification was managed:

I am really disappointed with provision of TPD training certificate without mentioning the division on the certificate. Such provision does not motivate those teachers who really worked hard in the training. The final certificate without mentioning division indicates that all teachers' performance in the training was the same which generally does not happen in reality. So there should be mentioning of division in the training certificate such that teacher with higher division will be given priority for promotion. This will ultimately motivate teachers for professional development. (ETC training chief)

3.9 Resource constraints

During discussions about teacher CPD, education officials at different levels of the provincial system regularly commented on how their work was limited by the resources available and explained how this affected what they were able to do in relation to CPD:

Firstly there is a lack of adequate number of staff and secondly there is lack of subject specific staff who can supervise classes and provide meaningful feedback to the teachers. There are about 42 public schools under our municipality. We cannot make a meaningful visit to a school even in two months. Even in the provincial training centre, there are limited trainers. In such a situation, how can we expect adequate TPD training and teacher professional support from local education units? (Education unit head)

In addition to resource constraints, there are also constraints in the delegation of authority and working areas due to lack of rules and regulations as further clarified by one of the respondents:

We are said to be a coordination unit which has to literally look after the education development and coordination within the entire district but we are operating with only five staff as of now. We are two section officers, two technical assistants and myself, the unit head. We are said to be an Education Development unit but there is neither any programme nor any budget entitled for education development. In such a situation, we cannot even make monitoring visits despite our desire to do so. In this connection, I wish the upcoming government would formulate the education rules and regulations such that our roles, responsibilities and working area are clearly defined i.e. I wish there will clear division of working area and

authorities among ETC, EDCU and Local Education Units. (EDCU head)

Similar concerns were expressed by another official:

We have very limited budget disbursement for the Education unit in the municipality. The majority of the budget of local government goes for infrastructure development. We are unable to conduct local level training for our teachers though we have plans in hand. (Education officer)

On a more positive note, one education officer explained that the local government had allocated a substantial budget (5 lakhs for ECD training and 15 lakhs for customised training/ refreshment training) for teacher professional development. At the same time, though, the lack of staff in the education unit made it difficult for them to execute the activities that this budget would allow.

3.10 Transfer of CPD to the classroom

Among the stakeholders who spoke to us there were different views about the quality of the TPD and its impact on what teachers do in the classroom. Some teachers were positive:

TPD is really very important for being a good teacher. Prior to receiving TPD, I felt I was an incomplete teacher but after training, I became a complete teacher/practical teacher. I energized myself. I used the concept of sharing, caring and learning following the TPD training. (Teacher)

TPD worked a lot for me. After getting TPD training, I started using more student-centred methods while delivering classes. Earlier, I used entirely teacher-centred methods. As an example of what I learned from TPD training, when a student is unable to learn/understand something, I let other students facilitate to make him understand the subject matter. (Teacher)

In contrast, some teachers were negative about the value of TPD training:

TPD training is just being delivered in the name of compulsory provision. The training centre should give training anyhow to teachers and teachers also should get training anyhow to get benefit of promotion in future. The core objective of TPD seems to be missing from both sides. If the score of TPD training were not used for promotion, we think most teachers would not participate in the training. (Teacher)

There is nothing as such which makes us interested and more enthusiastic to learn from TPD. The general things are discussed which are of no major concern for us. Something like Action Research seems to be a little useful, otherwise we think TPD as such is of no use. (Teacher)

One of the education officials suggested the TPD training needed to be changed and modernised:

The TPD module should be revised to make it more tech friendly and demand driven. For this, the revised or upgraded version of TPD should be able to address the specific needs of present generation teachers. (EDCU head)

Regarding the transfer of CPD to the classroom, a few teachers said they were using training ideas in their lessons to some extent, but the majority said they faced constraints which did not allow them to do so. The major constraints they mentioned were large class sizes and a lack of instructional materials. As one respondent stated, 'TPD training is very efficient only in the training centre due to favourable environment which cannot be transferred as such in the real classroom.' Others elaborated on this:

Due to big class size (70–80 students in a class), we had to teach with loud voice to make the last bench students audible. Some of us got throat problem. To get rid of such problem, we are all provided with a microphone and mini-speaker. Nowadays, the class controlling is very easy and all students can listen to us comfortably. However, we cannot implement other teaching methods rather than focusing on lecture methods. (Teacher)

I understand the problem of secondary teachers who have to teach 70–80 students in a class. Their complaint can be considered to some extent that due to bigger class size, they cannot implement other methods of delivery rather than lecture method. But how this can be valid in case of primary classes where even 30 students are not in a class? Why do they not adopt other methods of effective teaching? This leads me to think that unless and until teachers internalize their responsibility and make attempts to be accountable, nothing can be expected regarding professional development (despite several trainings and monitoring mechanisms) and its impact on students' learning outcome. (Head teacher)

A head teacher confirmed that teachers cited class size as a major barrier:

I ask my teachers to adopt some new methods of teaching which they learnt from training centre at least once a week but they do not, stating that big class size does not allow them to do so. (Head teacher)

Teachers also referred to the obligation to cover the curriculum and the limited time to do so as other reasons why they were unable to adopt more innovative approaches to teaching:

If I have to talk with reference to my subject (Social Studies), I need 4–5 periods to complete a lesson if I engage students in all the activities mentioned in the curriculum, which is impossible practically due to compulsion of completing all course on specified time before the final examination. (Teacher)

Almost all of us are teaching for 20 years but we hardly teach for 120–130 periods (one period lasts for 45 minutes). The curriculum anticipates 175 periods for successful learning but due to several holidays and other reasons, we cannot meet the target. Hence, if we keep on using different teaching methods which we learnt in the training, the courses could never be completed on time. Therefore, we cannot use different methods, though we want to. (Teacher)

It was also felt that closer evaluation of teachers after training was needed:

For effective use of training in the classroom, there should be a system of classroom teaching monitoring from local education units regularly and, accordingly, feedback and reporting mechanisms should be developed. (Head teacher)

Education officials felt that the lack of transfer of training was also due to the lack of incentives:

Regarding implementation of TPD training in the classroom, there is no provision of incentives for those teachers who really want to do something new or better. Although teachers learn many things well in the training centre, they do not apply those things in classroom. This is because of the lack of motivation and incentives. Another reason is the lack of a supporting environment in the school (lack of teaching materials, lack of support from Head Teacher). (ETC official)

In one of the schools, we found that the majority of the teachers were permanent teachers and all of them had received TPD

training. Nonetheless, only three students out of 98 that took the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) had succeeded. The head teacher's explanation for this was as follows:

Those teachers who are permanent and have long years of experience do not keep themselves updated with new ways of teaching. Though they have received training, the majority of them do not utilize it in the classroom showing several constraints. I agree that they cannot apply everything that they learnt in the training but they should at least try. In private schools, the teachers have neither any such formal training nor other kinds of support from government, however, their performance in the SEE examination is far better than government schools. This is all due to provision of hire and fire policy. The teachers have to be responsible for students' weak performance. There is pressure from both parents and school management. So, teachers have to be accountable anyhow. But here in the case of government school, such provision is not in place. (Head teacher)

More accountability, then, might encourage teachers to apply in the classroom what they learn from training. Teachers, though, provided a different explanation for this situation, which was not related to teachers' willingness to adopt new ideas in the classroom:

Some teachers who are very old might be lazy and cannot stay updated with the new technology and ways of teaching. But teachers are not the only ones responsible for the low performance of the students. Learning outcomes are the product of multiple factors. There should be parallel contribution from teachers, school management, students, their parents and the society (environment). Regarding the better performance of private schools, they enrol only selective students. And there are fewer students in a class where the teachers can provide individual feedback to the students. But in case of government schools, we have to admit students without any entrance examination despite the students' academic background being very poor. We have to teach a large number of students where we cannot monitor individual students. We cannot even check homework properly. The factor is parents' concern regarding their children's education. In private schools, the parents are very concerned about their children's progress. They visit school, meet teachers and discuss regarding their children's performance. In contrary to this, in government schools, the majority of parents do not pay attention to children's education. They hardly visit school although we invite them to come and discuss their children's performance. There is no guidance for students at home. So, it's very difficult for us to handle students from poor economic and academic backgrounds. (Teachers)

Appendix

Sudurpaschim fieldwork schedule

| Sudurpaschim Respondents | Municipality/Location | Activities |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Sudur Pashchimanchal Academy (SPA) | Dhanagadhi Sub-Metropolitan City | KIIs and FGD |
| Panchodaya Secondary School | Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City | KIIs and FGD |
| Education unit head | Gauriganga Municipality | KII |
| Kalika Secondary School | Gauriganga Municipality, Rajipur | KIIs and FGD |
| EDCU head, Kailali district | Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan | KII |
| Education unit head | Kailari Rural Municipality | KII |
| Rastriya Secondary School | Kailari Rural Municipality, Basauti | KIIs and FGD |
| Education unit head | Dhanagadhi Sub-Metropolitan City | KIIs and FGD |
| Mahendra Nagar Secondary School (Sadharan School) | Bhimdatta Municipality, Kattan | KIIs and FGD |
| Sharada Secondary School | Bedkot Municipality | KIIs and FGD |
| Education unit head | Bhimdatta Municipality | FGD |
| Education unit head | Bedkot Municipality | KII |
| EDCU, Kanchanpur district | Bhimdatta Municipality | KII |
| Janajyoti Multiple Campus | Mahendranagar, Bhimdatta | KIIs and FGD |
| Sudur Pashchimanchal Academy (SPA) | Dhanagadhi Sub-Metropolitan City | KIIs and FGD |

